

**WHITHER INCLUSION: PEDAGOGY, POLICY AND
PRACTICE?**

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I submit for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Date: 11.2.11

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this enquiry was the interplay between policy and principles of inclusion, resource and class teachers' interpretations of this, and the manner in which policy and principles are enacted in their practice. The enquiry's purpose was to provide insight into inclusive practice from teachers' perspectives and to increase understanding of inclusion by systematically documenting teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines. Additionally, it was anticipated that documenting these 'realities' had potential to inform, refine and alter existing policies while also providing insights relating to improvement of practice.

Within the constructivist paradigm, an emergent, two-phased, interpretive research design espousing a grounded theory approach was adopted. Based on nine resource teachers and nine class teachers each pairing in a particular school, interviews to elicit teachers' interpretations combined with observations to document the detail of practice generated data from which nine case studies were crafted.

Findings indicate that inclusion is highly complex and dilemmatic. Inclusion has to evolve further as learners with SEN are accommodated only to the extent that they can be included within the needs of the mainstream class. The significant contribution of this enquiry to understanding inclusion is that teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice are grounded in the central tenets of communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation. The pedagogical practices central to facilitating inclusion are as follows: mediated talk and questions to assess learning; transactional teaching-learning actions and interactions contributing to transformational teaching-learning episodes; and, optimal interfacing of resource and class teachers. Mediated talk and practices of attunement are associated with context and are more likely to occur during either teaching involving smaller groups withdrawn to the resource room or co-teaching within the mainstream class. Recommendations relating to policy and professional preparation are made as a means of supporting the developments to practice critical to securing and sustaining inclusion.

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KEY FOR ACRONYMS

AAIDD	American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AS	Asperger's Syndrome
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorders
AST	Additional Support Teachers (a generic category covering all support teachers)
ASTI	Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland
BAS	British Ability Scales
BASRC	Bay Area School Reform Collaborative
CBM	Curriculum Based Management
CIRC	Cooperative Integrated Reading and Comprehension Programme
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DES	Department of Education and Skills (Department of Education and Science until June 2010)
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
FETAC	Further Education and Training Awards Council
GAM	General Allocation Model
GLD	General Learning Disability
IATSE	Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education
ICEP	Institute of Child Education and Psychology
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (USA)
IEP	Individual Education Plan
INTO	Irish National Teachers' Organisation
IPPN	Irish Primary Principals' Network
JCSP	Junior Certificate School Programme
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LDA	Learning Disability Association
LEA	Local Education Authority
LSA	Learning Support Assistants
Mild GLD	Mild General Learning Disability

Mod GLD	Moderate General Learning Disability
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NDA	National Disability Authority
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NFER	National Foundation for Educational Research
NS	National School
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PE	Physical Education
PECS	Picture Exchange Communications System
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (UK term corresponding with SPLD)
PQRS	Preview Question Read Summarise
REB	Regional Education Boards
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator (term used in UK)
SENO	Special Educational Needs Organiser
SERC	Report of the Special Education Review Committee
SESE	Social Environmental and Science Education
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SNS	Senior National School
SPHE	Social Personal and Health Education
SPLD	Severe and Profound General Learning Disability
SSP	School Support Programme
WISC	Wechsler Intelligence Scales Checklist
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
TES	Teachers Education Section (of DES)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this enquiry is the interplay between policy and principles of inclusion, resource and class teachers' interpretations of this, and the manner in which policy and principles are enacted in their practice. The setting of the enquiry is the mainstream primary school system in Ireland. The enquiry's problem is shaped by the rapid and successive policy reforms relating to the education of children with SEN. Evident in legislation, policy documents and circulars¹ issued by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), these reforms support a policy transformation from segregation to inclusion. As such, within the past two decades, the mainstream primary education system has experienced a significant change in terms of its requirement to educate all children, including those with SEN. Such change, not necessarily initiated by those most affected by its implementation, constitutes a challenge to the established practices of teachers. More specifically, teachers are required to interpret knowledge of special education and the policy and ideology of inclusion in their constructions of practice. However, definitions, concepts and principles of inclusion are many and varied, giving rise to multiple interpretations in practice, while knowledge of the nature of SEN and implications for teaching and learning has to be acquired. Although legislation and policy documents make the presumption for inclusion, and additional resources have been provided to some extent, capacity building efforts to support and sustain inclusion have been piecemeal. This problematic context gives rise to the enquiry's intimately related questions, stated as follows:

How do resource and class teachers interpret and construct practices to include children with SEN in mainstream primary school?

More specifically, how do resource and class teachers interpret the policy and principles of inclusion?

How do they translate their interpretations into action?

¹ Circulars are issued by the DES for the attention of the principal, teachers and Board of Management of every recognised school in the country; circulars can relate to every aspect of education and represent official Department policy (Carey, 2005) and while they do not replace legislation, they are intended to supplement and support it by adding detail concerning the daily operation of schools in all their functions.

How do their actions influence the learning experiences of the children, particularly those with SEN?

As such, the enquiry's purpose is exploratory and interpretive in that it seeks to provide insight into inclusive practice in the mainstream setting from the perspectives of the key constructors of that practice and to increase understanding of inclusion by systematically documenting teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines. Additionally, it is anticipated that documenting these 'realities' has potential to inform, refine and alter existing policies while also providing insights relating to improvement of practice through professional development programmes.

The research design was flexible and naturalistic, combining two phases of data collection. The first phase involved individual interviews with eighteen teachers, nine resource teachers and nine class teachers, each pairing in a particular school, to determine their interpretations of inclusive policy and ideology as evidenced in their intentions in terms of teaching and including children with SEN. Analysis of data from this phase of the enquiry provided the interpretative lens for observations of practice, dialogue and semi-structured interviews which formed the second phase of data collection. Prolonged observation and detailed analysis of practice led to the emergence of three central themes on which teachers' inclusive practice is grounded. Consistent with the flexible design of naturalistic enquiry, progressive focusing of the substantive issue called for structured observations involving the combined use of a systematic observation schedule and running record. This yielded quantitative data to support further the persistence of one of the central themes to emerge from qualitative data. The three themes and their interrelatedness illuminate existing policy and practice of inclusion while addressing identifiable professional development needs that the evidence suggests warrant attention. With the focus, problem, purpose and nature of the enquiry articulated above, the following sections provide an account of my personal interest in the enquiry's focus, justify the significance of the enquiry at this time and outline the structure through which this enquiry is presented.

PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE ENQUIRY'S FOCUS

My personal interest in teachers' practices of inclusion arises from my professional experience as a former class teacher and resource teacher in a mainstream primary school and as a lecturer currently involved in initial and continuing professional preparation of teachers. Having qualified as a primary school teacher in 1983, I began teaching a combined first and second class in September of that year, in a school designated by the then Department of Education as disadvantaged. The development of my expertise as a class teacher was accompanied by a growing appreciation of heterogeneity and individuality, and while the need to do something additional and above the ordinary in designing the teaching-learning experiences for some pupils was obvious, my knowledge of how was acquired by trial and error. In 1990, the establishment by the Department of Education of a psychological service for primary schools on a pilot basis in two areas in Ireland, one being West Dublin where I taught, led to improved access to pupil assessment. However, due to "crisis demands for assessments" (INTO, 1993, p. 1), any form of teacher support was rare and in-service or continuing professional development (CPD) in the area of special education and inclusion was not available for class teachers at this time. In retrospect, regarding practice, I considered individual objectives and devised individual learning activities for some, because not to have done so would have led to a mini riot. Nonetheless, I was more motivated by keeping everybody gainfully employed than a commitment to inclusion.

In 1999, a system of resource teaching allocation was introduced by the Department of Education and Science (DES) as the automatic response to applications for additional teaching support for pupils with SEN enrolled in mainstream primary schools (this is elaborated in detail in Chapter One on policy transformation). I was one of the resource teachers appointed as a result of this departmental initiative. The appointment was shared between two schools, based on the number of children with assessed SEN in our school combined with those in the neighbouring boys' school. The appointment of a resource teacher meant that the most challenging children in the school who had previously been receiving learning support transferred to resource support; it did not result in the transfer of children with SEN from special schools. The realities of

resource teaching, without designated time for collaboration in planning and implementing an education programme for the children with SEN, without in-service (the dramatic increase in the number of resource teachers appointed rapidly outpaced induction course placements), without a classroom base from which to operate, and in most cases, the relief of class teachers when they and other pupils “got a break” from the pupils with SEN, were difficult to reconcile with the rhetoric of inclusion. As such, the problems associated with interpreting the principles, ideology and policy of inclusion and enacting this interpretation in practice, which form this enquiry’s focus, were inextricably linked with my teaching experience as both a class and resource teacher.

As a lecturer involved in initial and continuing professional preparation of teachers, I have contributed to a number of courses at various levels concerned with increasing teachers’ understanding and expertise for teaching students with SEN. A key element of this work has been the preparation of teachers to assess for, plan and teach individually relevant learning programmes. This is useful to teachers working in special schools who can pursue individual programmes in the context of the low pupil to teacher ratios assigned to these schools². However, one of the consequences of inclusive policy reform is the ever increasing number of additional support teachers in mainstream schools participating in CPD. Evidently, inclusion is an issue for these teachers while in terms of ‘fit for purpose’, CPD for teachers in special schools may not automatically transfer to the mainstream or to resource teachers in mainstream schools. As such, the extent to which CPD for teachers working in special schools is adequate for resource teachers in the mainstream setting in terms of preparation for inclusion becomes an additional issue. My professional role within this context contributes significantly to my interest in this enquiry’s focus.

² The pupil-teacher ratio assigned to special schools varies by category of ‘disability’ as follows: physical disability is 10:1; hearing impairment is 7:1; visual impairment is 8:1; emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems is 8:1; severe emotional disturbance is 6:1; borderline/mild general learning disability is 11:1; moderate general learning disability is 8:1; severe/profound general learning disability is 6:1; autism/autistic spectrum disorders is 6:1; specific learning disability is 11:1; specific speech and language disorder is 7:1; multiple disabilities is 6:1 (Circular 08/02) (DES, 2002a). For comparative purposes, in mainstream primary schools, the pupil-teacher ratio varies from 27:1 to 29:1 depending on the total number of children enrolled in the school.

Apart from personal, professional interest, the substantive focus of this enquiry is particularly significant in terms of educational policy and practice in the Irish context at this point in time. Although elaborated in the first three chapters, the enquiry's significance is justified briefly in the following section.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENQUIRY

While special schools continue to implement categorical selection of pupil intake, a qualified legal duty exists for mainstream primary schools to accept and provide appropriate education for all children. This requires balancing inclusive principles with the "core values of education" which centre on the provision of appropriate education for all (Hegarty, 2001, p. 246). As inclusion is a relatively recent phenomenon in the mainstream primary education system in Ireland, the research question of how resource teachers and class teachers interpret and construct inclusive practice in mainstream primary schools could not have been addressed before now, and to this extent the enquiry is significant.

Elaborated in the discussion on policy transformation in Chapter One, the dominant approach to providing additional support practised by resource teachers is withdrawal (Shiel and Morgan, 1998; Costello, 1999; IATSE, 2000; McCarthy, 2001; Travers, 2006). Until the formation of special education support teams in schools and across clusters of schools was directed (Circular, 24/03) (DES, 2003), there was no requirement for additional support teachers to consult with each other or to collaborate with, or coordinate their support of, class teachers. Although it is now advocated that special education support teams are formed, and that members of the support team collaborate closely with the principal teacher and class teachers to assist in the planning and delivery of educational support for pupils with SEN (Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05) (DES, 2003, 2004 and 2005a), no formal time is allowed for collaborative planning in the allocation of resource teaching hours or in timetabling for primary schools in Ireland generally (Government of Ireland, 1999). Lack of capacity building measures to restructure practice undoubtedly contributes to tensions in planning and pedagogy for inclusion. Without dedicated planning time and professional development on collaboration, teachers lose out on opportunities to share experiences in classrooms

while learners become the real losers. Although, increasingly, schools are engaging in whole school planning, a move facilitated by the in-service provided on implementing the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999), given additional support teachers' preference for withdrawal, the dominant culture of teaching remains separatist and isolationist. Such a context highlights the critical importance of an enquiry that investigates both resource and class teachers' interpretations and constructions of practice to include learners with SEN.

For class teachers, inclusion is navigated within the context of a highly complex and changing learning environment in the mainstream school. Among the complexities, teachers are faced with implementing a broad, balanced and integrated curriculum with the competing demands of maintaining standards³. They have to create a positive, friendly and supportive learning environment, yet one in which all pupils are cognitively challenged and are motivated, engaged and active participants in their learning. In fulfilling the aim of enabling all pupils to achieve their potential, teachers have to balance meeting the particular needs of pupils with SEN with meeting the diverse needs of all pupils and in class sizes which are the second highest in the European Union (EU) and among the highest in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)⁴ (Flynn, 2010). Also, in certain circumstances, teachers may have to plan for and oversee the care role of the special needs assistant (SNA), where the school has

³ More recently, concern regarding standards has prompted the DES to devise a national plan to improve literacy and numeracy in schools (DES, 2010a). In draft form at the time of writing, the documentation calls for "priority" to be given "to the improvement of literacy and numeracy over other desirable, important but ultimately less vital issues" (DES, p. 11). Evidence supporting concern over standards is based on "inspections of primary schools" which have "revealed that a significant proportion of lessons in English are not satisfactory" (DES, p. 11). Evidence also currently being cited, is based on Ireland's performance on the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) where the mean score declined by 31 points (about one-third of a standard deviation) between 2000 and 2009 (reading was a major assessment domain on both occasions). This decline represents the largest across all 39 countries participating in both PISA 2000 and PISA 2009, resulting in Ireland's rank falling from 5th to 17th. According to the Report of the Education Research Centre, performance of students in Ireland declined uniformly across all ability levels and so cannot be attributed to one particular group such as very high or very low achievers doing poorly (<http://www.erc.ie>).

⁴ This newspaper article reported on the annual OECD Education at a Glance Report which found that on average, there are twenty-four pupils in Irish classrooms compared to an EU average of twenty; the smallest classes are in Luxemburg where there are on average, fifteen pupils per class. Furthermore, it is worth noting that these figures are based on trends in 2007 and do not take account of the cuts in the education sector since then.

qualified for such support on the basis of the particular special needs of some children⁵. Articulating these competing demands not alone indicates the complexities and tensions faced by class teachers, but further illustrates the significance of an enquiry that investigates and documents teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines for inclusion.

Although legislation and policy documents make the presumption for inclusion, as elaborated in Chapter One, little by way of professional support has followed. Initial teacher preparation and opportunities for mainstream class teachers to pursue CPD on inclusion and special needs have seen very little change while the restructuring of organisational approaches to promote opportunities for professional knowledge sharing and pedagogical flexibility in schools is dependent on ad hoc arrangements and the good will of colleagues. When mandated, schools will have to prepare, implement and review an individual education plan (IEP) in accordance with legislation, for each pupil with SEN; currently, schools have to provide individually relevant learning programmes for these pupils. Although guidelines on this issued from the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) (2006a), the provision of CPD remains at the intentional stage. In the meantime, informed decisions have to be made regarding priority needs of the child and how best to diagnose these needs (Thompson, Bachor and Thompson, 2002), what to teach, how and when. Appropriate levels of teacher knowledge and expertise are required to make these decisions and to follow through with action. While curriculum guidelines for teaching pupils with general learning disabilities have been produced (NCCA, 2007) and are to be welcomed, in-service has not been provided regarding their implementation. This contrasts with the roll out of in-service provided for all primary teachers which accompanied publication of the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999). When change without adequate and appropriate support is demanded, it is much less likely that pedagogical practice alters radically other than among the most highly motivated and expert teachers. This further substantiates the significance of an enquiry that investigates teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice and documents their intentions and pedagogical routines for inclusion.

⁵ Although assigned on the basis of particular needs, to fulfil a care and non-teaching role, recent modifications to the contract of employment for SNAs identify 11 care duties supporting the teacher's practices (this is elaborated as relevant in Chapter One).

The significance of this enquiry's substantive focus is further endorsed by previous research conducted in the Irish context. While a dearth of research relating to special education in Ireland is generally acknowledged (Stevens and O'Moore, 2009) and has resulted in frequent calls for investigation (INTO, 2000; NDA, 2002; Shevlin 2002), an increase in the number of postgraduate courses including a focus on special education has led to a growing body of research over the last decade. Against this backdrop, previous investigations relating specifically to inclusion and special education in mainstream primary schools in Ireland have focused on a number of topics as follows: inclusive teaching strategies implemented by class teachers (Barry, 2005); the role and nature of educational support provided by resource teachers (Costello, 1999; IATSE, 2001, 2002; McCarthy, 2001; Travers, 2006); collaborative relationships (Harty, 2001); the processes of developing and applying the IEP (Keady, 2003; Walshe, 2005); the experience of integrating a child with moderate general learning disability (Ring and Travers, 2005); in-class support provided by SNAs (Logan, 2001, 2003; Lawlor and Cregan, 2003; Allen, 2006; Craig, 2006); possibilities and challenges for children with SEN (Kenny, Shevlin and Loxley, 2006); and, staff attitudes on inclusion, the educational support and needs of children with SEN in mainstream (Keyes, 2001; Dagg, 2004; Scanlon and Mc Gilloway, 2006). Established in 2005 with a statutory role to carry out research, the NCSE has commissioned and funded research focusing almost exclusively on aspects of policy and practice relating to particular categories of SEN, to special schools and classes⁶. In the context of previous research, this enquiry's focus of resource and class teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice is distinctive. The enquiry adds to existing research in so far as it seeks to understand the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream primary schools from the perspectives of resource and class teachers who are centrally involved, by systematically documenting their intentions and pedagogical routines. It now remains to outline the structure of presentation.

⁶ To date, two documents arising from the research programme of the NCSE refer to inclusion and are titled as follows: *An Inclusive Framework and self-reflection template to help schools assess their levels of inclusiveness* (NCSE, 2010a); *Literature Review on the Principles and Practices Relating to Inclusive Education for Children with Special Educational Needs* (NCSE, 2008).

THE ENQUIRY'S OUTLINE

The enquiry is presented in twelve chapters. Situating the enquiry's problem within the historical and policy context which contributes to shaping it, the focus of Chapter One is policy transformation over the past two decades and its implications for teachers' practice. A baseline overview of educational provision for children with SEN in Ireland in 1990 is provided and policy reforms and capacity building initiatives to facilitate inclusion during the intervening two decades are analysed in detail. As the multiple and varied definitions, concepts and principles of inclusion also shape the enquiry's problem, Chapter Two's focus is conceptualisations of special needs with an evaluation of the extent to which these conceptualisations have shaped and influenced policy and legislation with potential also to shape and circumscribe practice. Chapter Three presents a review of the research on teachers' practices of inclusion for teaching children with SEN in mainstream settings. While this review of teachers' practice provides perspectives for subsequent framing of the enquiry's data, it also substantiates the critical importance of documenting intentions as well as pedagogical routines and of incorporating classroom observations in the research design as a means of capturing teachers' interpretations in action. Chapter Four documents the research design crafted to capture the dynamics of teachers' inclusive practices.

Documenting each of three themes related to the first phase of data generation, Chapter Five focuses on teachers' understandings of inclusive ideology and of what including children with SEN means for them in theory and in practice; the focus of Chapter Six is teachers' intentions towards planning, and on how teachers go about preparing and organising for teaching the children in their classrooms including those with SEN; the final of these themes, pedagogical routines, is presented in Chapter Seven and includes detailed analysis of the curriculum emphases and teaching methods considered by teachers in their constructions of practice.

Chapter Eight provides an instrumental version of one case study with a primary focus on the three central themes that emerged from detailed analysis of data generated throughout the two phases of the enquiry. The eight other cases are accessible, but due to constraints of space in the thesis, are confined to the Appendices. Each of the three central themes is then presented in detail in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Nine focuses on the communicative routines in resource and class teachers' constructions of inclusive practice. It documents the verbal interactions initiated by teachers, teacher mediation and the intentional learning of children with SEN and mediated talk and the teaching-learning context. The focus of Chapter Ten is the theme of attunement in resource and class teachers' constructions of inclusive practice. The distinctive contribution of attunement as a sophisticated pedagogy is detailed, the transactional dynamics of attunement and the deliberate promotion of learning are documented while links between attunement and teachers' explicit and reflexive thinking about learning are analysed. Chapter Eleven focuses on the theme of coherence-fragmentation in teachers' constructions of inclusive practice. This chapter provides detailed analysis of the fragmented learning experiences and participation of learners with SEN. It also considers the coherence of curriculum and demands placed on the learner with SEN by it, along with the interface of mainstream and additional support and the complementariness of teachers' roles.

Chapter Twelve articulates the enquiry's insights in a manner that illuminates existing policy and practice while addressing identifiable professional development needs that the evidence suggests require attention. The enquiry concludes by calling on all who are in a position to influence change to reflect on the enquiry's detail and act on the implications in pursuit of greater inclusion of all learners, particularly the most marginal.

CHAPTER ONE

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS: POLICY AND HOW IT HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED IN THE PAST TWO DECADES

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this enquiry is the interplay between policy and principles of inclusion of learners with SEN, resource and class teachers' interpretations of this, and the manner in which policy and principles are enacted in their practice. It is anticipated that systematic documentation of teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines will provide insight into inclusive practice in the mainstream setting and will increase understanding of inclusion of children with SEN from the perspectives of resource and class teachers. Reiterating that the enquiry's problem is shaped by rapid and successive policy reforms relating to the education of children with SEN and by the many and varied definitions, concepts and principles of inclusion giving rise to multiple interpretations in practice, the focus of this chapter is policy transformation over the past two decades and its implications for teachers' practice.

Inclusion and more precisely inclusive teaching practice is a relatively recent phenomenon in Irish education. In 1998, legislation was introduced enshrining the legal right of all children to an appropriate education in the school of the parents' choice. A series of policy documents and circulars followed, providing direction and guidelines on the promotion of increasingly more inclusive practices in the allocation of resources for and education of children with SEN. These initiatives represented a watershed for mainstream primary schools. Accustomed to a culture where children with SEN were educated in the separate setting of a special school or a special class, for the first time in the history of the State, teachers in mainstream primary schools were officially required to provide an appropriate and inclusive education for all children. This policy transformation from segregation to inclusion was influenced by international trends, "principally informed by government-sponsored initiatives ... combined with very effective parental litigation" (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007, p. 49), and supported by a number of measures. Nonetheless, it constituted a major challenge to the established practices of teachers. Documenting policy transformation of the past two decades in

relation to the education of children with SEN and its implications for teachers' practice, this chapter is in three sections. To appreciate the extent of reform, the first section provides a baseline overview of educational provision for children with SEN in Ireland in 1990. The second section presents analysis of policy reforms towards inclusion influenced by key reports, judicial decisions and legislative developments of the last two decades. Analysis of the capacity building initiatives to facilitate inclusion in teachers' constructions of practice forms the substance of the third section.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN WITH SEN IN IRELAND IN 1990

In 1990, a parallel and segregated system of schooling was firmly established as the dominant form of educational provision for children with SEN. The State's first intervention in special education, signalling official recognition of the special needs of children with SEN, occurred in 1952 when two schools for the visually impaired were granted a special teacher-pupil ratio of one to fifteen and financial aid towards the purchase of specialised equipment¹ (Department of Education, 1993). There followed the establishment of a network of special schools throughout the 1960s. During this time, on the international front, the principles of egalitarianism, democracy and "normalisation with its attendant concept of integration" (Juul cited in Mazurek and Winzer, 1994, p. 387) fuelled civil rights movements and disability activists to advocate the human and civil right to an education. Highlighting the discriminatory aspects of restrictions imposed by the segregation of special schools and special classes (Hallenbeck and Kauffman, 1994; Karagiannis, Stainback and Stainback, 1996), and the limited outcomes of segregated provision indicated by research (McDonnell, McDonnell, Hardman and McGune, 1991; Hegarty, 1993; Lipsky and Gartner, 1996), there was a social and educational "impetus towards mainstreaming" (Croll and Moses, 2000, p. 178). This manifested in the introduction of legislation enshrining the right of all children regardless of SEN to education in countries where that right had not

¹ In the early 1870s, two schools for children with visual impairment were founded by the Irish Sisters of Charity (Mount Merrion) and the Carmelite Brothers (Drumcondra) in Dublin and were accorded national school status in 1918. These schools continue to provide education for children with visual impairment. Schools for the "mentally handicapped" were recognised by the Department of Education in 1955 and were allocated a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:20 (O'Cuilleain, 1968). By 1960, there were 12 such schools.

heretofore been recognised. In Australia, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark education was provided for all children of compulsory age, while resolutions passed in parliaments of the Scandinavian countries in the 1960s extended instruction to people with SEN in a normal school environment (Mazurek and Winzer; OECD, 1999).

This international policy shift in special educational provision from separate and segregated to additional or supplementary to that normally available in mainstream schools led first to integration followed with inclusion. The distinction between integration and inclusion is significant in terms of implications for teachers' practice. Integration involves focusing efforts on the individuals with SEN, applying special education measures in mainstream settings and implementing limited additional arrangements for these individuals. In contrast, inclusion focuses on the creation of an environment that is supportive of all students and involves the restructuring, transformation and reorientation of the school environment to provide education to meet the diversity of needs and increase all pupils' participation.

While policy in Italy was to all but abolish segregated provision², inclusion with a continuum of provision was implemented elsewhere. In the United Kingdom (UK), this was evident in the ten-step continuum of services from integration to segregation³ recommended in the Warnock Report (Department of Education and Science, 1978) (England and Wales), and incorporated in practice. Similarly, in the USA, a continuum of seven levels of alternative placement was provided with the concomitant legal requirement to choose the least restrictive environment for each student with SEN⁴.

In the mid 1970s in Ireland, the expansion of the special school system was "largely complete" (McGee, 2004, p. 69), and policy focused on the establishment of

² With the lowest percentage, Italy has less than 1% of students aged between 6 and 17 years in special schools (Pijl and Meijer, 1994).

³ Four steps related to forms of supporting education in the mainstream school, two steps to forms of educational provision in the special school, one to education in a residential school, two to forms of educational provision in hospitals and the tenth step was home tuition. Within the ten steps, the Committee distinguished between locational, social and functional integration defined as follows: locational integration refers to physical location and exists where special classes are located in mainstream schools or a special school is located on the site of a mainstream school; social integration refers to social interchange between children with SEN and others and can occur during eating, playing and sharing out-of-classroom activities; functional integration refers to joint participation in educational programmes which have been carefully planned to ensure that all children benefit.

⁴ Students with SEN, to the maximum extent appropriate to their learning, are to be educated with peers without SEN.

special classes; initially, these were in mainstream schools for children with mild general learning disability (Mild GLD). By 1990, a total of 111 special schools and 192 special classes in 156 schools⁵ were recognised by the Department of Education (Department of Education, 1993). Of the 192 special classes, 142 were based in 113 mainstream primary schools⁶. Although regarded as a movement towards locational integration (McGee, 1990; McDonnell, 2003), the special class tended to be a self-contained unit⁷ and had a pupil-teacher ratio of sixteen to one with an age range as broad as the children assigned to this provision represented. According to a longitudinal study conducted by Stevens and O'Moore (2009), in 1989, sixteen percent of special classes were located separately to the rest of the school.

While the high proportion of special schools and special classes may demonstrate favourable expansion in the provision of special education, pupils with severe and profound general learning disability (SPLD) remained excluded from the education system. A Report on the Education and Training of Severely and Profoundly Handicapped Children in Ireland (Departments of Education and Health, 1983), representing the first official acknowledgement that no child was uneducable, led to the establishment of a pilot study in 1986 sanctioning the appointment of twenty teachers for pupils with SPLD. However, by 1993, the pilot status of the scheme remained unchanged and only 207 pupils with SPLD “out of an estimated total of 2000” were being taught by seventeen teachers (Department of Education, 1993, p. 130). Embarking on the 1990s, Ireland lagged behind other countries in relation to the policy of making education available to all children and the policy of inclusion. Table 1.1 overleaf indicates clearly that legislation underpinning entitlement to education in Ireland came much later than in several other jurisdictions while reforms of provision, as indicated above, had preceded this legislation.

⁵ These statistics do not include the special schools and special classes for children of the travelling community.

⁶ The remaining classes were assigned to special schools where pupil enrollment represented a category of general learning disability (GLD) above the category of GLD represented by the special class, for example, two special classes for pupils with moderate general learning disability (Mod GLD) were assigned to St Brigid's Special School, Mullingar, a school for pupils with Mild GLD.

⁷ A teacher's contribution to the Irish Teachers' Journal '*Múinteoir*', in the Spring 1989 edition, described the special class as a “kind of isolation ward, situated apart from other classes, peopled by children who may not only be seen as “different”, but can actually be seen as undesirable” (Welford, 1989).

Table 1.1: Legislation enshrining the right of all children to education, by year and by country

1970	1974	1975	1988	1998
UK	Iceland	USA	Spain	Ireland

Source: Adapted from OECD (1999), Moltó (2003) and the Education Act 1998 (Government of Ireland, 1998)

Regarding legislation to include children with SEN in mainstream schools, Table 1.2 provides additional information on reforms internationally for comparative purposes.

Table 1.2: Legislation towards inclusion in mainstream, by year and by country

1975	USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensured a free, appropriate public education to children with SEN in the least restrictive environment ▪ Amended in 1990, requiring that children with SEN be educated with their non-disabled peers as far as possible ▪ Amended in 1997, 2001 and 2004, emphasising effective access to the regular curriculum for children with SEN in an inclusive setting
1977	Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legislation abolished special classes established for children with SEN ▪ 1979 legislation requiring that children in ordinary classes are to be supported by teachers with specialist training
1981	UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Endorsed inclusion but allowed for a continuum ▪ 1996 requires consideration of the rights of the child with SEN and others ▪ 2001 strengthens the endorsement of inclusion
1991	Iceland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provided that all children attended the school nearest home ▪ 1995 Compulsory Education Act omitted the term 'special education'
1994	Denmark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regulated the educational provision for children with SEN
1994	Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extension of basic law by article to effect that no person could be discriminated because of disability was adapted accordingly by the school laws of the Lander of the country
1994	New Zealand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Human Rights Act outlaws discrimination on disability grounds and the 1995 special education guidelines stress the rights of students with SEN to the same educational settings as other learners
2004	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mandates appropriate educational provision for children with SEN, emphasises inclusion and makes specific reference to 'inclusive education' unlike legislation in the UK and USA. At the time of introduction, commencement dates for only two provisions of the Act had been decided. In the second budget of 2008, the act was deferred until further notice.

Source: Adapted from OECD (1999), Frederickson and Cline (2002) and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004)

Analysis of the administrative structures of the education system, the economic climate and the combination of aspiration and caution reflected in policy initiatives of that time, highlights certain circumstances that impeded the development of an inclusive educational system. Peculiar to administrative structures in Ireland, apart from the establishment of Vocational Schools in the 1930s and the foundation of a small number of Community and Comprehensive secondary schools in the 1960s and 1970s, the ownership and management of schools rested outside the Department of Education⁸. As such, while the state could facilitate and set criteria for provision, with limited control and in the absence of legislation, it did not have the authority to require schools to make provision for children with SEN⁹. The education system was highly centralised and as such, the possibility of clustering services to respond to local needs was impeded by the lack of administrative units for primary schools at regional level¹⁰. As there was no generally available educational psychological service, responsibility for the assessment of children with SEN rested with the Department of Health and availability of assessment procedures, necessary for gaining access to support services, was limited (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007). No agency or individual had a statutory requirement to provide services as a right while the continued absence of legislation governing

⁸ Although established as a non-denominational national school system in 1831, the state paid for the maintenance cost of buildings and teachers' salaries and ran the system while the churches, the Established Church and the Roman Catholic Church, controlled and managed the schools giving rise to a denominational system in practice. Inglis (1987) contends that the state handed over control of education to the churches and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, precisely because it proved so capable of civilising and socially controlling the Irish people along with caring for the sick, poor and uneducated. This laid the foundation for a pattern of church hegemony on education in general and in reform schools, orphanages and special schools, with increasing reluctance to be accountable to the state and acquiescence on the part of successive governments to insist on accountability or take responsibility for policy. Whether emblematic of a turning tide or a sinking ship, on 3/8/2010, the Minister for Education and Skills published the outcome of work undertaken by the Department, at the request of the Catholic Church in November 2009, to identify areas nationwide that may offer potential for the church to divest its patronage of certain primary schools (DES, 2010b).

⁹ The networks of special schools and special classes established by 1990 were predominantly "instances of voluntary effort, initiated and managed by religious, parental or in some cases enlightened entrepreneurial initiative" (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007, p. 43).

¹⁰ Collaborative attempts to devise Regional Education Boards (REB) with statutory responsibilities were all but given the departmental seal of approval in the early 1990s (Coolahan, 1994) and were proposed in the White Paper (Government of Ireland, 1995). However, pressure from the Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI) led to government opposition to the decentralisation of existing administrative structures.

education meant the rights of children with SEN were not particularly well protected (McGee, 2004).

Access was also limited by an economic recession in the 1980s and early 1990s. This led to a contraction in public services, high unemployment levels and emigration, coupled with a sharp decline in the Irish birth rate. Teachers in mainstream schools were faced with the requirement to take more pupils into their already very large classes at a time when schools were losing teachers because of declining enrolments. Against the backdrop of budgetary constraints where appropriate resources could not be guaranteed, principals of mainstream schools were reluctant to enrol children with SEN¹¹. While prudence in the management of public finances is always desirable, in times of budgetary constraint precisely because resources are scarce, it is incumbent on those involved in such management to safeguard the rights and well-being of the more vulnerable and to ensure their decision-making is highly informed. However, on the political front, a number of frequent government changes led to different holders of the education portfolio, effecting policy formation in relation to access and inclusion. The ambivalence evident in policy documents and official statements issued in the decade leading to 1990 reflect Ó Buachalla's view that while there was continuity in the policy focus on curricular issues throughout the decades of the twentieth century, "in relation to access and educational opportunity" the system showed no continuity (1988, pp. 76-77). Although the White Paper on Educational Development (Government of Ireland, 1980) confirmed that integration would be the first option considered in the education of children with SEN, the Programme for Action in Education 1984 – 1987 (Government of Ireland, 1984) recorded the establishment of special classes as a form of integration and acknowledged that special schools would continue to operate. In 1987, at a meeting of European Ministers for Education, the then Irish minister declared it was government policy to support the trend towards integration but that certain demographic and geographic features of the country rendered the provision of high quality services for some categories of disabled in any setting other than in special schools both impractical

¹¹ Paradoxically, McGee reports that when declining enrolments during the 1980s had the potential to impact on many lives, there was anecdotal evidence of a "disinclination on the part of some schools to initiate a referral process for a pupil if subsequent assessment was to lead to the pupil's placement in another school" (2004, p. 74).

and unrealistic (European Council, 1987). The Report of the Primary Education Review Body (Government of Ireland, 1990a) stated that departmental policy was in favour of integration where possible while retaining the option of segregation, and acknowledging considerable financial implications associated with the principle of integration.

When eventually policy focused on diminishing inequalities at primary level, it was in relation to those arising from economic and social disadvantage. Additional teachers were provided to reduce pupil-teacher ratios in primary schools in disadvantaged areas, increased grants were paid to the schools and a Home School Community Liaison Scheme was established¹². Furthermore, 127 special classes in mainstream schools and four special schools had been established for children from the travelling community by 1990. However, there was evidence that the tide was beginning to turn for children with SEN. In a publication announcing a major breakthrough in the creation of 100 new teaching posts for primary schools in disadvantaged areas and thirty “new remedial teacher posts” as a result of INTO “pressure and negotiation” (INTO, 1989, p. 109), there was an invitation for submissions from mainstream school teachers on their experiences “with the integration of children with special needs” (p. 110)¹³. At this point, although neither officially recognised in legislation nor in circulars issued by the DES, practices in mainstream schools were changing as an increasing number of children with SEN were being educated in their local national schools. This was welcomed in the report of the Review Group on Mental Handicap Services¹⁴ (Government of Ireland, 1990b).

¹² This scheme involved the appointment of a teacher to liaise with relevant family members in the children’s homes and with agencies in the community.

¹³ This invitation came from a subcommittee of the Central Executive Committee. The purpose of this subcommittee was “to examine the question of the integration of children with handicaps in ordinary schools and to formulate guidelines to enable such children to participate fully in the activities of everyday life within the school” (INTO, p. 110). The subcommittee was particularly interested in the following: advance planning; referral, consultation and enrolment procedures; provision of educational resources and support services; organisation and adaptation of curriculum; effects on other children in the school; suitability of school premises; attitudes and expectation of parents; and, awareness and knowledge of disabilities among staff.

¹⁴ The title of this report, *Needs and Abilities: A Policy for the Intellectually Disabled*, was significant in putting policy for people with disabilities firmly on the agenda. Further significant was the report’s recommendation to transfer responsibility for key elements of disability service provision from the health sector to “mainstream public service providers” (Doyle, 2003, p. 15), signalling movement towards more inclusive policy and practice.

Documenting the separate and parallel system of educating children with SEN along with the ambivalence towards their inclusion which existed in 1990, serves to illustrate that segregation was the established orthodoxy. Mainstream schools did not have to accommodate children who challenged their modus operandi. As for teachers' inclusive practice, the substantive focus of this enquiry, mainstream teachers were accustomed to relocating children with SEN in separate, special schools or classes, similar to a mindset that committed those with 'other difficulties' to industrial and reform schools. However, very rapidly, during the final decade of the twentieth century, this practice was to be challenged by a radically different policy, with attendant expectations regarding teachers' practices and largely without the benefit of CPD. Analysis of policy reforms towards that radically different policy of inclusion which occurred over the two decades from 1990 to 2010 is presented in the following section.

POLICY REFORMS TOWARDS INCLUSION: 1990 TO 2010

The policy transformation from segregation to inclusion over the past two decades was influenced by a combination of factors at national and international levels. International influences were brought to bear by organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the European Community (EC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the OECD; these were instrumental in highlighting educational provision for children with SEN and issuing policy statements driven by rights-based principles which strongly advocated inclusion. National influences can be traced to government-sponsored reports and parental litigation which "resulted in major changes in policy and provision" (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007, p. 47). This was reflected in the enactment of legislation to safeguard individual rights, access and participation, and in the introduction of policy documents, circulars and resources to promote inclusion. The key national influences contributing to policy developments in the past two decades are presented in Table 1.3 overleaf. Analysis of their import for inclusion and teachers' inclusive practice which follows, is presented to reflect their cumulative impact, and with reference to associated international influences as relevant.

Table 1.3: Key national influences by category, contributing to policy transformation from segregation to inclusion

Government-sponsored reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the Special Education Review Committee (SERC) (Department of Education, 1993) • Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities (CSPD) (Government of Ireland, 1996a)
Litigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The O'Donoghue case (1993) • The Sinnott case (2000)
Policy documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Green Paper – <i>Education for a Changing World</i> (Government of Ireland, 1992) • The National Education Convention (1994) • Government White Paper – <i>Charting our Education Future</i> (Government of Ireland, 1995) • <i>Implementing the Agenda for Change</i> (Government of Ireland, 1996b)
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Act 1998 • The Education Welfare Act 2000 • The Equal Status Act 2000 • The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 • The Disability Act 2005

The first significant step towards inclusion taken at the start of the last decade of the twentieth century occurred during the Irish presidency of the EC, when a resolution on the integration of children with SEN was adopted unanimously by the EC Council of Ministers for Education in May 1990. According to Gash and Feerick (1995), this marked the beginning of Ireland's adoption of integrative education, as subsequent policy would be obliged to reflect the philosophy of international agreements. By signing the EU Convention in 1992, ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), policy direction in Ireland was further committing to integration. Acknowledging the reluctance of children with SEN and their parents to accept the social separation which the special school system entailed, the Green Paper (Government of Ireland, 1992) prepared by the Government¹⁵ incorporated the policy principle of seeking to provide for children with SEN in mainstream schools as far as was appropriate for the particular child, and recommended a continuum of provision.

¹⁵ This was a coalition Government with Fianna Fáil as the dominant partners. However, the minister for education (Séamus Brennan) had held this portfolio for only six months and was not responsible for the Green Paper although he wrote the foreword.

Recognised as the most significant and comprehensive policy document in special education (Spelman and Griffin, 1994; Swan, 1994), the Report of the Special Education Review Committee (SERC) (Department of Education, 1993)¹⁶ recommended seven principles to guide educational provision for children with SEN and to be considered in framing educational legislation¹⁷. In summation of its guiding philosophy, the Review Committee favoured as much integration as appropriate with as little segregation as necessary. While the continuum of services was reiterated, the Report (1993) advocated that “appropriate education for all children with special educational needs should be provided in ordinary schools” (p. 22) except where individual circumstances made this impracticable. It also recommended the establishment of resource teaching posts to cater for children with SEN on a withdrawal basis from mainstream classes. Principles relating to the continuum of services and provision of appropriate education for all children with SEN in mainstream schools may have appeared somewhat radical against the landscape of parallel systems of educational provision that existed up to this point and in the context of very little requirements on mainstream schools to provide special education, apart from housing ‘the special class’. However, in comparison to the drive towards inclusion being experienced internationally, which was calling for restructuring of schools to increase participation of all students, these principles were somewhat conservative. Nonetheless, in the Irish context, the Report (1993) represented a positive basis from which to formulate legislation and devise inclusive policies. More recently, its significance as a ‘blueprint’ for and ‘cornerstone’ of DES policy in relation to special educational provision has been

¹⁶ The Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE) held a conference in 1989 entitled ‘Acts, Commissions and Change’ and called for the organisation of a commission to examine special education provision. Following this, the decision was made to establish SERC with the brief of examining how the existing system could be resourced in order to allow the effective implementation of the policy of integration. This would suggest that the impetus for reform for inclusion was stronger within the special education community than among educators more generally.

¹⁷ Summarising briefly, the principles were as follows: all children have the right to an appropriate education; the needs of the individual child should be paramount in decisions concerning educational provision; parents of the child with SEN are entitled and should be enabled to play an active part in decision-making; a continuum of services should be provided ranging from full-time education in mainstream classes with additional support as necessary, to full-time education in special schools; appropriate education for all children with SEN should be provided in mainstream schools, except where individual circumstances make this impracticable; only in exceptional circumstances should it be necessary for a child to live away from home to avail of education; and, the state should provide adequate resources (Department of Education, 1993, pp. 19-20).

widely acknowledged (Carey, 2005; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007; Stevens and O'Moore, 2009).

Influenced by the SERC Report, the White Paper on Education (Government of Ireland, 1995) reiterated that all students had the "right of access to and participation in the education system" (p. 24), favoured preservation of the continuum of placements and recommended the establishment of REBs. However, government endorsement of inclusion was at odds with the stance taken by the State in cases of parental litigation. Coinciding with the publication of the SERC Report in 1993 was one of the most significant legal cases in special education in Ireland, the O'Donoghue case (O'Donoghue v. Minister for Education, 1993). This involved a mother suing the State on behalf of her son with SPLD who had been denied access to education on the grounds of ability. The State, reflecting the perception that children with SPLD were uneducable, despite Report (Departments of Education and Health, 1983) recommendations ten years previously to provide education for these children and commitments to the UN convention and EU charter, fought the case and lost. The case was based on Article 42.2 of the Constitution of Ireland (Government of Ireland, 1937), which does not discriminate between children on the grounds of ability. The High Court judgement asserted that Paul O'Donoghue was educable and ruled that the State was obliged to provide free primary education for children with SPLD¹⁸. Apart from being based on the unlikely grounds of the Constitution, in terms of impact, this judgement was significant in a number of respects. Firstly, it represented a starting point for a flood of High Court actions relating to educational provision for children with SEN¹⁹; secondly, it ordered that education be provided with a ratio of one teacher to six pupils and two child care assistants²⁰. Such a judgement required the State to develop the measures necessary to accommodate these children (Whyte, 2002), a development repeatedly opposed by the Department of Finance. Given that in 1994, Ireland was one of ninety-two governments and twenty-five international organisations to subscribe to the Salamanca Statement which advocated the fundamental right of all people with SEN to an appropriate

¹⁸ On appeal, the Supreme Court endorsed the right of the applicant to an appropriate primary education (O'Donoghue v. Minister for Health, Minister for Education, Ireland and the Attorney General, 1996).

¹⁹ During the same month that educational legislation was finally introduced in Ireland, Pollak (1998) reported that there were fifty-six families taking legal cases against the State in November 1998.

²⁰ This staff-pupil ratio for children with SPLD was eventually conceded and is currently operated.

education and access to regular schools (UNESCO, 1994a, 1994b), refusal by the Department of Finance to fund the educational provision as ruled, was paradoxical.

Integration and the quality of educational provision for children with SEN in mainstream schools were addressed at the National Convention on Education (Coolahan, 1994). Influenced by the SERC Report, participants at the convention endorsed a continuum of provision and agreed that future policy should be governed by the principle that every child is educable. However, contributions emphasised that unsupported, unresourced integration was unsatisfactory and that “real integration” involved “identification of the child’s needs, an appropriate curriculum, resources such as support staff and in-service education for all involved teachers” (Coolahan, 1994, p. 123). Access to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment and provided in mainstream schools was further endorsed by the Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities (CSPD) (Government of Ireland, 1996a). Basing its recommendations within the frame of a human rights perspective (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007), the CSPD Report emphasised the responsibility of all schools to include children with disabilities. However, at the time of its publication with the twentieth century almost drawing to a close, there was still no official requirement of mainstream schools to educate all children, including those with SEN.

Public pressure, exposing the hypocrisy of expressing commitment to access to regular education for all children while refusing to take the necessary actions for this to happen, made the State’s stance increasingly untenable. The State faced the threat of continuous litigation. Professional and administrative personnel from the DES could no longer “seek resolutions to these cases against a background in which the structural dysfunctionalities which had given rise to the case in the first instance were still present” (McGee, 2004, p. 75). There was the possibility of a decline in the government’s popularity because of its begrudging response to access for all. Amidst the mounting pressure, a press release was issued by the Minister for Education in November 1998, guaranteeing automatic entitlement to resources for all children including those with SEN on enrolment in a mainstream school²¹. This press release was followed by the

²¹ If for nothing else, Micheál Martin will go down in history as the minister who made the announcement of ‘automatic entitlement’.

Education Act 1998 (Government of Ireland, 1998), which gave practical effect to the constitutional rights of all children, including those with SEN, to an appropriate education in the school of the parents' choice subject to the rights of patrons and the effective and efficient use of resources. However, the Act was cautious in not assigning to any person or authority in particular, the responsibility for this constitutional right to be fulfilled. Addressing this issue, in a second landmark judgement in the Sinnott case²², Justice Barr ruled that the State "retains primary responsibility for the nature and quality of the educational service which is provided on its behalf" (Sinnott v. Minister for Education, 2000, p. 58).

Implementation of the O'Donoghue judgement, reviewed by Justice Barr for the Sinnott case, revealed the extent to which the Department of Finance had delayed in carrying out obligations of the State. Finance providers were criticised for lack of understanding and for an inability to "prioritise in constitutional justice claims made on the resources of the State by those having such rights which the State has an obligation to vindicate in full and as a matter of urgency" (Sinnott. v Minister for Education, 2000, pp. 26-27). The public outcry at the level of State neglect associated with this case was an important catalyst in the development of the Education for Persons with Disabilities Bill (Government of Ireland, 2003), which advocated the right of people with disabilities to an appropriate and inclusive education, a principle enshrined in the subsequent legislation. Specifically, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (EPSEN) (Government of Ireland, 2004) makes legal provision for the education of people with SEN to take place "in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs" (p. 5) unless there are specific reasons for a specialised placement for the child. This legislation outlines policy procedures for assessment of special needs and for ensuring provision of appropriate 'intervention', services and reviews and it makes the preparation, implementation and review of the IEP a legal requirement²³. However, as indicated in Table 1.2, only two provisions of the Act have been implemented²⁴ and

²² This case was taken by Mrs Kathy Sinnott on behalf of her son, Jamie, with autism and SPLD, who had what amounted to no more than two years of meaningful education/training provided by the state throughout the first twenty years of his life.

²³ These requirements are detailed comprehensively in Sections 3, 8 and 11 of the Act.

²⁴ The first relates to the establishment of the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) with statutory functions relating to appropriate educational provision for pupils with SEN (Section 20); the

as measures to support policy implementation, these are elaborated in the following section; in October 2008, the Act was deferred until further notice. Consequently, at the time of writing, teachers are not legally obliged to prepare IEPs. Access to education was further endorsed by the Education Welfare Act 2000 (Government of Ireland, 2000a) which focuses on strategies to encourage school attendance and by the Equal Status Act 2000 (Government of Ireland, 2000b) which prohibits discrimination and requires schools to provide reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Finally, the provision of assessment to determine the educational needs of children with disabilities is supported by the terms of the Disability Act 2005 (Government of Ireland, 2005).

Of particular relevance to the substantive focus of this enquiry is the significance of mandating the right of all children to an appropriate education in the school of the parents' choice along with automatic entitlement to resources. This was critical for mainstream primary schools in terms of challenges to existing practices. Rather than referring children with SEN to special schools or special classes, mainstream schools now had to provide appropriate education for all children. Despite a relative lack of experience, teachers in mainstream primary schools were required to construct practices of inclusion for teaching all children enrolled in their mainstream classes. Although deferred, the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004) represents further challenges to teachers' practices to the extent that it imposes very specific obligations on the school principal and teachers in relation to educating children with SEN.

Commenting on education policy in twentieth century Ireland, Ó Buachalla argues that there are many examples to support his claim that "the most rationally coherent policy can be reduced to inefficiency by the quality of the attention given to the measures planned in the implementation stage" (1988, p. 390). The capacity building measures to facilitate implementation of the policy of inclusion in teachers' practices are analysed in the following section.

second relates to the creation of the post of Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) (Section 26), appointed by the NCSE to advise and assist school personnel and to oversee the IEP process in relation to IEPs requested by the NCSE. Also provided for was a Special Education Appeals Board which was established but then disbanded following the deferral of the legislation.

CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES TO FACILITATE INCLUSION IN TEACHERS' PRACTICES

Although the Education Act 1998 (Government of Ireland, 1998) emphasised inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream primary school, it made no provision for a psychological service to schools at primary level. This constituted a structural impediment to progress as without an efficient assessment process, the child's access to special educational provision was severely delayed. Furthermore, the Act made no provision for regionalised structures to administer the distribution of resources, or for the professional development of teachers whose practices were impacted by the Act. Nonetheless, following its enactment, systemic supports were provided by the State to facilitate inclusion. As for 'the quality of attention given to these measures', analysis indicates that decision-making regarding capacity building by the DES was more influenced by a reactive stance to crisis management, than a proactive embrace of and commitment to inclusion. Categorized in terms of human resources, organisations, documentation and CPD financed by the DES, these capacity building initiatives are presented in Table 1.4 overleaf. The impact of human resources, established organisations and CPD financed by the DES on facilitating inclusion is analysed in the three subsections which follow while the impact of documentation is discussed as relevant throughout.

Table 1.4: Capacity building initiatives to facilitate inclusion by category of support type

Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource teachers: allocation and role specified in Circulars 08/99, 08/02, 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05 • Special Needs Assistants: appointment and responsibilities specified in Circular 08/99 and contract of employment specified in Circular 15/05 • Special Educational Needs Organisers
Organisations	<p>The establishment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Educational Psychological Service (1999) • The Special Education Support Service (2003) • The National Council for Special Education (2005)
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines on devising, implementing and reviewing IEPs (NCSE, 2006a) • The continuum of support (NEPS, 2006) • Curriculum Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities (NCCA, 2007)²⁵
CPD financed by the DES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2003: Fulltime diploma course for special school and resource teachers cut to a block-release of fifteen weeks • 2006: Replacing the course leading to award of Certificate in Learning Support, a fifteen week block-release diploma course for special school, resource and learning support teachers is provided by seven third level institutions • 2004: Certificate course for special school and additional support teachers teaching children with ASD provided by one third level institution²⁶ • 2004: A one-year, full-time release course leading to a masters in special educational needs, for special school and additional support teachers • 2007: Subsidy provided for online course leading to the awards of certificate and diploma in special/inclusive education, for mainstream class teachers provided jointly by St Patrick's College and the Institute of Child Education and Psychology (ICEP) • 2009: Diploma courses cut from fifteen to eight weeks block-release; ASD certificate course cut from five to three weeks block-release; funding for masters programme and subsidy for online course pulled

Human resources as a capacity building initiative to facilitate inclusion

In 1999, reflecting a recommendation of the SERC Report, a system of allocating resource teachers was introduced by the DES as the automatic response to applications for additional teaching support for pupils with SEN enrolled in mainstream

²⁵ The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) produced these guidelines on CD (also available online) for the purpose of assisting teachers in planning and implementing curriculum for students with Mild GLD, Mod GLD and SPLD. To date, no in-service has been provided on the guidelines while as a capacity building initiative, they support educational provision for learners with SEN rather than teachers' practices of inclusion.

²⁶ Prior to the introduction of this course, the DES funded a number of participants to complete a similar course in Birmingham University.

primary schools²⁷. Documented in circular 08/99 (DES, 1999), the resource teacher was distinguished from the learning support teacher²⁸ on the basis of the educational needs of the children for whom these teachers provided additional support; the resource teacher provided support teaching for children with an assessed special educational need²⁹ while the learning support teacher taught children whose achievements were between the tenth and second percentile on standardised assessments of literacy and/or mathematics. The outcome of the departmental initiative meant that resource teaching support, measured in hours, was allocated to individual pupils on the basis of assessed need. There followed a significant increase in the numbers of children with SEN in mainstream primary classrooms and resource teachers supporting their inclusion (INTO, 2003). Based on a census of special educational needs in mainstream primary schools conducted by the DES in October 2003, it was calculated that a total of 18,060 pupils with SEN were enrolled in mainstream primary classes (S. Beirne, personal communication, March 8, 2006). A further 9,340 were enrolled in special classes (DES, 2006). From the original seven appointed in 1994, the number of resource teachers increased dramatically to 2,301 in the school year of 2004/2005 (Stevens and O'Moore, 2009). Special Needs Assistants (SNA) in mainstream schools, recruited specifically to assist in providing the necessary non-teaching services to children with assessed educational needs, totalled 299 in 1998 and rose to 6,000 in 2006 (INTO, 2006)³⁰.

²⁷ Prior to this, seven resource teachers were appointed in 1994 specifically for teaching children with Down syndrome. Over the following four years, with falling enrolments, some teachers were redeployed from the panel as resource teachers for children with special needs. However, this redeployment was on a case-by-case basis and a school's success in appealing for a resource teacher was dependent on the power of its lobbyists. In 1998, there were 104 resource teachers (INTO, 2003).

²⁸ From 1973, remedial teachers (currently termed learning support teachers) were appointed to many primary schools to provide additional teaching to 'remedial' or 'slow' learners. In 1999, the Learning Support Service was extended to all primary schools (INTO, 2000).

²⁹ Circular 08/99 (DES, 1999) dealing with the allocation of resource teachers, listed the categories of special educational need for which a resource teacher could be appointed along with the corresponding 'resource teacher weekly time allocation'; the categories of SEN are as follows: physical disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, emotional disturbance and/or behavioural problems, severe emotional disturbance, borderline/mild GLD, moderate GLD, severe/profound GLD, autism/autistic spectrum disorders, specific learning disability, specific speech and language disorder, and multiple disabilities (such as SPLD combined with sensory impairments and/or physical disability). The resource teacher weekly time allocation was based on the pupil-teacher ratio assigned to the category of disability, for example, a child with Mild GLD was allocated 2.5 hours per week one-to-one tuition equivalent to 1/11th of the resource teacher's weekly time.

³⁰ In 2008, the number of SNAs employed in primary, post-primary and special schools was 10,232 (Mahon, 2009). Although assigned on the basis of particular needs, to fulfill a care and non-teaching role,

Although intended as a measure to facilitate inclusion, the allocation of resource teaching hours to children on the basis of the individual's assessed SEN was to reinforce the mindset of withdrawal already firmly established in relation to the provision of learning support³¹. Teachers' interpretation of the content of Circular 08/99 supported their use of 'resource teaching hours' for individual tuition on a withdrawal basis, a practice found to be prevalent among resource teachers (Costello, 1999; IATSE, 2000; McCarthy, 2001). Revision of the system of allocating resource teachers in 2002 further reinforced the allocation of teaching hours to individual children (Circular 08/02) (DES, 2002a). Nevertheless, measures towards promoting inclusive practice were evident in the prescription of responsibilities relating to the resource teacher's role provided in the circular³². Specifically, expectations of more inclusive practice in teaching children with SEN were signalled in the following duties: agreement with the class teacher of targets for each child, direct teaching of the children in the mainstream class, team-teaching and, advising class teachers on adapting curriculum, teaching strategies and resources.

Within twelve months, yet another circular was to be issued, Circular 24/03 (DES, 2003), acknowledged by Stevens and O'Moore (2009) as a "milestone, in that Departmental policy was moving towards a whole-school, and therefore more inclusive approach to special educational needs within primary schools" (p. 28). This circular recommended the flexible deployment of resources involving special education support teams and the implementation of a collaborative approach to teaching and a staged approach to intervention, paving the way for subsequent legislation. The circular was

modifications to the contract of employment for SNAs identify 11 care duties supporting the teacher's practices. This represents an attempt to move away from the Velcro situation that had occurred where an SNA was assigned to an individual child and remained with that child throughout the school day (Circular 15/05) (DES, 2005b).

³¹ During the 1990s, 'remedial education' came under critical scrutiny and the practice of withdrawal was seriously questioned; in 2000, Learning Support Guidelines (DES, 2000) were introduced, detailing the roles of all personnel involved in teaching children with learning support needs and promoting collaboration.

³² Based on either the 'blank or blind' (Kamler and Thomson, 2006) definition of the role of resource teacher as "to provide additional teaching support for these children (*assessed as having disabilities*) who have been **fully integrated** into mainstream schools and who need such support" (*emphasis added*), seven duties were listed to encompass the following: assessing and recording child needs and progress; setting targets for each child and agreeing these with class teacher and principal; direct teaching of children in separate room or mainstream classroom; team-teaching, so long as children concerned are deriving benefit from it; advising class teachers in regard to adapting curriculum, teaching strategies and resources; meeting and advising parents, accompanied by class teacher; and, short meetings with other relevant professionals, in the children's interest (DES, 2002a, p. 1).

critical in that it represented the first attempt by the DES to articulate the role of the class teacher in the education of children with SEN. In outlining the involvement of the class teacher in this staged approach to intervention, the circular marked the official starting point in the requirement of class teachers to interpret inclusive policy in their constructions of practice. Until then, although assumed to have primary responsibility for the education of all children in their classes, the role of class teachers in the education of children with SEN in mainstream schools was largely ignored in departmental policy statements. Acknowledgement of this role, four years following the department's first initiative to support educational provision for children with SEN in mainstream schools, indicates a reactive rather than proactive stance to policy implementation.

In response to the dramatic increase in resource applications and consequent increase in human resources indicated above, and coinciding with the introduction of the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004), the system of allocating resource teachers was modified once again by the DES in June 2004. Re-categorising children with SEN as either high incidence needs or low incidence needs, this modified system combined a general weighted allocation of support for children with high incidence SEN, with a specific allocation of support for children with low incidence SEN, where the hours of support are determined on an individual basis in relation to one of eleven categories of disability³³ (Circular 09/04) (DES, 2004). Under the general weighted allocation, commonly referred to as the General Allocation Model (GAM), the number of additional support teachers for each school is determined by gender with a more favourable weighting for boys, socio-economic disadvantage and school size. A key principle of this system is that schools can provide immediate support for children with high incidence SEN while making individual applications for support for those with low incidence SEN. However, the designation of certain categories of SEN as high incidence

³³ The high incidence needs category covers the following: needs relating to achievement at or below the 10th percentile in standardised tests of reading or mathematics; mild speech and language difficulties; mild co-ordination or attention control difficulties; borderline mild GLD; mild GLD; and, a specific learning disability. The category of low incidence needs covers the following: physical disability; hearing impairment; visual impairment; emotional disturbance; severe emotional disturbance; moderate GLD; SPLD; autistic spectrum disorder; speech and language disorder; assessed syndrome in conjunction with a low incidence disability and multiple disabilities (such as SPLD combined with sensory impairments and/or physical disability).

conflicts with the definition of SEN provided in the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004) and this has implications in terms of the child's entitlement to resources and the obligations imposed on the teacher. Furthermore, concerns have been expressed regarding the unequal ratios on the basis of gender for appointment of additional support teachers³⁴ (INTO, 2004). To this end, research by Travers (2010) reveals that despite increased numbers of schools and teachers providing support in mathematics following the introduction of the GAM, pupil access to support has not increased. Based on the finding that children with difficulties in mathematics in designated disadvantaged schools are less likely than their peers in non-designated schools to have their learning needs addressed by the learning support team, Travers (2010, p. 18) voices criticism of the GAM as "a crude mechanism based on prevalence estimates and not on actual need" and calls for a review of the criteria underpinning the model to allow greater flexibility in provision of support. Referring to children with Mild GLD, Stevens and O'Moore (2009) claim that "the largest section of the school-going special needs population just 'dropped off the radar' overnight" (p. 55). Significantly, a decade after implementation of the Education Act 1998 (Government of Ireland, 1998), the combined total of whole time equivalent learning support and resource teachers was 5,417³⁵ (Mahon, 2009) and of this, 3,373 were full-time learning support teachers (Stevens and O'Moore, 2009) suggesting that the number of resource teachers in the system stabilised from 2004.

Whether prompted by need to stem the ever accelerating appointment of resource teachers or commitment to facilitating inclusion, the categories of high and low incidence and the weighted system of the GAM were copper fastened by a further circular issued by the DES (Circular 02/05) (2005a). As such, the traditional approach to determining allocation of resources quantitatively on the basis of assessed individual needs combined with prevalence estimates was firmly endorsed. This circular was significant in providing guidance to primary schools on the deployment and organisation of teaching resources for children with SEN. Promoting inclusion and a whole-school

³⁴ Circular 02/05 (DES, 2005a) revised the ratios outlined in Circular 09/04 (DES, 2004) and currently, in all boys' schools the additional support teacher-pupil ratio is 1:135 in contrast to 1:195 in all girls' schools.

³⁵ A whole time equivalent calculation involves converting the hours worked by resource teachers working part-time to equivalent full-time posts and combining this with the number of posts held full-time by learning support and resource teachers; of the total, 3,373 were full-time learning support teachers (Stevens and O'Moore, 2009).

approach, the DES articulated the necessity to match level of support provided to level of need, to consider the appropriateness of teachers' training, expertise and experience in assigning children to teachers, and to be flexible in the deployment of differential support levels by implementing one-to-one and group teaching, and combining withdrawal and in-class support depending on the nature of children's needs.

The particular relevance of such guidance to the substantive focus of this enquiry is that in constructing inclusive practices, resource and class teachers are expected to plan collaboratively and implement a range of teaching approaches combining in-class and out-of-class teaching. Such planning and teaching potentially constitute a transformation of practice, but also require adequate human resources and specific levels of teacher knowledge and expertise, collaborative skills and designated time. The unprecedented move of forwarding a copy of this circular to each teacher in every primary school in the country may be an indication of the significance the DES attributes to the promotion of inclusive practice in the education of children with SEN. If so, then it is reasonable to expect that such a move is followed by a transformation of the traditional system of allocating resources on the basis of individual needs and prevalence estimates, by opportunities for professional development for teachers, manageable teacher-pupil ratios and designated planning time. Elmore's (2004) notion of the principle of reciprocity as an approach to capacity building is a reminder that for performance demanded, the demand-maker has an equal and reciprocal responsibility to provide the performer with the capacity to produce that performance, if the performer does not already have that capacity. At the time of writing, class size in Ireland remains the second highest in the EU and in contrast to the in-service provided on the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999), there have been no initiatives to provide in-service to all primary teachers on inclusion or to secure dedicated planning time. If the DES is seriously committed to securing inclusive teaching practices that embody flexibility in the deployment of differential support levels by implementing one-to-one and group teaching, and combining withdrawal and in-class support, then it has a responsibility to ensure that the levels of additional human resources for mainstream schools are appropriate and adequately prepared for the task. As a policy implementation measure, the allocation and preparation of human resources contributes

to the context which shapes this enquiry's problem. By systematically documenting teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines for inclusion, a particular contribution of the enquiry is its potential to inform existing policy in relation to human resources. As indicated in Table 1.4, a number of organisations were established in the context of promoting inclusion and analysis of their impact is presented in the following subsection.

Specifically established organisations as a capacity building initiative for inclusion

The establishment of the long awaited National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) as an executive agency of the DES in 1999, was a positive measure in terms of providing services to schools and educational centres approved by the DES. However, as the gatekeepers of resources, in the period following the ministerial announcement of automatic entitlement, the work of NEPS psychologists focused almost exclusively on psychological assessment of SEN. In the context of the rapid expansion of special educational provision in mainstream schools, "the process of tying resources to assessment" resulted in lengthy waiting lists and limits on the number of assessments per school (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007, p. 66)³⁶. However, the introduction of the GAM in 2004 alleviated the pressure of conducting psychological assessments, allowing NEPS to focus on the development of a consultative process of support for schools; this was outlined in a document entitled '*A Continuum of Support: Guidelines for Teachers*' (NEPS, 2007)³⁷, a copy of which was forwarded to all teachers in every primary school in the country. However, the consultative process requires educational

³⁶ In the school year of 2003/2004, 63% of NEPS psychologists' work related to casework as in assessment of individuals referred, 14% related to support and development work, 13% related to meetings at local and regional level, 4% related to meetings at national level and 6% to involvement in CPD (NEPS, 2004). Furthermore, Kenny et al. (2006) reported that only 60% of primary schools and 70% of children had access to NEPS.

³⁷ The continuum of support reflects the staged approach to intervention documented in Circular 24/03 (DES, 2003) and advocates a graduated problem-solving model of assessment and intervention in schools comprising of three distinct school based processes as follows: classroom support which details the class teacher's role in relation to the child with SEN; school support, which promotes collaboration of all personnel involved in education of child with SEN; and, school support plus, involving personnel and agencies beyond the school. Each of these stages assumes increased levels of support from an educational psychologist.

psychologists and at the time of writing, the service of NEPS remains unavailable to all schools (INTO, 2011)³⁸.

Initially, the responsibility for processing resource applications was assigned to the inspectorate. However, members quickly realised the sensitivities involved and lobbied very strenuously through their union to be relieved of this decision-making. Furthermore, paralleling the pressure on psychologists to conduct assessments, the announcement of automatic entitlement led to an unprecedented increase in resource applications to the DES at a volume which proved extremely difficult to process. A review of the department's operations, systems and staffing needs concluded that the Special Education Section of the DES had neither the expertise, nor the resources to meet the demands of the system and endorsed the DES recommendation to establish a national council specifically for special education (Government of Ireland, 2000c). Undoubtedly, this response to 'crisis management' contributed to the fast tracking of the NCSE, which became operational on the first of January 2005 with statutory functions relating to appropriate educational provision for pupils with SEN³⁹. While securing access to resources for children with SEN is a priority, the establishment of a council, the title of which suggests an exclusive focus on special education, seems paradoxical within the context of legislation to promote inclusion.

As a support to teachers and with implications for their practice in terms of specific requirements relating to assessment, collaborative planning, teaching to accommodate individual priority learning needs and accountability, the NCSE published guidelines on the process of IEPs (NCSE, 2006a)⁴⁰. However, as previously indicated, at

³⁸ According to Citizens Information (2010), it was anticipated that provision in Budget 2010 for the recruitment of an additional 28 psychologists, bringing the total to 210, would allow NEPS psychologists to provide direct services to every school in the country; while a recruitment process was initiated, due to "key cutbacks in the education sector" the number has been capped "at current level of 178" (INTO, 2011, p. 5).

³⁹ As a provision of the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004) (Section 20), the special education functions of the DES were transferred to the NCSE in January 2005 and include responsibility for IEPs, resources and supports, policy implementation, research and innovation (DES, 2005c). An implementation plan for the legislation (NCSE, 2006b) was compiled by the NCSE and submitted to the Government in October 2006.

⁴⁰ If the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004) becomes mandatory, teachers will be obliged to contribute to the gathering and sharing of information regarding the student, and to the development of the IEP by assisting in the identification of strengths, priority learning needs, targets and teaching strategies, to contribute to implementing the IEP by working on designated priority learning needs, to monitoring and recording progress and to reviewing the IEP.

the time of writing teachers are not legally obliged to prepare IEPs. The NCSE also has responsibility for the development and management of the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) service. The SENO role described in the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004) was to advise and assist school personnel, sanction resources and to oversee the IEP process in relation to IEPs requested by the NCSE⁴¹. However, in accordance with relevant qualifications and experience specified in the job advertisement, many of those appointed are not qualified teachers⁴². It is difficult to envisage the kind of credibility SENOs who have never taught in a classroom nor implemented the steps of an IEP in practice would have in overseeing this process in relation to IEPs requested by the NCSE or in advising and assisting school personnel on instructional aspects of educational provision. The statement that SENOs “are principally involved in resourcing schools to meet the needs of children with SEN” (NCSE, 2010b, p. 1), may be a more apt definition of the role. Over the past two years, SENOs have conducted an extensive audit of resources available to children with SEN across all primary, post-primary and special schools. While personnel to audit and sanction resources for the education of people with SEN may be necessary, as a capacity building measure, the potential to maximise the facilitator role of the SENO in promoting inclusive practice has been greatly diminished by not securing qualified teachers with experience of teaching children with SEN for this position. Arguably, the establishment of the NCSE and SENO service has been more effective in alleviating workloads of personnel in the DES than in promoting inclusion. A psychological service without the capacity to provide a direct service to every school in the country and the paradoxical functions of the NCSE and SENO service, focusing on special needs more so than inclusion, further contribute to the ambiguous policy context shaping this enquiry’s problem and underscore the significance of an investigation of teachers’

⁴¹ The SENO role is prescribed in Section 26 of the EPSEN Act 2004.

⁴² Of the initial seventy-three SENOs appointed, twenty-five held a teaching qualification while others held degrees in arts or social sciences (M. Grogan, personal communication, May 12, 2007). As the salary scale for the post of SENO was lower than for teaching, there was little incentive for qualified, experienced teachers to apply. At the time of writing, the SENO service has eighty staff with “at least one assigned to each county” (NCSE, 2010b), “to provide a localised service that will facilitate the process of identification, assessment and resource provision” (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007, p. 61); examination of the NCSE website reveals that while at least one may be assigned to each county, many have been assigned a number of counties.

interpretations of inclusive policy in their constructions of practice. Given its function in relation to CPD, the third organisation is discussed in the final subsection which analyses the capacity building impact of CPD financed by the DES.

CPD financed by the DES as a capacity building initiative for inclusion

Regarding initiatives relating to CPD, the approach taken by the DES can at best be described as mercurial. In 2003, the In-Career Development Unit of the DES established the Special Education Support Service (SESS) with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning in relation to the education of those with SEN⁴³. The SESS was ascribed the role of co-ordinating and developing professional development opportunities and support structures for school personnel working with learners with SEN. However, at this time seven third level institutions⁴⁴ were being funded through the Teacher Education Section (TES) of the DES to provide a combination of certificate and diploma courses which special school and additional support teachers were eligible to attend. From 2004, the DES funded a one-year, full-time release course leading to the award of masters in special educational needs, for special school and additional support teachers⁴⁵. In 2006, responding to the introduction of the GAM, the seven third level institutions provided a diploma course for the combined cohort of special school, special class, resource and learning support teachers. Replacing certificate courses in learning support, this diploma course was on a block-release basis of fifteen weeks. In 2007, the DES subsidised an online course leading to the awards of certificate and diploma in special/inclusive education, for mainstream class teachers. This was provided jointly by St Patrick's College and ICEP.

In 2008, in an effort to reduce public spending, these rather short-lived initiatives to build capacity were either cutback or dismantled. Arising from Budget measures of

⁴³ During this same year, the one fulltime course of one year duration and for which substitute cover was provided, leading to the award of Diploma in Special Needs, was reduced to a block-release course of fifteen weeks.

⁴⁴ These included the following: St Angela's College, Sligo; National University of Ireland, Galway; Mary Immaculate College, Limerick; University College Cork; Church of Ireland College, Dublin; University College Dublin; and, St Patrick's College, Dublin.

⁴⁵ This course was provided by the Special Education Department in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra and while the DES committed funding for up to a maximum of sixteen participants per year, the number was nine in the first year rising to sixteen in the final year this course was run.

October 2008, the diploma courses run by third level institutions were reduced from fifteen to eight weeks block-release, the certificate course was reduced from five to three weeks block-release, and DES funding of the masters programme and subsidy for the online programmes were withdrawn⁴⁶. In the meantime, drawing on the expertise of graduates from the CPD courses provided by the third level institutions and particularly those from the masters programme, the services provided by the SESS have expanded. The latest priority of the SESS is 'Accredited Long-Term Professional Development' to provide opportunities for teachers to participate in a variety of programmes ranging from induction to advanced professional development at post-graduate level (SESS, 2010). To provide accredited courses will inevitably involve liaising with the third level institutions where existing courses have been cut, only this time round course participants will self-finance their professional development.

To the extent that the menu of module options relating to the CPD courses identified above is a reliable indicator of their content, the predominant focus is the development of participants' knowledge and understanding of the nature and range of SEN and of methods and adaptations of curriculum and resources for teaching learners with SEN⁴⁷. While the importance of such knowledge and understanding cannot be understated in constructing practices to teach children with SEN, for teachers in mainstream schools it represents only one side of the equation. Investigating integration in Ireland in the early 1990s, Lynch (1995) reports that "classroom teachers do not seem to know how to provide adequately for individual learning differences nor how to provide a flexible classroom structure and organisation that would accommodate all pupils with varying abilities and needs" (p. 70). Over a decade later, based on a small-scale investigation, Kenny et al. (2006) report that while teachers are supportive of inclusion, they regard curriculum inclusion as deeply problematic due to their lack of

⁴⁶ These decisions came into effect at the beginning of the academic year 2009/2010, coinciding with the closure of 128 special classes for children with Mild GLD.

⁴⁷ By way of illustration, selecting the 'Certificate/Diploma in Special/Inclusive Education' provided jointly by St Patrick's College and ICEP as it has a reference to inclusion in its title, there are six modules listed as follows: Inclusion; Understanding Autism: Effective Management and Teaching Strategies; Dyslexia; Mild General Learning Disabilities; Challenging Behaviour; and, Dissertation (Tutor Information Handbook 2010-2011). The module on Inclusion covers history of special education and legislation for inclusion from national and international perspectives, cooperative learning and peer tutoring.

experience and knowledge of how to differentiate the curriculum to meet diverse needs. Knowledge and understanding of the practices of teaching children with SEN within the context of teaching all children also needs to be addressed by CPD, to balance that equation.

SUMMARY

Examination of the changes and shifts in special education policy over the past two decades reveals a policy transformation from segregation to inclusion of learners with SEN, with attendant expectations for teachers' practices. In the context of legislation and policy documents promoting inclusion, at a rapid pace, the fabric of mainstream primary classrooms was to alter radically as increasing levels of heterogeneity and diversity among learners were represented in each class. While capacity building measures were implemented, decision-making regarding these measures appears to have been influenced by reactionary coping mechanisms to manage and control the swift expansion of educational provision for children with SEN in the mainstream setting. The outcome of such measures is an infrastructure to support special educational provision in mainstream schools, which is somewhat at odds with a policy that presumes inclusion, and policy documentation that demands transformation of teachers' practices. When change with inappropriate support is demanded, it is much less likely that pedagogical practice alters radically other than among a small number of highly motivated expert teachers. Hence the necessity for an investigation of teachers' constructions of inclusive practice which considers their interpretation of inclusive policy, how this translates into action, and how the actions influence the learning experiences of the children, particularly those with SEN.

Having considered the policies which shape teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice, in the context of this enquiry's research question, it is now necessary to examine how conceptualisations of special needs have dominated perceptions of people with SEN, and perspectives of their educational provision from segregation to inclusion. Conceptualisations of special needs with particular reference to implications for practice form the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, LEGISLATION AND PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

Aligned with interpretation of policies promoting inclusion, of equal relevance to this enquiry's substantive focus of resource and class teachers' inclusive practice are teachers' interpretations of the ideology and principles of inclusion. Interpretations of inclusion are invariably, if not intimately, connected with conceptualisations of special needs and their implications for the educational experiences of learners with SEN and teachers' practices. Charting the history of the education of people with SEN from segregation to inclusion indicates that conceptualisations of special needs have changed over time, directly influencing and being influenced by changing policies and practices in schools within the wider socio-cultural and economic context. Although varying conceptualisations have contributed to reform, their legacies are traceable in legislation and in current policies and practices of inclusion. The focus of this chapter is conceptualisations of special needs, with an evaluation of the extent to which, in Ireland and else where, these conceptualisations have shaped and influenced policy and legislation, with potential also to shape and circumscribe practice. Structured in three sections, the first section of this chapter presents an interrogation of the conceptualisations of special needs and to a lesser extent an evaluation of their implications for policy, legislation and practice. The multiple definitions of inclusion and consequent challenges of interpreting inclusive ideology in practice are analysed in the second section. Evaluation of the integral-distinctive conceptualisation of SEN and the attendant dilemmatic perspective regarding inclusion forms the substance of the final section.

CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, LEGISLATION AND PRACTICE

The policies of educating people with SEN from exclusion to segregation towards inclusion documented in Chapter One have been influenced by

conceptualisations of disability, special needs and educability. Exclusion was based on the perception that people with disabilities were uneducable. While residential institutions and special schools were established as the norm for educating those who had sensory and physical impairments, people with significant developmental disabilities were generally denied educational services and “resided primarily in the back wards of large state institutions” (Karagiannis et al., 1996, p. 19)¹. In Ireland, the pervasive culture of institutionalisation relating to disability was initiated by the building of District Lunatic Asylums throughout the 1830s as a response to the growing problem of abandonment by their families of people with psychiatric illness and general learning disabilities (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007). It was further promoted by the construction of 130 workhouses under the Poor Relief Act 1838 to make provision for the containment of idiots, imbeciles and lunatics (Inglis, 1987). Under the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913, local authorities in the UK were legally required to certify all mental defectives and set up special certified institutions. Attitudes arising from cultural views of ‘deformity’ as an illness to be cured and as punishment for sin² along with a widespread public perception, supported by the rise of the eugenics movement, that people with disabilities had criminal tendencies and were a menace and economic burden to civilisation because of their genetic makeup³, led to their exclusion. The

¹ Prior to the 1960s, the ‘handicapped’ were considered to be distinct from the rest of the population and “ordinary schooling was just not considered to be an option for them” (Frederickson and Cline, 2002, p. 68). In Britain, Hegarty (1993) notes that children with severe learning difficulties, then termed ‘educationally subnormal (severe)’ did not attend schools run by LEAs but were provided with ‘training centres’ run by local health departments. In Ireland, health care was provided and while education was provided on a pilot basis from 1986 and approximately one tenth of the population of children with SPLD were receiving education by 1993, educational provision for all was not mandated until 1998.

² Safford and Safford (1996, pp. 12-13) claim that the doctrine of original sin had profound implications for children with disabilities and their parents; no longer considered as holy innocents, these children represented punishment for parental sin or the workings of Satan. In the Irish context, the ‘changeling’ features in Irish folktales and refers to a typical child being stolen away in the darkness of night by the fairies only to be replaced by a child with some kind of disability; this is reminiscent of how disability was explained and understood and is a recurrent theme from a pre-Christian attribution of disease to supernatural forces of the spirit world.

³ The underlying assumption that people with disabilities were not only the cause of social evils but an economic burden is evident in the following extract from a newspaper article published prior to the introduction of the Mental Deficiency Act (1913) which states:

The feeble-minded are a parasitic, predatory class, never capable of self-support or of managing their own affairs ... We have only begun to understand the importance of feeble-mindedness as a factor in the causation of pauperism, crime and other social problems. (Fido and Potts, 1997, cited in Dykens, Hodapp and Finucane, 2000)

problems that schooling these people would have entailed, contributed initially to exclusion from educational services of any type and later to inclusion in segregated educational provision.

Mapping the routes to inclusion, Clough (2000) identifies five perspectives which, he argues, shape current understanding and practices: the psycho-medical model, the social model, curricular approaches, school effectiveness and the disability studies critique. Clough (2000, p. 8) highlights that these perspectives “are never wholly exclusive of each other, nor are they strictly chronologically sequential” but are intended to demonstrate the heterogeneity of inclusive ideology. In his presentation of curricular approaches, Clough (2000, p. 20) accounts for two “radically different” strands. The first relates to the use of behavioural objectives arising from psychological constructs; the second, owing its development to social movements and relating to a form of curriculum for all, is aimed at realising an ideological commitment to comprehensive schooling. For the purpose of this critique, in the context of historical developments in educational provision for learners with SEN, and with regard to the significance of the pedagogical distinctions implied by these radically different strands, the perspective of curricular approaches is revised to acknowledge the behavioural analytic model. This gives rise to six perspectives which shape understanding of special needs and practices. Based on a number of sources from the literature, Table 2.1 presents an overview of perspectives shaping conceptualisations of special needs with a summary of attendant implications for policy, legislation and practice. Interrogation of these perspectives is presented in two subsections which follow, the first focusing on the psycho-medical conceptualisation of SEN.

Table 2.1: Perspectives shaping conceptualisations of special needs and the attendant implications for aspects of policy, legislation and practice

	Psycho-medical model	Social model	Behavioural analytic model	Curricular approaches	Effective schooling	Disability studies critique
Influencing discipline	Medicine; psychology	Sociology; political critique	Behavioural psychology	Curriculum studies; action research; sociology	Action research; naturalistic and collaborative enquiry	Sociology; disability studies
Key concepts	Within-child deficits; focus on what child cannot do	Rights-based; role of institutions in reproducing inequality and disadvantage	Rights-based; conditions and consequences of learning particular tasks	Rights-based; equality of opportunity to address disadvantage and marginalisation; comprehensive schooling	Rights-based; vision of inclusive schooling synonymous with effective schooling	Rights-based; relating social inclusion to inclusion in employment, health, housing and education
Source of SEN/ difficulty	Individual pathology	Social construction of SEN; inequalities are outcomes of social processes	Related to instructional conditions; analysed in individual terms based on child's learning performance	Difficulties not exclusively within the learner - related to instructional conditions and curriculum	Schools – their organisational structures and curricula	Culturally produced and socially constructed; power structures in society create political, economic and professional barriers
Focus of intervention	Individual treatment; remedial education	Remove all forms of oppression; address inequalities	Performances in particular contexts	Espousal of a comprehensive education system promoting equality of opportunity and curricula for all	Structural solutions - curriculum, pedagogy and institutional culture	Connections between educational and social policies and disabilities
Pedagogical implications	Remediation of underlying deficits in segregated settings	Deconstruct assumptions underlying psycho-medical model	Identification of individual goals and objectives, driving a task-analysis programme involving an 'assess, teach, assess' cycle	Active role of learner in constructing knowledge; dismantling traditional subject boundaries; challenging ability grouping	Transformation and restructuring of schools; flexible, responsive systems creating conditions to facilitate participation of all	Collective empowerment of people with disability; moral commitment to inclusion of all children in a single education system
Legislation and policy influences in Ireland	Definition of SEN in Education Act 1998; segregated education; categories relating to high and low incidence SEN	Locational integration of special classes for children with Mild GLD	Principles of behavioural objectives model incorporated in IEP	Curricular adaptation initiatives within framework of common curriculum and accreditation	Inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream; DES directives to provide additional support in-class;	Inclusion; DES directives and initiatives attempting to transform existing school capacity, addressing socio-economic, language and ability barriers
Legacy evident in current practice in Ireland	Assessment and diagnosis of SEN and of individual priority learning needs for IEP	Inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream; recognition of parental choice and views	Objectives teaching approaches in special education; individual teaching	Differentiation arising from efforts to secure equality of access to, and participation in, curriculum	Inclusion; cooperative learning and peer tutoring; co-teaching	Inclusion; involvement of children with SEN in decisions relating to their learning

Source: Adapted from Brennan (1985), Clough (2000), Corbett and Norwich (2005), Guidelines on IEPs (NCSE, 2006a), Education Act 1998 (Government of Ireland, 1998), Oliver (1990) and Tomlinson (1982)

The psycho-medical conceptualisation of SEN

The psycho-medical conceptualisation of SEN dominated policy and practice in special educational provision, drawing heavily on medical, and later psychological enquiry. In this context, the first assessments of SEN were clinic based, typically involving a doctor or psychiatrist and increasingly in the period following the Second World War, an educational psychologist. Assessments were conducted in one session, for the purpose of identifying deficits within the child and determining whether a transfer to a special school of a particular disability category was required. The option of placement in the relevant special school or special class supported the perception that teachers working in special settings had special preparation and special capacity for the work. By corollary, it was regarded as inappropriate to expect teachers lacking specialised training and inclination to participate in educating students with SEN.

Within-child deficit, categorisation and specialisation, key assumptions of the psycho-medical model, prevail in current legislation, policy and practices in Ireland. The strong psycho-medical language of the five-part definition of disability provided in the Education Act 1998 (Government of Ireland, 1998)⁴ clearly situates disability, causes and manifestations within the individual, subscribing to a child-deficiency model. References to illness and disease, malfunction, malformation and disfigurement are a throw back to traditional views emanating from cultural beliefs of difference as deformity to be cured. Key terms such as the presence of organisms in the body and partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions are a legacy of the medical model, construing disability as a problem in body or in mind to be contained and treated with medical procedures. References to a condition affecting the person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions and judgement are consistent with the psychological emphasis of this model,

⁴ The Education Act 1998 presents a five-part definition of disability as follows:

- (a) the total or partial loss of a person's bodily or mental functions, including loss of a part of the person's body, or
- (b) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness, or
- (c) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body, or
- (d) a condition or malfunction that results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or
- (e) a condition, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour (p. 6).

framing disability as a cognitive and information processing problem to be addressed with specific treatment.

Although described as contrasting “markedly” (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007, p. 59) with the definition provided in the Education Act 1998, the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004) presents the following legal definition:

“special educational needs” means, in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition and cognate words shall be construed accordingly. (p. 6)

A distinction made by Terzi (2005, p. 446) between “impairment” seen as a physiological disorder or limitation and “the related disability” in terms of restriction of activity, is exemplified in this definition where restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in education is attributed to an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning condition; any relationship between the impairment and the design of educational arrangements is completely overlooked. Despite abandonment of the term disability in favour of special educational need and tamer psycho-medical language, in relation to the terminology used, the view expressed by McDonnell (2003, p. 262) applies: “the focus of attention remains fixed on the particularities of the individual’s body or mind rather than on the marginalising and exclusionary practices and structures of society.”

Both definitions, the second provided in 2004, are particularly disappointing in their assumption that the identification of SEN can be made exclusively within the child and without any consideration of the context of instruction. Given the level of international knowledge regarding identification of SEN in the late 1990s⁵, to ignore any connection between the learning environment, the nature and presentation of a given task

⁵ As far back as 1989 in the UK, a document titled *Assessments and Statements of Special Educational Needs: Procedures within the Education, Health and Social Services* (Department of Education and Science, 1989, paragraph 17) stated:

The extent to which a learning difficulty hinders a child’s development does not depend solely on the nature and severity of that difficulty. Other significant factors include the personal resources and attributes of the child as well as the help and support provided at home and the provision made by the school and the LEA and other statutory and voluntary agencies. A child’s special educational needs are thus related to both abilities and disabilities, and to the nature and extent of the interaction of these with his or her environment.

and the child's performance of it, is at odds with international trends. Considering this enquiry's focus, if teachers were to be guided by definitions of SEN provided in legislation, then one would expect to find constructions of practice that were individually focused, reactive and intervention based, aimed at addressing restrictions or deficits. Despite being part of legislation that actually uses the term "inclusive education" (Government of Ireland, 2004, p. 7), there is little in the definition of SEN to encourage teachers to consider organisation of the learning environment or curriculum and pedagogical approaches in their constructions of practice.

Regarding the prevalence of categorisation and specialisation, the remaining key assumptions of the psycho-medical model, children with SEN continue to be assessed on the basis of categories of impairment. The practice is justified as "attempts to understand learners' individual characteristics" (McKay, 2002, p. 160), and regarded as critical to determining allocation and provision of appropriate specialised educational support. As discussed in Chapter One, children with SEN in Ireland are categorised as either high or low incidence needs. This is for the purpose of providing a general weighted allocation of support for children with high incidence SEN and a specific allocation of support for children with low incidence SEN, where the hours of support are determined on an individual basis in relation to one of eleven categories of disability. Critics of the category perspective have argued that once the process of categorising the child is complete, "it becomes easier to transform the responsibility to 'specialists' trained to deal with 'problems' exhibited by the child" (Emanuelsson, 2001, p. 135), and as such, categorisation perpetuates segregation since only those with 'special skills' can teach children with SEN. However, categorisation has potential in terms of informing adaptations or modifications to curricula and teaching methods. Regarding teachers' constructions of practice, knowledge of impairments associated with particular categories is critical to how the impairments are addressed and accommodated in educational arrangements which promote participation in learning. By way of illustration, teaching literacy to children with visual impairment not alone requires the teaching of phonological skills, blending, principles of sequence and story and vocabulary commonly taught to all children, but also teaching use of the Braille code instead of the print code or teaching use of low vision aids, to address and accommodate the particular level of visual

impairment. As such, apart from general pedagogical knowledge, whether classified as specific or specialist, knowledge of Braille and low vision aids distinctive to the category of visual impairment is also necessary.

Although accepting that specific or specialist knowledge is necessary to meet the educational needs of some learners, specialist measures are integral to what Norwich (2002) refers to as the “separatist position” where “what is ‘special’ is additional or different from mainstream education” (p. 483). This assumption has promoted “a specialisation with separate institutions, subsystems and labelled professionals, training and associations” (Norwich, 2002, p. 483). In Ireland, the continued existence of special education departments within Universities, the Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE), and 129 special schools segregated by disability category, are manifestations of the separatist position. While in the past, specialisation was used as justification for policies and practices of segregation, more recently, it is used to justify forms of educational provision in mainstream settings which involve regular withdrawal from the mainstream class or placement in a special class or unit attached to a mainstream school; it is also used to justify the IEP as additional to, and different from, the differentiated mainstream class curriculum (NCSE, 2006a). If teachers’ practices are to promote inclusion and provide appropriate education for all students, it seems that what is necessarily specialised has to be balanced with maintaining connectedness to curricula and pedagogy designed to meet needs common to all. However, changing beliefs and attitudes arising from categorisation and specialisation established over decades represents a major challenge and is not just a matter of policy.

From the 1970s, the psycho-medical model was increasingly criticised for emphasising defective aspects of the individual while overlooking the relevance of school factors, curriculum presentation, methods of teaching and the organisation of the general education environment, and for ignoring any interpretation of disability within the context of societal attitudes and responses (Tomlinson, 1982; Oliver, 1990; Sailor, Gerry and Wilson, 1991; Ainscow, 1994, 1999; Skrtic, 1995; Oliver, 1996; Stainback, Stainback and Ayres, 1996; Skidmore, 1999; Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000; Clough, 2000; Symeondidou, 2002; McDonnell, 2003; Terzi, 2005). There was criticism of the “personal tragedy” emphasis supported by this model which invoked a “well-

intentioned pity or charity” (Alton-Lee, Rietveld, Klenner, Dalton, Diggins and Town, 2000, p. 182). This led teachers to respond to the individual with disabilities in a compensatory rather than educational way. Finally, there was criticism of the discourse of expertism rooted in the psycho-medical model (Tomlinson, 1982; Troyna and Vincent, 1996; McDonnell, 2003; Vlachou, 2004). It was argued that privileged roles were assigned to professionals, medical, psychological and educational experts involved in development of policy and practice relating to special needs education. By virtue of their expertise, they were the exclusive authority on what was in “the best interests” of people with disabilities and they conducted their responsibilities in the context of “benevolent care” (McDonnell, 2003, p. 266) while those with disabilities were regarded as passive recipients of services (Barton and Tomlinson, 1984; Clough and Barton, 1998) and denied access to the particular “decision-making processes for policies” that affected their lives (Vlachou, 2004, p. 6). As McDonnell (2003) asserts, the presumption of authority and care along with the practice of excluding the voices of people with disabilities gives rise to institutionalised paternalism.

Paralleling criticism of the psycho-medical model and as indicated in Table 2.1, a series of rights-based perspectives emerged. Interrogation of these rights-based conceptualisations of SEN with evaluation of their implications for policy and practice is the focus of the following subsection.

Rights-based conceptualisations of SEN

Exposing inadequacies of the psycho-medical model and reflecting the values based philosophy of human and civil rights movements active from the 1960s, sociological critique supports a rights-based conceptualisation of SEN. This constitutes a conceptual shift from within-child deficits to a focus on social processes, organisational structures and the flexibility of school systems, educational programmes, settings and criteria to meet the diversity of students (UNESCO, 1994; Stainback et al., 1996; Knight, 1999). Initially, the ‘social’ charge was led by Tomlinson’s (1982) pioneering work on the sociology of special education which examined structures and cultures of difference and questioned the crucial role of institutions in reproducing inequality and disadvantage. Exposing the advantages of a special education system for medical and psychological

professionals with a “vested interest” in maintaining their own power (Tomlinson, 1982, p. 66), the need to employ sociological analysis in addressing social and political questions about power relations among groups was highlighted. This sociological approach challenged the social construction of SEN. Similarly, but arguing from a disability perspective, the sociological framework was also invoked to demonstrate that disability and its categories could only be understood as being “culturally produced and socially structured” (Oliver, 1990, p. 22). Oliver (1990) was particularly prominent in claiming that disability did not exist outside the social structures in which it was located or independently of the meanings given to it. He was critical of the social production of disability “first as a medical problem requiring medical intervention and second as a social problem requiring social provision”, and rejected any attempt to “produce disability as social oppression” (Oliver, 1992, p. 101). However, the extent to which disability is a social construction is debatable. In this regard, returning to the example of visual impairment, if the teaching provided for a child with visual impairment includes instruction in the use of Braille or use of low vision aids, then the visual impairment is unlikely to result in a barrier to learning but remains nonetheless, an impairment. As such, disability is relational to the impairment and to the way education is provided and it is necessary to consider this relational aspect if potential barriers to participation in learning are to be addressed in teachers’ constructions of practice.

Coinciding with the shift from deficit-focused approaches to SEN and with increasing acceptance of the rights of children with disabilities to be in mainstream schools, was a significant expansion in the training and deployment of educational psychologists in the UK and USA throughout the 1970s. Their contribution to conceptualisation of SEN was the behavioural analytic model which focused on performances in particular contexts and attributed difficulties to the conditions and consequences of learning particular tasks. Regarding the pedagogical implications of this model, teaching practices were concerned with individual children and were based on diagnostic teaching which involved an ‘assess, teach, assess’ cycle and incorporated behavioural objectives. One of a number of such objectives’ approaches was devised by

Ainscow and Tweddle (1979, p. 25)⁶ who recommended analysis of the “skill to be learnt into carefully graded steps” and argued that the teaching programme was then “a matter of leading the child with learning difficulties through the predetermined steps, allowing time for each stage to be thoroughly mastered before proceeding to the next.” The objectives approach was positively regarded for being logical, systematic and explicit, and was identified as part of the prerequisite skills and knowledge for special educators in a prospectus titled *Teacher Training for the 21st Century* written by Mittler (1981), which listed proficiency in the specification of behavioural objectives, goal setting, task analysis and programme writing. Corbett and Norwich (2005, p. 20) “conjecture that ... performance planning and outcome principles are adopted when social and political conditions call for greater control of educational outcomes”⁷. Based on their logic, Bloom’s taxonomy appears to have taken root in special education within a political and social context which sought to secure improved rights for people with disabilities, lending credibility to special education which until then had remained relatively marginalised.

The behavioural objectives approach has remained very influential in special education. Currently, the principles of this approach are incorporated in guidance from governments in the UK and USA. They are also prevalent in guidance from the NCSE in Ireland (NCSE, 2006a) relating to the preparation, implementation and review of the IEP, as reflected in the following steps: assessment of the individual’s ‘current levels of performance’ to determine priority learning needs and inform identification of learning targets and selection of teaching methods and resources most likely to lead to their achievement; teaching to the plan; and, monitoring learning progress with the collection of performance data which is used to inform subsequent teaching. Regarding teachers’ constructions of practice, post-graduate diploma and certificate courses in special education provided by at least one third level institution in Ireland prepare and require

⁶ Similar approaches are evident in the Special Needs Action Plan (Ainscow and Muncey, 1981), *Curriculum for Special Needs* written by Wilfred Brennan (1985) and in programmes like DataPac (1984) published by the University of Birmingham.

⁷ Bloom’s taxonomy influenced educational practice in the USA during the 1960s in response to political calls to raise standards following the launch of Sputnik into outer space by the USSR; more recently, regulations regarding target setting for schools have been introduced nationally and internationally, in response to pressure from political and business sources to be accountable and raise standards.

their participants to implement models of diagnostic teaching based on the objectives approach.

As insights generated by sociological analyses of schools and society were interpreted by educators, perspectives relating to curricula for all and school effectiveness came to the fore. Arguing that curriculum stood between mainstream and segregated special provision, Clough (1989, p. 337) called for teaching and research on learning difficulties to “move towards a curricular conception of special needs” set within a theoretical framework that considered the complex interrelationships between the aims and organisational structures of the institution and the needs, motivations and intentions of the individuals involved. Although the argument was based on advocacy rather than evidence, it nonetheless provided a curricular lens through which to conceptualise SEN, the influence of which is currently evident in teachers’ practices of differentiation and in the range of programmes available to students with SEN which sit within the framework of a common curriculum and accreditation process⁸. Further informing conceptualisations of SEN were those who concentrated on policy and practice aimed at improving the inclusive capabilities of schools in the UK throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Dyson (2001) regarded the problem of children’s failure as a structural one and therefore sought structural solutions in terms of organisation and policy. Ainscow (1993), one time champion of the behavioural objectives approach, called for replacement of the “traditional search for specialist techniques” used “to ameliorate the learning difficulties of individual pupils” with a focus on “finding ways of creating the conditions that will facilitate and support the learning of *all* children” (p. 205) (*italics in original*)⁹. The policy and practice implications of this conceptualisation of SEN are intimately linked with the transformation and restructuring of schools to support inclusion and sustain

⁸ In Ireland, programmes such as those accredited by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC), the Junior Certificate School Programme (JSCP) and the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) provide students with SEN with a range of opportunities to pursue differentiated curricula and achieve accreditation.

⁹ Other contributors to the school effectiveness model were Daniels (1993, 1996a, 1996b), who was influenced by Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory and highlighted how social and cultural circumstances influence individual functioning. In the USA, Biklen (1985) coined the term ‘unconditional mainstreaming’, a process that involved teachers, administrators, parents and school community fashioning schools to serve the range of students. In Australia, Lingard was highlighting “the need to ensure teacher ownership and development of projects in disadvantaged schools aimed at whole-school change and more inclusive relationships with students and communities” (1998, p. 12).

diversity. The influence of the school effectiveness model is evident in the guidance to primary schools on the deployment and organisation of teaching resources for children with SEN provided by the DES in Ireland (Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05) (2003; 2004; 2005a). As discussed in Chapter One, calls articulated by the DES for incorporation of a whole-school approach and flexibility in the deployment of differential support levels by implementing one-to-one and group teaching, and combining withdrawal and in-class support depending on the nature of children's needs imply transformation and restructuring of the organisation.

The many conceptualisations of SEN are particularly significant for this enquiry as they give rise to multiple and varied implications for teachers' practice and thereby contribute to the complexities of including children with SEN in mainstream. To the extent that assumptions of the psycho-medical model have potential to influence understanding of SEN in relation to distinctive categories of need and so determine accommodations to the impairment to enable learning, this model has relevance for teachers' constructions of practice to teach learners with SEN. However, as to informing practices of inclusion, teachers also have to look to perspectives that consider the social and organisational aspects of teaching and learning.

The rights-based conceptualisations of SEN documented above imply inclusion. However, inclusion has proven contentious to define while the challenges associated with interpreting inclusive ideology in practice have given rise to a rhetoric-reality gap. The multiple definitions of inclusion giving rise to challenges in interpreting inclusive ideology in practice are analysed in the following section.

DEFINITIONS OF INCLUSION AND THE INTERPRETATION OF INCLUSIVE IDEOLOGY IN PRACTICE

In a legislative and policy context that rejects discrimination and accepts diversity as "a social fact" to be celebrated and promoted (Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton, 2000, p. 34), mainstream schools are challenged to be inclusive. Regarding practice, inclusion has particular implications for the organisational structures within schools, the curriculum and pedagogical approaches constructed and the experience and expertise of those responsible for providing education. Despite much agreement on rights to inclusive

education and on valuing diversity, there is divergence in definitions of inclusion with implications for experience of inclusive education and practices of inclusion.

Some definitions are placement focused, emphasising a requirement to place children with SEN in age and grade appropriate classes in their local schools, where the percentage of children with SEN does not exceed the district wide proportion and ability groups are mixed, where there is strong site based management and co-ordination of resources and support teams, and where co-operative learning and peer instruction are implemented (Sailor et al., 1991; Jorgensen, 1996; Lipsky and Gartner, 1996; Schaffner and Buswell, 1996; Thousand, Villa, Paolucci-Whitcomb and Nevin, 1996; Holdsworth, 2005). Some definitions focus on classroom practice, emphasising a requirement to make appropriate learning individually accessible to pupils with SEN in their mainstream classes by adapting curricula, modifying instructional approaches and taking the specialised 'service or support' to the pupil (Stainback et al., 1996; Ryndak, Jackson and Billingsley, 2000; Friend and Bursuck, 2006). This requirement reflects functional integration specified in the Warnock Report (Department of Education and Science, 1978), which implies joint participation in education programmes carefully designed to ensure that all children benefit. Some definitions focus on organisational arrangements and school improvement, perceiving schools as diverse problem solving organisations with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students (Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1995a; Rouse and Florian, 1996; Ballard, 1997). Finally, certain definitions emphasise a process view of inclusion. According to Sebba and Sachdev (1997), inclusion is "the process by which the school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organisation and provision and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity" (p. 9). Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton (2000) argue that "in struggling for the implementation of inclusive practice we are engaging in a political process of transformation" (p. 11). Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan and Shaw (2000) regard inclusion as "an unending *process* of increasing learning and participation for all students" (p. 3) (italics in original), where participation means learning alongside others and collaborating with them in shared learning experiences.

Apart from divergence in definitions, not all who promote inclusion agree with curriculum adaptation and support (Clark, Dyson, Millward and Robson, 1999; Ainscow, Howes, Farrell and Frankham, 2003; Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2004; Slee, 2007). Critical of the assumption that certain students who do not respond to existing arrangements require different teaching methods and materials, there is concern that in the search for effective responses to those students “vast opportunities for developments in practice may be overlooked” (Ainscow et al., 2004, p. 133). There is concern also that effective responses have resulted in special education reproducing itself in mainstream settings, “colonising rather than transforming” the mainstream (Dyson, 1997, p. 154). Rather, perspectives with a “social inclusion” emphasis are promoted (Dyson, 2001, p. 27), arguing for the requirement to address “the causes of marginalisation of certain students in school communities” and find ways to engage those students in learning activities (Ainscow et al., 2004, p. 126). The focus broadens to the accommodation of all vulnerable students and not just those with SEN, subscribing to a process view of inclusion. This social inclusion perspective provides the rationale for the *Index for Inclusion*, school development material specifically designed to improve the inclusive capability of schools in England (Booth et al., 2000), and adapted for the same purpose in other European countries and in Western Australia (Forlin, 2004).

The requirement promoted by ‘placement’ focused definitions of inclusion, that supports and services are taken to the student, is somewhat problematic. So too is the rejection by ‘process’ focused definitions of the need to differentiate curricula, teaching methods and materials. The former gives primacy to the location of the mainstream class in any arrangements of educational provision while the later gives primacy to the sameness of provision, both of which may compromise the pursuit of the core values of education. Furthermore, investigations of inclusion reveal that transformation of inclusive ideology into practice is complex and dilemmatic and appears to present a major challenge in many countries (Clark, Dyson, Millward and Skidmore, 1997; Clark et al., 1999; Croll and Moses, 2000; Dyson and Millward, 2000), supporting a theoretical-practice gap in efforts to promote inclusion (given their dilemmatic perspective, these investigations are elaborated in Chapter Three, as part of the interpretative lens of this enquiry). Acknowledging the fundamental conflict of principles, Clark et al. (1997, p.

101) argue that “some trade-off has to be made between the principle of inclusion and the principle of ‘appropriate’ education.” In this regard, whether inclusion is one of a number of important principles that should suffuse the school’s ethos or “central to good practice” (Allan, 2003, p. 175), primacy has to be given to the school’s core mission of providing “high-quality, appropriate education” (Hegarty, 2001, p. 248). Furthermore, as discussed in the previous section, the assumption that disabilities in education are socially constructed overlooks individual factors related to impairment, which have to be recognised and accommodated in the teaching provided “in order to avoid educational barriers” (Terzi, 2005, p. 448), and to prevent the impairment from becoming a disability¹⁰. Maintaining that current educational provision is hindered by a “contradiction between the intention to treat all learners the same and that of responding adequately to the needs arising from their individual differences”, Warnock’s call for substantial reconsideration of the assumptions of such an education framework is timely (2005, p. 11).

Although varying in emphases and leading to ambiguities in interpretation, all definitions support an ideology of inclusion which implies some form of transformation, restructuring and reorientation of schools’ existing practices. Regarding the Irish context, the type of transformation of schools’ practices envisaged by those providing guidance to teachers is difficult to discern. Given the emphasis on special education and related support services as a content area in the IEP, constructions of practice adhering to the guidelines on IEPs produced by the NCSE (2006a) could lead to a reproduction of special education in mainstream settings. As discussed in Chapter One, restructuring was envisaged by those who issued guidelines from the DES calling for reorganisation of the additional support teacher’s timetable and caseload to allow the level of support provided match the level of need¹¹, and for flexibility in deployment of differential support levels

¹⁰ As indicated in the example relating to visual impairment provided in the previous section, where a child with visual impairment is taught the use of Braille or the use of low vision aids then the impairment is prevented from disabling the child’s learning; where a child with an expressive language impairment is taught the use of the Picture Exchange Communications System (PECS) to communicate intent, to initiate, respond and turn-take, the impairment is prevented from disabling the child’s learning. The distinction between impairment and disability is maintained to the extent that appropriately selected accommodations to address the impairment will enable learning and therefore reduce the likelihood of the impairment disabling learning.

¹¹ Three examples illustrating how this reorganisation of timetable and caseload could be achieved were provided (Circular 02/05) (DES, 2005a, pp. 25-42).

by implementing one-to-one and group teaching, combining withdrawal and in-class support depending on the nature of pupils' needs; advocating collaboration of special needs support teams also presumes restructuring and transformation (Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05) (DES, 2003; 2004; 2005a). However, as also argued, these initiatives represent a challenge to existing practices where resource teachers typically provide special education on a withdrawal basis and with minimal consultation with class teachers. In the context of inappropriate capacity building measures, teachers are more likely to implement limited additional arrangements for individuals with SEN. Such arrangements undoubtedly fall short of the transformation, restructuring and reorientation that are integral to the processes engaged in by schools if their teachers' inclusive practices are to increase the participation in learning of all children. Hence, yet again, the necessity for an investigation of teachers' constructions of inclusive practice which considers their interpretation of definitions and ideology of inclusion, how this translates into action and how the actions influence the learning experiences of the children, particularly those with SEN.

The many conceptualisations of special needs and their implications for practice, and the varied definitions of inclusion giving rise to multiple interpretations in action, support the complexity of inclusive education in ideology, theory and practice. Acknowledging the dilemmatic potential of inclusion, the integral-distinctive conceptualisation of SEN attempts to reconcile these diverse perspectives. This forms the focus of the final section.

THE INTEGRAL-DISTINCTIVE CONCEPTUALISATION OF SEN AND THE ATTENDANT DILEMMATIC PERSPECTIVE REGARDING INCLUSION

Analysis of the conceptualisations of special needs presented in the first section of this chapter supports the conclusion that in so far as assumptions of the psycho-medical model have potential to influence understanding of SEN in relation to distinctive categories of need and so determine accommodations to the impairment to enable learning, this model has relevance for teachers' constructions of practice to teach learners with SEN. However, as to informing practices of inclusion, the social and organisational aspects of teaching and learning also have to be considered by teachers. This conclusion

underscores both the relevance and theoretical limitations of each conceptualisation in relation to the practice of teaching children with SEN in inclusive settings. As such, neither the educational interests of children with SEN, nor developments in inclusive education, are served by a focus on whether education is about changing the child to suit the curriculum or about adapting curriculum, pedagogy and organisational structures to the needs of the child.

Recognising the false dichotomy associated with setting one conceptualisation against another, Norwich argues for “ideological impurity” and proposes “an integral-distinctive position” (2002, p. 483). This involves conceptualising the inclusive and specialised or ‘integral-distinctive’ aspects of special education as a ‘connective specialisation’ (Norwich, 1994, 1996, 2002). Borrowing the term from Young (cited in Norwich, 2002, p. 484), connective specialisation refers to “the inter-dependence of different specialisms and the sharing of a relationship to the whole.” Conceptually, connective specialisation “ties together the contrary tendencies towards specialisation and integration” and explains the field of educating people with SEN as “a field with inherent connections to education overall, but also a respected distinctiveness” (Norwich, 2002, p. 484). By recognising what is necessarily specialised while maintaining connectedness to education generally, it calls for the balancing of appropriate educational provision with inclusive principles. Connective specialisation has particular relevance to the education of children in mainstream “who exist simultaneously in regular and special education” (Lieberman, 1996, p. 20). Specifically, it promotes the balancing of specific instructional methods necessary for some children with more general instructional methods necessary for all, in teachers’ constructions of practice.

The integral-distinctive position acknowledges the dilemma and tensions associated with the dual commitments to inclusion and individuality. Proposing a dilemmatic perspective, it is argued that resolutions require the balancing of “potentially contrary rights and values” where “some values and rights may not be met or met fully” (Norwich and Kelly, 2005, p. 57). It is further purported within this perspective that “for all those making decisions in the education system, including class teachers, policy and practice becomes a matter of finding the best ways of having it both ways while minimising the loss” which in turn calls for “the acknowledgement of multiple values and

ideological impurity” (Norwich and Kelly, 2005, p. 57). While intellectually and theoretically, the integral-distinctive conceptualisation of SEN with its attendant notion of ideological impurity addresses the dilemma associated with meeting diverse needs within the context of meeting needs common to all in class teaching, this does not imply an automatic and direct translation to practice; balancing potentially contrary rights and values in the process of sustaining diverse needs while supporting inclusion remains open to multiple interpretations in practice.

Within the integral-distinctive conceptualisation of SEN, emphasis shifts from causality to a concept of need which directs teaching practices to accommodate individual needs and inclusion. To this end, a conceptualisation combining three elements of need has been proposed by Norwich (2002, p. 498) and endorsed by many (O’Brien, 1998; O’Brien and Guiney, 2001; Corbett and Norwich, 2005; Norwich and Kelly, 2005; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007). Common needs or “inclusive entitlements” are those needs shared with all others. Distinctive or additional needs are needs shared with some people by virtue of membership of a particular sub-group, but not with others. Unique needs are those that are unique to children as individuals and “not covered through their membership of common humanity or some sub-group” (Norwich, 2002, p. 498). Rather than exclusively promoting either specialisation or commonality of teaching, addressing individual needs based on this broad conceptualisation and accommodating inclusive principles, the integral-distinctive position implies a continuum of pedagogy where pedagogical approaches differ by degree depending on degrees of need (Norwich and Lewis, 2001; Lewis and Norwich, 2005). Accordingly, for teachers’ constructions of practices, a varied pedagogical repertoire is required.

Endorsing this conceptualisation of pupils’ learning needs as serving “the aims of inclusion very well”, in his Gulliford Lecture in 2005, Wedell (2005) acknowledged “widespread concern about the problems in implementing inclusion” and predicting changes that are required, advocated “three features of an education system which need to be considered in any exploration of the practical implications ... if inclusion is to be realisable” (p. 7). These features are teaching-learning approaches, the nature and levels of expertise and the variety of pupil groupings and locations in which learning may

occur. Presented in matrix form by Wedell (2005) to illustrate their interrelatedness, the features are reproduced in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Prerequisite features of an educational system for inclusion identified by Wedell



Source: Wedell (2005)

Clarifying teaching-learning approaches, Wedell (2005) emphasises “personalising” learning which requires teachers “to be able to use the evidence of pupils’ response to decide how and when they should alter their teaching approaches” (p. 8). The nature and levels of expertise refer to the following: the need for high levels of teachers’ understanding of the nature of child and adolescent development, of learning processes and the content of what is to be learnt; a deeper consideration of teacher roles and how “collaboration and co-ordination should be implemented in the wider context of mainstream provision” (2005, p. 8); and, increasing recognition of the teacher’s role in supporting and facilitating learning rather than the transmission of curricular content. Variety of pupil groupings and locations underscores flexibility to match learner needs and demands of the curriculum which Wedell argues “is clearly at the heart of progress towards inclusion” (2005, p.8). The openness of the integral-distinctive conceptualisation of SEN to multiple interpretations and those features of the education system which require consideration in the realisation of inclusive ideology in practice further support the complexities of inclusive education which both shape this enquiry’s problem and

underscore the significance of an investigation of teachers' interpretations of inclusive ideology in their constructions of practice.

SUMMARY

Inclusion has long been recognised internationally as a human right and more recently established as a legal right in the Irish context. However, as indicated, definitions of inclusion and by implication, interpretations of it are divergent, leading to multiple and sometimes conflicting interpretations on placement, classroom practices and processes of inclusion. In the context of divergent definitions and varying perspectives on policy and practice for teaching children with SEN, teachers have to construct practices that are inclusive, that balance the necessary specialisation with generalisation to address learners' needs, and that ensure the participation in learning of all students in the class. The many definitions of inclusion and the varied conceptualisations of SEN shape this enquiry's question, to the extent that they give rise to multiple interpretations in practice. Consequently, and to reiterate, there is necessity for an investigation of teachers' inclusive practice which considers their interpretations of definitions and ideology of inclusion, how this translates into action and how the actions influence the learning experiences of the children, particularly those with SEN.

For an enquiry whose problem is shaped by rapid policy reform from segregation to inclusion and by the many and varied definitions of inclusion supporting conflicting principles and a complex ideology, the third phase of scene setting is teachers' practice for including children with SEN in mainstream primary school. The policy context which forms the backdrop for this enquiry and shapes the research question has been documented in Chapter One. Further shaping the research question, the many definitions of inclusion and varied conceptualisations of SEN and the attendant dilemmatic and challenging implications for practice have been analysed in this chapter. In the context of a research question concerned with resource and class teachers' interpretations and constructions of practice to include children with SEN in mainstream primary school, it now remains to review the research literature documenting inclusive teaching practices; such a review forms the focus of Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

TEACHERS' PRACTICES FOR INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

INTRODUCTION

Devising policy through the formulation of legislation and guidelines, defining inclusion and identifying principles of inclusive ideology and education are part of the process of educating people with SEN. An equally significant part of that process are the practices that provide appropriate education for the diversity of learners and it is to teachers' constructions of such practices that this chapter turns. The purpose of the chapter is to present a review of the research on teachers' practices of inclusion for teaching children with SEN in mainstream settings. As such, the focus progresses from the what, how and why of the policies and ideologies of inclusion to the what, how and why of teaching practices to include children with SEN. While analyses of policy and ideology presented in the previous two chapters provide the backdrop and shape the enquiry's research question, a review of teachers' inclusive practices provides perspectives for subsequent framing of the enquiry's data relating to teachers' intentions and pedagogical practices.

Following an outline of the selection and search procedure for the relevant literature, the chapter is structured to reflect key and interrelated aspects of inclusive teaching practices. In the first section, school level practices with their dilemmatic progression towards inclusion are identified as a means of providing an interpretative lens for subsequent analysis of teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines. The remaining five sections focus on teachers' practices as follows: special education specific pedagogies and curricula; co-teaching; teaching for collaborative learning; differentiation; and, pedagogy for inclusion. Although each of these is discussed separately, their impact is intended to be cumulative in articulating perspectives to further frame the enquiry's data. Reference to the methodological implications of investigations for the research design of this enquiry is noted as relevant throughout the review.

SELECTION AND SEARCH PROCEDURE

The literature reviewed is based on a search using the following terms: special education, students with disabilities, inclusion, inclusive education, integration, mainstream, general education setting, and cross referencing of the terms curriculum, pedagogy, teaching methods, teaching practices and interventions with special education and with inclusion. Publications that appeared from 1995 onwards were considered and seminal texts outside this time frame were also included. Databases including EBSCO, Swetswise and ERIC were searched for articles published in refereed journals on educational provision for pupils with SEN in mainstream settings. For publications of articles not electronically available, the following international journals were hand-searched: *Educational Review*, *British Educational Research Journal*, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, and *Teaching Exceptional Children*. Although neither peer-reviewed nor electronically available, *REACH Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland* was hand-searched for articles pertaining to educational provision for students with SEN in Ireland. Meta-analyses addressing special education specific pedagogy (Lewis and Norwich, 2001) and the efficacy of co-teaching (Murawski and Swanson, 2001; Zigmond, 2003) were used to locate primary sources. Further research papers were gleaned by checking the index of edited books where the title promised information on educational provision for pupils with SEN in mainstream settings. Lists of Masters Theses were checked for relevant unpublished sources. Finally, websites of the DES, the INTO, the NCCA, the SESS, the NCSE, the National Disability Authority (NDA), Citizens Information, and the Irish Legal Information Initiative were accessed for statistics, legislative and policy documentation and conference papers.

Articles were included if they fulfilled at least one of the following criteria:

- The articles reported on research investigating practices of educating pupils with SEN in mainstream settings where this research:
 1. was conducted with teachers working with pupils between the ages of four and thirteen years, some or all of whom were pupils with SEN;

2. incorporated a case study or a quasi-experimental design in which an intervention was implemented in a setting at primary level that included at least one pupil with SEN.
- The articles reported on research investigating school practices of educating pupils with SEN in mainstream settings across a range of levels, one of which was primary level;
 - The articles related to historical developments in the education of people with SEN, to conceptualisations of SEN and theoretical perspectives on practice, and to policy guidelines for educating people with SEN in mainstream settings.

Articles dealing with comparative studies of educating pupils with SEN focusing on inclusive versus special school outcomes, studies with a focus on the role of paraprofessionals and the attitudes and formal training of special needs assistants and studies dealing with mainstream and special school partnerships were excluded from this review.

Research papers in the resulting collection were separated into one of three categories: (1) school level practices (2) teachers' practices (3) history, policy and implementation. Papers relating to historical developments, policy and implementation have been discussed in Chapters One and Two, while a number of these papers researching aspects of policy implementation were redistributed to the category of school level practices for further consideration. Papers relating to teachers' practices were further subdivided, and as such, research relating to six aspects of teachers' constructions of practice is reviewed in the following sections, sequenced accordingly: school level practices, special education specific pedagogies and curricula, co-teaching, teaching for collaborative learning, differentiation and pedagogy for inclusion.

SCHOOL LEVEL PRACTICES

Investigations of school level practices are particularly significant to this enquiry for two reasons: firstly, they indicate the type of capacity building measures necessary to support changes to the established practices of teachers in the promotion of inclusion;

secondly, rather than assuming a linear progression, they underscore a complex and dilemmatic pathway towards inclusion in teachers' practices.

The capacity building measures of visionary leadership, restructuring of separatist structures and professional development for staff were identified by Janney, Snell, Beers and Raynes (1995) in their investigation of the move from segregation to inclusion of seventy students with disabilities in ten schools¹ from five school districts in Virginia. Each school was provided with on-site consultation from a state-wide project for three to four days per month for one semester, where project consultants assisted with planning and implementing inclusive initiatives. Teachers reported that supportive principals set a "positive tone" by implementing a collaborative, problem-solving orientation, which contributed to a "facilitative school climate" (Janney et al., 1995, p. 432) and they regarded the principal as pivotal in organising provision of information, orientation and training. While in all, thirty-five students with moderate disabilities and thirty-five with severe disabilities were moved to inclusive settings, there was variation in the extent of inclusion². In the elementary schools, inclusion was highest and students were included for art, music, physical education, library time and peer tutoring. In the middle and high schools, inclusion was for one or two class periods daily, and typically for vocational or non-academic classes such as home economics, choir or physical education. Rather than providing analysis of the extent of variation with which students were included or attempting to interpret findings within a theoretical framework, the researchers "judged the integration effort as successful" (Janney et al., 1995, p. 436). However, the continuum of provision in the mainstream setting, consistent with other investigations on school level practices where separate, special teaching is maintained in the context of school commitment to inclusion, substantiates contradictions associated with interpreting inclusive ideology in practice.

Further endorsing capacity building measures in the promotion of change and almost a decade later, leadership, staff development, planning time and classroom support were identified as facilitating inclusive practices, by Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon,

¹ The schools comprised three elementary schools, three middle schools and four high schools.

² The percentage of the school day for which students were included ranged from 0% to 100%, with a median of approximately 25%. Regarding terminology, in the USA, moderate and severe disabilities are equivalent to a specific learning disability of a moderate or severe nature as distinct from Mod GLD and SPLD; in the USA, GLD comes under the terms of intellectual disability or developmental disability.

Cabello and Spagna (2004). Their investigation was of a change model towards inclusion, developed and implemented over three years³. At the outset, practice in participating school districts involved providing additional support in separate settings⁴. Leadership teams from each district and researchers⁵ worked collaboratively to develop inclusive practices⁶. The first year focused on preparations for change and involved attending professional development seminars, visiting other schools and establishing teams to provide technical assistance and ongoing consultative support in the preparation of activities. During the second year, schools implemented the planned activities. Funds were used to provide planning time⁷ and staff development, which changed in focus from the “why” of inclusion to knowledge of “how” (Burstein et al., 2004, p. 108). For the third year, efforts focused on school practices such as devising methods of assessment for collaborative classrooms, designing systems to facilitate collaboration and teaming among class and special teachers, constructing practices responsive to student diversity and adapting the curriculum. Based on interview data⁸, following the third year of implementation, three approaches to inclusion were evident in practice. Firstly, practices were restructured so that some students were educated exclusively in general education classrooms, where special and class teachers worked collaboratively, team teaching and grouping according to need. Secondly, practices were modified where some students remained in separate settings but had increased opportunities for inclusion in the general classroom and were supported by assistants,

³ This occurred in two southern California school districts.

⁴ Students needing special education services for less than 50% of the day were taught by resource teachers in pull-out programmes; students with more severe needs were placed in self-contained special education classes and were involved in inclusive settings for non-academic activities; students with severe disabilities were placed at segregated sites or in segregated wings of general education campuses.

⁵ The researchers were university faculty members who served as liaisons to each of the districts and acted as consultants over the implementation of the change model.

⁶ The model for change included four strategies with associated activities as follows: **Building a commitment for change** involved providing leadership for change, understanding the need for inclusive practices, and observing inclusive models; **Planning for change** involved developing a vision of inclusive practices, engaging in self-examination and identifying needs, establishing goals, and developing a strategic plan; **Preparing for change** involved participating in professional development and providing assistance in classrooms; and **Supporting change** involved sustaining administrative support and allocating resources as needed. The levels of school involved were elementary and middle grades.

⁷ Substitute teachers were hired to float so that class and special teachers could meet to collaboratively plan practices that fostered the inclusion of students with varying needs.

⁸ Data collection involved interviewing 25 special teachers, 44 class teachers, 6 administrators and 24 parents.

while students without SEN joined the separate settings for certain curricular activities. Finally, practices were expanded to support students who had not been identified for special education but were struggling in general education classes, by placing a full-inclusion specialist teacher in the class to work cooperatively with the class teacher. The involvement of two teachers in the mainstream class in a “blended services” system⁹ was also identified by Kugalmas (2001, p. 58) as a school restructuring initiative to create “accessible and supportive learning environments for all children”¹⁰. However, maintenance of the continuum of provision despite commitment to inclusion further substantiates contradictions and tensions with interpreting inclusive ideology in practice.

Acknowledging these tensions, problems giving rise to contradictions and compromises in practice were identified by a team of researchers investigating practice in four schools committed to inclusion; the team regrouped to report on key aspects of the research¹¹ (Clark et al., 1995a; Clark, Dyson, Millward and Skidmore, 1995b; Clark et al., 1997; Clark et al., 1999; Skidmore, 1999; Dyson and Millward, 2000). Consistent with research previously reviewed, changes in practice were facilitated by leadership committed to inclusive principles while restructuring efforts were made in all schools by dismantling separatist provision and increasingly locating students in the mainstream classroom, following the common curriculum with in-class support. There was an emphasis on the professional development of staff as a means of embedding responses to diversity in the mainstream classroom. Although teachers regarded in-class support as broadly helpful, they were dissatisfied with its effectiveness and efficiency. Specifically, at a technical level, in-class support was delivered by a range of personnel and in a

⁹ The system of blended services refers to a teaching model used throughout the school of a lead teacher and a collaborator in each classroom to support co-teaching arrangements.

¹⁰ This investigation was conducted over a four-year period across a range of levels from kindergarten to fifth grade in a primary school in the USA committed to the principles of inclusion.

¹¹ Clark, Dyson, Millward, Robson and Skidmore conducted research during the 1990s, involving detailed case studies which combined interviews, observation and document review and resulted in a number of publications; initially dominated by assumptions of the organisational paradigm, the development and elaboration of their theory of dialectics and the related concept of dilemmas can be traced in these publications. There are variations in the levels of detail regarding methodology provided, with the most comprehensive account of procedures relating to data collection and analyses, and to measures of establishing trustworthiness furnished by Dyson and Millward (2000) in the appendix of their publication. Consisting of two interlinked phases, the first phase involved review of documentation relevant to the school’s approach to special needs education and eighty-four semi-structured interviews were conducted; the second phase involved undertaking thirty-eight observations of lessons followed by focused interviews and tracking the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) in each school for part of a school day.

range of contexts¹², was therefore highly variable and “offered no guarantees of minimum standards of provision” (Dyson and Millward, 2000, p. 139). Also, there was teacher uncertainty about the viability of mixed ability grouping. The teaching and learning co-ordinator¹³ in one school was an advocate of the common curriculum, but expressed uncertainty as to whether this approach was actually meeting the needs of all students. Dissatisfaction among teachers related to a growing belief that resources devoted to students with increasing severity of need might be better deployed towards other students who represented “a somewhat neglected group” (Clark et al., 1999, p. 44).

Compromises included withdrawal of students from their classes for individual or small-group tuition, ability grouping where students with SEN and students with behavioural difficulties were invariably placed in the lowest set, the use of classroom and school exclusion for unacceptable behaviour, and the use of additional teachers to police classrooms rather than support the development of mainstream teaching practices. These compromises, leading to various levels of exclusion, constituted standard practice in all of the schools and continued as part of their approach, despite a commitment to inclusion. Interpreting the ambiguities and complexities of their findings, the researchers draw on the theory of dialectics¹⁴ and the related concept of dilemmas (Clark et al., 1995a; Clark et al., 1995b; Clark et al., 1999; Dyson and Millward, 2000). As such, competing tensions relate to fundamental contradictions in providing for all learners equally while responding differentially to individual characteristics, are dilemmatic in

¹² Personnel included specialist teachers, subject teachers, specially-trained learning support assistants, relatively untrained learning support assistants and in some instances, sixth formers; contexts included full-size classes, small ‘bottom’ sets, teaming of two subject-specialist teachers to provide general classroom assistance or targeted support to specified individuals, with variation in levels of co-operation and pre-planning.

¹³ As part of the dismantling of separatist provision, the SENCO was reinvented as a ‘Teaching and Learning Co-ordinator’ with the responsibility of working collaboratively with teachers to develop their classroom practice, managing and delivering school based in-service training programmes, and deploying resources in support of curriculum initiatives (Clark et al., 1995b).

¹⁴ Influenced by the ideas of Benson (1983) and Heyderbrand (1977), the researchers argue that dialectical analysis regards the organisation in terms of an ongoing process of social production, which generates contradictions, inconsistencies and incompatibilities in the fabric of social life. The contradictions emanate from multiple sources including the continuing reconstruction of reality by social actors, different constructions of reality by different individuals or groups, the unequal distribution of resources and power within the organisation, conflicting demands from the organisation’s environment, and the incompatibility of existing structures with new demands. The contradictions are the basis of the transformation of existing organisational arrangements as they undermine the apparent stability of one set of arrangements, thereby creating the possibility for new arrangements to be produced (Clark et al., 1995b).

form, and give rise to uncertainty and compromise in the resolutions sought by teachers. Based on this analysis and reflecting the integral-distinctive conceptualisation discussed in Chapter Two, tensions and dilemmas are inherent to inclusion which is characterised by a “complex interaction of more or less inclusive tendencies” (Dyson and Millward, 2000, p. 145).

Tensions associated with incorporating inclusive ideology in action within the complexities of school contexts leading to compromise of the very values being advocated, are further reiterated by research on the development of inclusive practices during the first decade of this millennium; this was conducted by a team of researchers from three higher education institutions who were part of a Network involving twenty-five schools and three Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in England¹⁵. Rather than being selected because of a commitment to inclusion or as an example of exemplary practice, the schools represented a range of existing circumstances and dispositions. The research involved teachers and researchers working collaboratively to collect and analyse evidence in order to develop teachers’ practices. Partner and group discussion became a means of developing the social learning processes that facilitated group engagement with the evidence, knowledge sharing¹⁶ and change (Ainscow et al., 2004, p. 132), underscoring the concept of communities of practice. The significance of the social process of generating and using knowledge to instigate change is further

¹⁵ The Network, “Understanding and Developing Inclusive Practices in Schools” was established in 2000, as the first phase of the Economic and Social Research Council’s Teaching and Learning Research Programme (Ainscow et al., 2004). The researchers involved were Ainscow, Farrell, Frankham, Howes, Dyson, Gallannaugh, Millward, Booth, Smith and Weston, who represented three higher education institutions and worked in partnership with three LEAs and twenty-five schools at primary and secondary level; the research resulted in a number of interim publications and a final publication by Ainscow, Booth, Dyson, Farrell, Frankham, Gallannaugh, Howes and Smith (2006). Research questions considered the following: barriers to participation and learning experienced by students; practices to help to overcome these barriers; the extent to which these practices facilitate improved learning; and, the ways these practices can be encouraged and sustained within LEAs and schools.

¹⁶ An illustration of the processes of social learning engaged in by “communities of practice” is provided by Ainscow et al. (2003, p. 231). Focusing on “the development of aspects of classroom practice” four indicators adapted from the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth et al., 2000) were considered in devising lesson plans: responsiveness to diversity, accessibility to all pupils, facilitation of pupils’ participation and use of difference as a teaching and learning resource. Using the four indicators in an observation schedule, teachers working in pairs observed each other and made a record of “golden moments” (Ainscow et al., 2003, p. 236). Structured discussion about the mutual observation experiences followed in the forum of a staff meeting and a document was produced as a result of discussion, summarising what the teachers had learned.

supported by research conducted by McLaughlin (2002)¹⁷, highlighting that teachers' learning and associated change in school and classroom practices are a social and collective endeavour rather than an individual pursuit. In the Network's final publication, reflecting the process definition of inclusion discussed in Chapter Two, the researchers concluded as follows:

We are reluctant to designate any school as 'inclusive', since this implies that inclusion is a realisable end-state rather than a continuous engagement with overcoming barriers to learning and participation at all levels of the system inside and beyond schools. (Ainscow et al., 2006, p. 148)

The dilemmatic pathway towards inclusion evident in research on school level practices is particularly significant because it presents an interpretative lens through which to analyse teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines. As such, tensions, dilemmas and compromises are processes to be anticipated in teachers' inclusive practices and how these are played out may warrant critical attention from this enquiry as pedagogical routines and teachers' intentions regarding inclusion are documented. Further contributing to the enquiry's interpretative lens are the capacity building measures critical to facilitating change to established practices, identified by the research reviewed. Specifically, visionary leadership, the restructuring of separatist structures, the development on in-class support mechanisms, professional development opportunities for staff, and school community opportunities for knowledge generation and sharing, represent key features at school level that support changes in teachers' practices. As such, these may constitute measures that influence teachers' inclusive practices thus framing analysis of teachers' intentions and pedagogy. Although a number of the investigations reviewed above refer to observations of practice, findings relating to teachers' intentions and practices of constructing learning experiences to include children with SEN, are neither reported nor considered in the analyses. What

¹⁷ The Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (BASRC) focused on enabling schools to use evidence-based decision making in bringing about whole school reform. This initiative took place over a five-year period in a number of "Leadership Schools" in California (McLaughlin, 2002, p. 98). Based on the principle of using enquiry to inform whole school change, the initiative distinguished between three forms of knowledge and through on-site support and in-service, teachers were exposed to all forms. Knowledge for practice related to formal knowledge and theory; knowledge of practice related to teachers' use of classrooms and schools as sites of enquiry to examine broader social and political issues and their implications for teaching and learning; knowledge in practice related to practical knowledge stimulated by teachers' own questions and reflections on their practices within their own classrooms.

becomes more evident therefore, is that classroom observations are a critically important means of capturing these processes, something to which the research design of this enquiry will attend.

Funnelling the focus from research on inclusive practices at school level to teachers' practices of inclusion, with particular relevance to the pedagogical repertoire required by teachers to teach children with SEN in the mainstream setting, special education specific pedagogies and curricula are considered in the following section.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SPECIFIC PEDAGOGIES AND CURRICULA

In general terms, pedagogy is defined as "the broad cluster of decisions and actions taken in classroom settings that aim to promote school learning" (Norwich and Lewis, 2001, p. 314). Distinctive pedagogies for children with SEN are sustainable if research indicates that learners with SEN need distinct pedagogic strategies to learn the same content as those without SEN. However, there are methodological difficulties regarding the determination of distinctive pedagogies for learners with SEN, and for learners representing specific categories of SEN. The scarce evidence base upon which conclusions regarding distinctive pedagogies can be drawn, is attributed to the following factors: ambiguities associated with category labels and definitions of SEN; complexities of undertaking systematic research with learners representing the range of SEN categories which may focus on those participants more amenable to assessment and intervention; and, limitations of comparative experimental and quasi-experimental research designs (Fletcher-Campbell, 2005; Gregory, 2005; Porter, 2005; Portwood, 2005; Ware, 2005; Wishart, 2005). Consequently, in critiquing the generality-specificity of teaching for learners representing all categories of SEN, apart from evaluating the limited existing systematic evidence, researchers have had to draw on their relevant expertise and experience (Lewis and Norwich, 2005).

A synthesis of critiques provided by leading experts in the field of special education indicates a perspective on pedagogy that supports common pedagogical principles and generic strategies attuned to difference by degrees of deliberateness, attention and intensity of teaching (Lewis and Norwich, 2005), supporting a continuum of pedagogy. By way of illustration, considering pedagogy for children with dyslexia,

Reid (2005, p. 144) highlights the well-documented recommendation that the principles of a teaching programme include “multisensory, structured, cumulative and sequential aspects”, that the programme has a phonic emphasis and allows more time for over learning to enable children acquire automaticity. Experienced teachers would agree with Reid’s (2005, p. 142) argument that these principles are intrinsic to other reading and teaching programmes that benefit all children and as such, are not dyslexia-distinctive but “may have to be applied with more intensity” for teaching children with dyslexia. At the other end of the continuum of SEN and based on available research evidence on the efficacy of pedagogy for learners with SPLD, Ware concludes that “even where techniques appear highly specialized, they share common characteristics with ‘good’ teaching in general” and as such can be conceptualised as “lying at the high intensity extreme continua of strategies” (2005, p. 77).

Research on the efficacy of ‘intervention programmes’ devised predominantly for students experiencing specific learning difficulties, rather than for those with intellectual disabilities and implemented in mainstream settings, further supports a pedagogy that includes variables of effective teaching practised to a greater degree, with greater precision, more intensively, more exaggeratedly or for more regular and frequent periods of time¹⁸. Summarising results from a meta-analysis of intervention studies, Swanson (2000) found that a combined model of direct instruction and strategy instruction positively influenced academic performance for students with learning disabilities; key instructional components of this model included sequencing, drill-repetition-practice, direct question and responses, control of task difficulty, teacher-

¹⁸ Examples of such intervention programmes include Clay Reading Recovery, Head Start, Direct Instruction (Tarver, 1996), Milwaukee Project, Cooperative Integrated Reading and Comprehension Programme (CIRC) (Slavin, 1994), Strategic Reading Instruction (Schmidt, Rozendal and Greenman, 2002) and Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1998). With specific regard to the development of literacy, interventions commonly implemented in schools include: Jolly Phonics; Toe by Toe; Paired Reading; Phono-Graphix; Accelerated / Accellewrite; Precision Teaching; Reading Recovery; and, Literacy Acceleration. Brooks, in collaboration with the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) (2002), investigated the effectiveness of a range of intervention schemes aimed at children with literacy difficulties in primary level. Successful interventions were found to have a number of common factors. Firstly, ordinary teaching was not enough and while large-scale schemes such as ‘Phono-graphix’ and Reading Recovery were expensive and required specific teacher training, they produced positive outcomes in terms of reading progress. Approaches based on Information Communication Technology (ICT) only worked if precisely targeted. Also, where reading partners were available and were trained and supported, partnership approaches were effective. Finally, where success for some children with the most severe difficulties was elusive, there was a need for precisely targeted, skilled, intensive, one-to-one intervention.

modelled problem solving, small group instruction and strategy cues, approaches implying intensity of teaching but nonetheless within the pedagogical repertoire of teachers. Dowker's (2001) intervention with sixty-two six and seven year old children who were identified by their teachers as having numeracy difficulties, involved their assessment on eight components of numeracy followed by individual tuition addressing each component as necessary for one half hour weekly. Assessments of pre- and post-instructional performance indicated significant improvements in computation ability and arithmetical reasoning¹⁹, further supporting targeted and intense, one-to-one teaching to address specific needs.

Research by Johnson and McDonnell (2004) on the efficacy of embedded instruction of sight words by two class teachers to students with developmental disabilities²⁰ enrolled in their mainstream classes, further substantiates more intensive and targeted teaching for learners with SEN. While research on the efficacy of intervention programmes implemented in mainstream settings supports the practice of common pedagogical principles and generic strategies attuned to difference by degrees of deliberateness, attention and intensity of teaching and may shed light on the possible practices constructed by resource teachers who have opportunities to work one-to-one, this research does little to inform understanding of where and how this 'individual-based, more intensive and focused instruction' fits in the overall context of teaching the mainstream class. This is further evidence of the significance of this enquiry to include observation of class teachers' inclusive practices, thus addressing a gap in existing research literature.

Based on this review of critiques and intervention-efficacy research, a systematic evidence base for special education specific pedagogy does not currently exist. Although there is evidence in support of particular disability categories having distinctive group

¹⁹ The British Abilities Scales (BAS) Basic Number Skills subtest and the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children (WISC) Arithmetic Subtest were administered prior to and following six months of instruction. Results indicated an increase from the standard mean score of 93.52 to 97.94 on the BAS Basic Number Skills Subtest and an increase in the standard mean score of 6.05 to 8.18 on the WISC Arithmetic Subtest.

²⁰ One was an eleven year old with Down syndrome included in fifth grade with twenty-seven students, with an IQ score of 35 on the Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale. The remaining two children were nine year old twin boys who were included in second grade with twenty-five students. Both had IQ scores on WISC III that fell within the range of Mild GLD, while the first also had cerebral palsy and a cortical visual impairment.

characteristics, for example the category of autistic spectrum disorders (ASD)²¹, research does not support the view that effective teaching for learners of a particular category of SEN is different from teaching other learners. This makes the concept of a continuum of pedagogy to meet the continuum of need all the more compelling. Regarding the Irish context, lack of evidence to support special education specific pedagogies debunks the myth of esoteric knowledge for teaching learners with SEN. However, the critiques and evidence serve to highlight the importance of teachers having knowledge of the range of pedagogical principles and generic methods of teaching along with understanding of why and how these are attuned to respond to the diversity of needs represented in the mainstream class.

Critiquing a conceptual analysis of the generality-specificity of curriculum for teaching learners representing the range of SEN categories, the leading researchers in the field of SEN indicated that curriculum commonality could only operate at the broadest level of common principles (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). A number of researchers argued in favour of relevance over balance in the design of curriculum to meet the needs of children with ASD (Jordan, 2005), and children with SPLD (Ware, 2005). Certain researchers highlighted additional curriculum programmes for children with sensory impairments (Douglas and McLinden, 2005; Gregory, 2005) while others emphasised flexibility and variations in curriculum programmes (Cooper, 2005; Dyson and Hick, 2005; Martin, 2005; Miller and Hodges, 2005; Ware, 2005). However, all researchers considered the principles of curriculum design were no different for learners from each of the categories of SEN. Overall, their critiques support the concept of a continuum of common curriculum approaches that differ by degree depending on individual needs (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). To an extent, this concept of a curriculum continuum is endorsed by documentation relating to curriculum in the Irish context; the recommendation to draw on both the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999) and the Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning

²¹ Common to ASD is the triad of impairments, which refers to difficulties in the following three areas of development: social and emotional understanding; all aspects of communication; and, flexibility in thinking and behaviour. Typically, regardless of verbal skill, the child with ASD will experience severe difficulties with communication extending to all aspects such as gestures, eye signalling, facial expression and body posture, and will have to be taught what communication is for and how to go about it. As such, the child with ASD will benefit from an individualised approach informed by understanding of ASD (Jordan, 2005).

Disabilities (NCCA, 2007) sub-divided into the three categories of GLD²², anticipates that teachers will deliver a broad and balanced curriculum to address the individual, distinct and common needs of all learners in their constructions of practice. The implications for teaching are that within this broad context of commonality, the common, distinctive and unique learning needs of each child can be addressed. Again, this highlights the significance of teachers' knowledge of curriculum and understanding of how to accommodate individual differences and common needs in enabling all children in the class grouping to access the curriculum and participate in learning.

Pedagogy and curricula facilitating inclusion of children with SEN are an important element of this enquiry's focus of teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice. Specifically, teachers' understanding of pedagogy and curricula for including children with SEN and their accommodation of individual differences in the context of meeting the learning needs common to all are aspects of teachers' practices that may emerge from this enquiry as teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines are documented. Furthermore, increasingly evident is the critical importance to the enquiry's research design of classroom observations as a means of capturing aspects of, and processes underpinning teachers' inclusive practices.

Among the practices commonly identified as promoting inclusion at classroom level is co-teaching. Given that both a resource and class teacher are involved in teaching children with SEN in the Irish context, research on co-teaching is of particular relevance to the enquiry's focus and is reviewed in the following section.

CO-TEACHING

Overcoming a long established tradition of working separately, among initial efforts to facilitate inclusive education was the restructuring of teacher relationships and roles as special education teachers worked collaboratively with class teachers (Maeroff, 1993; Ferguson, Ralph and Sampson, 2002; Ferguson, 2008). Initially, a consultant model of collaboration operated, where special educator served as consultant to class

²² Sub-divided in three sections focusing on Mild GLD, Moderate GLD and SPLD, the Guidelines endorse the relevance of distinctive needs to curriculum and pedagogical decisions and approaches while the Primary School Curriculum assumes individual differences are accommodated within curriculum and pedagogical approaches relevant for all; both documents reflect the conceptualisation of SEN in terms of common, distinctive and unique/individual needs presented in Chapter Two.

teacher on curriculum adaptation and modifications of teaching methods and assessments (Bailey and Bailey, 1993; Johnson and Pugach, 1996). Latterly, a model increasingly recommended in the literature is teaming, co-teaching or collaborative teaching, involving equitable tasking and responsibility shared by the special education teacher and class teacher (Minke, Bear, Demeer and Griffin, 1996; Thousand et al., 1996; Walther-Thomas, Bryant and Land, 1996; Boudah, Schumacher and Deschler, 1997; Kugalmas, 2001). Regarding the Irish context, as discussed in Chapter One, policy guidelines provided by the DES (Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05) (DES, 2003, 2004, 2005a) recommend the employment of collaborative practices to support the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream schools. This represents a significant step in the restructuring of school practices and reconceptualisation of the resource teacher role.

Co-teaching as a practice is generally understood as a mainstream class teacher and special education teacher teaching a diverse group of students within one classroom²³. Theoretically, combining the pedagogical strengths of the special education teacher and class teacher, co-teaching is expected to enhance the educational experience of all learners in the mainstream class, including those with SEN (Hallahan and Kaufman, 2006). However, research investigating the efficacy of co-teaching evidences equivocal results.

Reviewing co-teaching research, Zigmond (2003) found four studies that considered academic achievement gains, three of which related to primary schools. Co-teaching was found to be effective in producing academic achievement, although students with SEN required additional, supplemental support on a withdrawal basis. Murawski and Swanson (2001), in their meta-analysis of research on co-teaching found

²³ Cook and Friend (1995) identified a theoretical model of collaborative teaching with five variations of co-teaching as follows: one teaching and one assisting; station teaching based on dividing instructional content and physical layout into two or more zones and each teacher assumes responsibility for a segment of the content at prearranged station while students rotate through the stations; parallel teaching requires teachers to jointly plan instruction which is then taught to the class divided into two heterogeneous groupings; alternative teaching allows a large and smaller group configuration and permits intensive instruction for students with SEN in a reduced teacher-student ratio; team teaching assumes parity between both teachers in planning and teaching with teachers continually alternating the role of primary instructor within individual lessons. Elaboration of these variations has led to subsequent theoretical models being proposed by Vaughn, Schumm and Arguelles (1997), Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin and Williams (2000) and Vaughn, Bos and Schumm (2006).

only six of eighty-nine studies from which effect sizes could be calculated and data suggested that co-teaching was only a moderately effective procedure for influencing student grades, achievement scores, and social and attitudinal outcomes.

Investigating co-taught classes at high school level, Boudah et al. (1997) reported that students had limited opportunities for academic engagement while academic achievement for students with mild disabilities decreased. Rea, McLaughlin and Walther-Thomas (2002) found that students with learning disabilities in co-taught settings earned higher grades and achieved higher scores than their counterparts in withdrawal programmes on language and mathematics subtests of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, but not on reading comprehension, science or social science subtests. Also, there were no differences between the two groups on the mathematics, reading or writing subtests of the state proficiency exam. Equivocal findings were further reported by Waldron and McLeskey (1998) where students with learning disabilities educated in co-taught settings showed significantly greater gains in reading than those who received withdrawal support. However, no significant differences were found between the two groups in relation to mathematical achievement while students with severe learning disabilities made comparable progress in reading and mathematics in withdrawal and in-class settings. A large-scale investigation involving 11,000 students with disabilities revealed that those who spent more time in general education had lower absenteeism, performed closer to grade level and had higher achievement scores in reading and mathematics than students with disabilities who spent less time in general education (Blackorby, Wagner, Cameto, Davies, Levine and Newman, 2005). However, as the achievement scores for most of the students with disabilities were below the twenty-fifth percentile, the researchers concluded that the low scores indicated the continuing need for additional, special education. In a comparative investigation of three approaches to educational provision for learners with mild disabilities, findings reported by Marston (1996) revealed that teacher satisfaction and student progress in reading were significantly greater for the 'combined services' model over the co-taught and withdrawal models²⁴. Based on their investigation of the learning outcomes of students

²⁴ This study used pre- and post-instruction curriculum-based assessment measures collected at the beginning and end of the school year to compare the reading progress of 240 elementary students with

with SEN in co-taught and solo-taught classes, Magiera and Zigmond (2005) reported these learners required the additional academic support provided in the resource room to supplement teaching in the co-taught classrooms. Investigating the achievements of 203 seventh-grade science students with and without disabilities in co-teaching and non co-teaching contexts within the mainstream class over an eight week period, McDuffie, Mastropieri and Scruggs (2009) found that students in co-taught classes statistically outperformed students in non co-teaching classes on unit tests and the overall cumulative post-test.

Research to determine the efficacy of co-teaching versus non co-teaching and the appropriateness of co-teaching versus withdrawal support, based solely on standardised scores and measurements of academic performance, largely ignores the quality of teaching-learning experiences and key pedagogical elements incorporated in teaching. The import of these aspects is further sidelined by the 'fidelity implementation' criticism voiced by Volonio and Zigmond (2007); based on their review of research on co-teacher roles, they express disquiet that co-teaching practices differ widely from the theoretical models proposed in the literature (see footnote 23), but make no reference to the pedagogical repertoire or curriculum emphases integral to children's learning. This evidence suggests that there is need for an enquiry such as this, that pays close attention to pedagogical expertise and classroom routines as a measure of shedding additional light on the appropriateness of various approaches of providing educational support and their contribution to children's learning.

Among the limited number of investigations of co-teaching to include learners with SEN that report significant gains in academic performance and grade levels achieved by students, participating class and specialist teachers had completed a staff-development training programme prior to practising co-teaching, and received technical support on a regular basis throughout the intervention²⁵ (Welch, 2000; Austin, 2001;

mild disabilities who received instruction in IEP areas in one of three different instructional models: inclusion only, pullout only and combined approaches (Marston, 1996).

²⁵ For example, in the investigation conducted by Welch (2000), this involved video-based staff-development training which consisted of two parts: the first part focused on observations and discussion of exemplary co-teaching practices, and took place over three two-hour sessions; the second part provided instruction for conducting assessment to identify the most suitable models of co-teaching for the school and in developing an action plan for implementing and evaluating the identified model, and took place over three two-hour sessions. During implementation, teachers met with the investigator in a group forum

Wischnowski, Salmon and Eaton, 2004). Generally, teachers indicated that co-teaching had contributed positively to their professional development. In the Welch (2000) investigation, teachers were satisfied that they could form relationships with all students and that support could be given to students who needed it and not just those with SEN. They were also satisfied with the students' receptivity to co-teaching and reported that behaviour problems were minimized. In Austin's (2001) investigation, specialist teachers cited an increase in their content knowledge while their class teacher counterparts noted the benefits to their practices of classroom management and curriculum adaptations. Overall, teachers regarded the collaborative teaching practices they were using as effective for a number of reasons: they contributed to a reduced pupil-teacher ratio; they exposed teachers to the expertise and viewpoint of the co-teaching partner; and, they afforded opportunities for all students to benefit from intervention strategies and review. However, consistently across these investigations, teachers reported that planning time was inadequate and that without sufficient planning time, preparing appropriate modifications was difficult. The constraints of inadequate planning time are endorsed by Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi and McDuffie (2005). Their multiple case investigation of co-teaching practices in upper elementary, middle and secondary classes²⁶ found that for teachers who co-planned, it was during lunch or before and after school; a lack of scheduled co-planning time was reported across all settings with teachers expressing the need for administration to allow for this. Furthermore, a lack of planning time was repeatedly highlighted by a number of survey investigations conducted nationally (Costello, 1999; McCarthy, 2001), and internationally (Whitaker and Taylor, 1995; Arnaiz and Castejón, 2001; Crowther, Dyson and Millward, 2001; Forlin, 2001; Pijl and van den Bos, 2001), as a reason given

for discussion. These meetings were once a month and lasted approximately one hour. In the investigation conducted by Wischnowski et al. (2004), prior to implementing co-teaching practices, teachers received professional development in the form of in-service offered by university personnel and state and regional trainers, accompanied with opportunities for staff to visit school districts where co-teaching at different grade levels was already established as practice.

²⁶ The first case study, based in an upper elementary and middle school, involved two teacher pairings in a fourth-grade and seventh-grade class and focused on an earth science unit on ecosystems. The second case study was based in middle school and focused on the teaching of social studies to eighth graders by one teacher pairing. The third case study, based in three tenth grade classes in a high school and involving three teacher pairings, focused on world history. The final case study focused on the teaching of chemistry to four high school classes, by the same two teachers (Mastropieri et al., 2005).

by teachers for the dominance of the withdrawal model of support for learners with SEN.

If lessons are to be learned from international experience, staff development in preparation for co-teaching and dedicated time for co-planning are measures with potential to facilitate teachers' co-teaching practices and enhance children's learning. In the context of research on school level practices discussed previously, such measures stimulate teacher interaction and knowledge sharing, thus cultivating communities of practice and enabling change in school and classroom practices. Consequently, schools need to be organised in ways that "create space for teachers to plan, learn and work together" (Ferguson, 2008, p. 113). As measures facilitating change to established practice, they may contribute to the interpretative lens through which teachers' intentions, their classroom routines and pedagogical expertise are analysed in this enquiry.

Forms of collaborative learning as a means of facilitating the access of all students to curriculum in the mainstream setting and increasing their success in learning have been documented in the literature. To the extent that teachers' practices may promote collaborative learning opportunities, they constitute inclusive teaching practices and as such, research on teaching for collaborative learning is reviewed in the following section.

TEACHING FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Collaborative learning such as forms of group work²⁷ and peer tutoring²⁸ are regularly cited as 'inclusive practices' (Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Corbett and Norwich,

²⁷ Group work is generally distinguishable by two broad categories: firstly, cooperative group work or 'group study methods' (Slavin, 1995) refers to children with clearly defined roles working together to help one another master relatively well-defined skills or content knowledge or complete clearly structured problems - in the literature, the term is 'well-structured' problems (Cohen, 1994); alternatively, collaborative group learning refers to 'project-based learning' or 'active learning' (Stern, 1996) and involves children working in groups with a focus on loosely-structured problems - in the literature, the term is 'ill-structured' (Shulman, Lotan and Whitcomb, 1998; Chiznik, Alexander, Chiznik and Goodman, 2003) with multiple outcomes, for example, creating a report or an experiment (Webb and Palincsar, 1996).

²⁸ Peer tutoring is a process whereby a student helps one or more students learn a skill or concept. There are several variations of peer tutoring as follows: heterogeneous grouping in which tutees are taught by tutors in the same grade level with a higher level of knowledge or skill; homogeneous grouping in which tutees are taught by tutors with similar skills; cross-age tutoring in which a tutor teaches a younger tutee;

2005; Rix, 2005; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007; Westwood, 2007; Ferguson, 2008). A compelling evidence base, spanning four decades, supports the effectiveness of collaborative learning for improving the social and academic competence of all students, including those with diverse needs (Palincsar and Brown, 1984; Topping and Lindsay, 1993; Cohen, 1994; Johnson and Johnson, 1994; Slavin, 1995; Webb, Troper and Fall, 1995; Schmidt, Rozendal and Greenman, 2002; Doveston and Keenaghan, 2006; Johnson and Johnson, 2008). Based on the assumption that collaborative learning promotes active involvement, Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2005) argue that it is “especially important for students with disabilities” (p. 155). Specifically, in addition to promoting positive learning outcomes, cooperative learning is reported to have positive effects on intergroup relations (Slavin, 1995), self-esteem, attitudes towards school and acceptance of children with SEN (Schmuck and Schmuck, 1997; Shulman, Lotan and Whitcomb, 1998).

However, simply placing children in small groups does not guarantee learning will occur. Rather, research indicates that gains from working with others are dependent on the nature of students’ participation in group work, specifically in relation to the quality and depth of student discussion determined by the extent to which they give and receive help, share knowledge, build on each others’ ideas and justify their views, and the extent to which they recognise and resolve contradictions between their own and other students’ perspectives (Webb and Palincsar, 1996; Howe and Tolmie, 2003; Veenman, Denessen, van den Akker and van der Rijt, 2005). Furthermore, research indicates that students’ performance on reasoning tasks is positively related to their engagement in exploratory talk²⁹ which involves them explaining their ideas and engaging with the ideas of others by questioning and challenging others to justify their thinking (King, 1999; Mercer, Wegerif and Dawes, 1999; Mercer, 2000; Webb, 2009).

and, reverse-role tutoring (reciprocal tutoring) in which tutor and tutee reverse roles (Stenhoff and Lignugaris/Kraft, 2007).

²⁹ Elaboration is one of three types of group talk/discussion and is related to reasoning; regarding the remaining two types of group discussion, in disputational talk, students disagree with others’ ideas without giving reason and they assert their own ideas without attempting to come to a consensus while in cumulative talk, students acknowledge each others’ ideas without disagreement by repeating or confirming them and they try to come to a consensus but do not justify, challenge or question each others’ ideas.

While an extensive research base informs understanding of the efficacy of group work in terms of student outcomes and knowledge regarding the types of student activity that promote learning, less is known about the teacher's role and practices in enabling group learning and guiding student activity. However, such knowledge is of particular relevance to an enquiry documenting teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines for inclusion. Regarding the teacher's role, research has focused on four dimensions (Webb, 2009): preparation of students for collaboration, composition of groups, structuring group work to guide students to engage in certain processes, and teachers' discourse with groups.

Underscoring the significance of the teacher's role in contributing to the effectiveness of cooperative learning, a number of investigations indicate that programmes of preparation in communication, explaining and reasoning skills can increase the quality and depth of group discussion, and improve group on-task performance and student achievement (Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif and Sams, 2004; Blatchford, Baines, Rubie-Davies, Bassett and Chowne, 2006; Reznitskaya, Anderson and Kuo, 2007; Bienes, Blatchford, Kutnick, Chowne, Ota and Berdondini, 2008). Such prerequisite skills of communication, explaining and reasoning for effective group collaboration are less likely to be the preserve of children with SEN who themselves are more likely to need intensive teaching to acquire these skills if they are to benefit from collaborative learning opportunities.

Regarding group composition, research highlights that status characteristics can produce inequities in participation by determining relative activity and influence in the group (Cohen and Lotan, 1995; Mulryan, 1995). High status individuals, determined on the basis of their high academic standing or peer status characteristics such as perceived attractiveness or popularity tend to be more active and influential than low status individuals. Specifically, low status individuals have been found to be less assertive and more anxious, to talk less and to give fewer suggestions and less information than high status individuals (Baxter, Woodward and Olsen, 2001). The dominance of high-achievers over low-achievers in small group activities has been documented by Baxter et al. (2001) and King (1993). Again, highlighting the significance of the teacher's role, research indicates that teachers can alter expectations and status relationships among

students by discussing the multiple competencies required for task completion, matched by the range of abilities and individual strengths within the group (Cohen and Lotan, 1997).

Functions of the teacher's role are further evident in research which focuses on approaches to structuring group interaction and thereby improving the quality and depth of discussion. Research indicates that requiring groups to carry out particular strategies or activities and assigning certain roles to group members can impact positively on the nature of group collaboration, task performance and student achievement (Fuchs, Fuchs, Kazdan and Allen, 1999; King, 1999; Mevarech and Kramarski, 2003). In terms of practice, the teacher has an explicit role in the earlier stages of group activities to help students become proficient in using particular strategies by explaining them and modelling their use, then supporting the students and gradually assuming the less active role of guide.

Research dealing with the influence of teacher discourse on students' group interaction is most informative in terms of providing detail regarding particular teacher practices. Gillies (2004, 2006) investigated teacher and student verbal interactions and student learning among teachers implementing cooperative group work, where a number of the teachers had received CPD on the specific communication skills for use with students during cooperative learning. Results indicated that the teachers who had received additional staff development asked more questions and engaged in more mediated-learning behaviours such as challenging the students to provide reasons, highlighting inconsistencies in student thinking and asking questions to suggest alternative perspectives. Consistent with investigations on the appropriateness of timing of teacher intervention during group work (Meloth and Deering, 1999; Chiu, 2004; Johnson and Johnson, 2008), Gillies (2006) reported that teachers who had the benefit of staff development in communication skills ascertained students' ideas and strategies before offering suggestions or focusing the group's attention on specific aspects of the task, and based their support accordingly. In contrast, teachers without the benefit of professional development exhibited more controlling and disciplining behaviours along with instructing and lecturing group members. Results also revealed corresponding differences between groups in the nature of discussion. Students of the teachers who had

received communication skills' development provided more detailed explanations, more frequently expanded on other students' contributions, questioned one another more and demonstrated greater learning than their counterparts whose teachers had not received additional staff development. This research is significant in highlighting the facilitative verbal interactions of teachers that promote learning in group contexts and the positive influence of CPD on teachers' practice, both of which may emerge in this enquiry's documentation of teachers' pedagogy and classroom routines for inclusion.

To the extent that the success of collaborative learning opportunities in securing student performance and achievement are dependent on the teacher's preparation and guidance of group members for collaborative activity and on their verbal interactions, the teacher's role and attendant practices to promote collaborative learning opportunities are of particular relevance to this enquiry's focus. Collaborative learning structured by teachers may emerge as an aspect of teachers' constructions of inclusive practice while the research reviewed relating to the teacher's role may contribute to framing analysis of teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines.

As a form of collaborative learning, peer tutoring has significant empirical support, furnished over the past three decades across classroom levels and curriculum areas, to supplement the teaching of students with and without SEN (Lloyd, Forness and Kavale, 1998; Fuchs and Fuchs, 2001; Heron, Welsch and Goddard, 2003; Mastropieri, Scruggs, Spencer and Fontana, 2003; Stenhoff and Lignugaris/Kraft, 2007). Apart from documenting the efficacy of peer tutoring based on gains in curriculum content and skill, research highlights the importance of training peer tutors and of monitoring peer tutoring sessions (Blake, Wang, Cartledge and Gardner, 2000; Fulk and King, 2001; Carnine, 2002) and indicates that low-achieving and at-risk students can successfully tutor each other (Hughes, Frederick and Keel, 2002; Menesses and Gresham, 2009). However, research is less informative regarding teachers' practices to prepare children for peer tutoring and to guide and monitor their progress; Stenhoff and Lignugaris/Kraft call for future studies to "report the training provided" (p. 27). Regarding insight into teachers' practices, an investigation of the differential effects of peer tutoring in co-taught and non co-taught classes on the academic achievement of 203 seventh-grade science students with and without SEN conducted by McDuffie et al. (2009, p. 501)

incorporated “observational measures of teacher-student interaction and teachers’ instructional behaviour”. However, the observations³⁰ documented in their research relate to technical and functional aspects of teaching, rather than specific teacher practices and interactions and their connection with student learning. As such, the key pedagogical elements of teachers’ intentions and practices that contribute to children’s learning through the process of peer tutoring remain undocumented. This evidence further suggests that there is need for an enquiry that pays close attention to pedagogical expertise and classroom routines as a measure of illuminating teachers’ inclusive practice and their promotion of children’s learning.

As discussed in Chapter Two, in its broadest sense, inclusion involves addressing diversity which in turn involves meeting the needs of all individuals to facilitate curriculum access and enable learning. In theory, supporting inclusion while sustaining diversity requires teachers to address multiple and diverse individual needs within the context of meeting the learning needs common to all which in practice, has been interpreted to imply differentiation. Research documenting teachers’ practices of differentiation to include children with SEN is reviewed in the following section.

DIFFERENTIATION

Consistency is evident in the many definitions of differentiation promoted in the literature, from Maker’s (1982, cited in Griffin and Shevlin, 2007) focus on modifications to the learning environment, content, process and product with reference to people with giftedness over quarter of a century ago to this more recent explanation furnished by NEPS: “differentiation is about matching teaching strategies, approaches and expectations to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in a mainstream class” (2007, p. 3). Reinforcing the association between mainstream education and differentiation, Griffin and Shevlin (2007) claim that “differentiation

³⁰ The researchers explain that “the observational system documented the following components of each observed teacher-student interaction”: (a) student with whom the interaction occurred; (b) class/condition (referring to co-taught or non co-taught conditions) in which the interaction occurred; (c) teacher with whom the interaction occurred (general or special education teacher); (d) initiator of the interaction (general education teacher, special education teacher or student); (e) the instructional setting of the interaction (whole class, small group or one-to-one); (f) focus of the interaction (academics or behaviour); and (g) length of the interaction (categorised as short – less than 1 minute, medium – between 1 and 5 minutes, or long – more than 5 consecutive minutes) (McDuffie et al., p. 502).

involves attempting to cater for the individual needs of the student/pupil while teaching in an ordinary classroom” (p. 150). Endorsing the practice of differentiation, the Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities define it as a “process of varying content, activities, teaching, learning, methods and resources to take into account the range of interests, needs and experiences of individual students” (NCCA, 2007, p. 8). Although the term is not specifically cited in the documentation of the Primary School Curriculum, “taking account of individual difference” is nonetheless a key principle of learning in the curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 7).

Although the research base is limited, a synthesis of empirical evidence regarding differentiation supports equivocal results. Palincsar, Magnusson, Collins and Cutter (2001) report that class teachers who used adapted teaching practices in science classes for students with diverse needs promoted increased achievement for typical students, low-achievers and students with learning disabilities. Cited among adapted teaching practices are guided enquiry, group work, monitoring and facilitating student thinking, and recursive opportunities for students to develop and refine investigative processes. However, such practices reflect generic teaching principles, facilitate variation in teaching-learning experiences and may be within the pedagogical ambit of teachers generally. An investigation conducted by Witzel, Mercer and Miller (2003) involving pairs of middle school teachers using two different approaches to teach algebra found that students with and without SEN taught by using a concrete-representational-abstract sequence with explicit instruction performed higher on post-test measures than their counterparts taught using an abstract-only approach. However, the extent to which use of the concrete-representational-abstract sequence qualifies as differentiation or simply constitutes an appropriate matching of method to experiential levels of the learners is debatable. Concluding that differentiation can lead to increased achievement for students with SEN, Cass, Cates, Smith and Jackson (2003) found that middle and high school students with learning disabilities who were taught to calculate perimeter and area problems using manipulatives, successfully acquired these skills. Further effective in promoting learning was their teachers’ use of modelling and prompting with gradual fading, advancing the students from guided practice to independent mastery. Although identifying teaching methods, endorsing generic

pedagogical principles and evidencing student achievement gains, this research does little to inform understanding of the specific pedagogical elements of differentiation, of the nature of teachers' practices to differentiate for individuals within the context of class teaching or of the links between such practices and children's learning. This is further evidence of the significance of this enquiry, to attend to teachers' practices of differentiation in documenting their intentions and pedagogical routines for inclusion.

Qualitative observations of teachers' inclusive practice further support equivocal outcomes for differentiation. An investigation of inclusion in a "Blue Ribbon School"³¹, observed that teachers modified the quantity of assignments or reduced the number of practice problems for students with disabilities (Stockall and Gartin, 2002). Also, instructional strategies were modified for groups of students with different reading levels, where some read silently at their desks, others read aloud to the teacher while others used head-phones to listen to an audio-recorded story. Despite commitment to inclusion, the researchers comment that when these students informed teachers that they did not understand something, rather than providing direct instruction, teachers were observed diverting students' attention from the issue by encouraging them "not to worry about it" and reassuring them that learning takes time (Stockall and Gartin, 2002, p. 185). Regarding assessment, teachers scanned for and marked particular student behaviours as evidence of active participation³² and modified assessment techniques for students with SEN by asking them to give a 'thumbs up' if they understood the content and a 'thumbs down' if they did not. Although not acknowledged by the researchers as falling short of the mark in terms of assessing students' understanding, they argue that the "monitoring of signals to verify students' engagement" was not as effective as anticipated and attribute this to a process of benevolent collusion, a tacit form of communicative interaction negotiated between teachers and students who were academically challenged "to create a context of superficial social inclusion" (Stockall and Gartin, 2002, p. 184). Based on qualitative research in a primary school in Norway,

³¹ Based in a district known for its mission to create professional development schools, the school was "nationally recognised for its excellence in teaching" (Stockall and Gartin, 2002, p. 173).

³² Specific markers included "sitting upright in a chair as opposed to laying one's head on the desk, sitting in close proximity with other students, displaying manipulatives or resources, talking with other students, and an absence of disruptive behaviour" (Stockall and Gartin, 2002, p. 184).

investigating one teacher's inclusion of three students with SEN in seventh-grade³³, Flem, Moen and Gudmundsdottir (2004, p. 91) report that these students had an "adapted learning programme", which was provided in a "flexible manner" and appeared "to be functioning well." While the teaching and learning processes are documented³⁴, apart from reference to one student with SEN taking "part in the decision on whether he will work in or outside the classroom" (p. 91), details regarding the elements of the adapted programme, of how and why the general class programme was adapted or of the type of progress being made to support the claim it was functioning well are not provided. This research highlights the critical importance of an enquiry that captures the dynamics of teachers' practices of inclusion, of their accommodation of children with SEN within the context of mainstream class teaching and of the attendant teaching-learning experiences.

Based on advocacy, Ferguson argues that when curriculum design strategies are combined with differentiated instruction "individual students' learning can be "personalised" to their current abilities as well as their interests" (2008, p. 114). Explaining that teachers can differentiate content, processes and products according to

³³ Average student age was twelve years, while the class had twenty-three students in total: twelve girls and eleven boys.

³⁴ Details indicate the curricular content which provided the teaching-learning focus, methods of teaching, use of resources, students' contributions, aspects of dialogue, and student progress and learning outcomes in relation to lesson objectives. Description of how the class teacher taught the calculation of the area of a parallelogram provided by Flem et al. (2004, pp. 88-90) can be summarised as follows: teacher drew parallelogram on left-hand side of chalkboard, placing dots to indicate height on both sides of shape, so diagram appeared as rectangle. Teacher then drew triangle on right-hand side. Pupils discussed diagram on left of the chalkboard. Then, in dialogue "with the pupils", teacher "explained in a systematic way how to calculate the area of a parallelogram". As previously pupils had calculated area of squares and rectangles, teacher "repeated to her pupils how they had calculated the area of a rectangle and asked them how they would find the area of a parallelogram". When pupils had the formula: 'baseline times the height', teacher drew another parallelogram on the board, and again reviewed how to calculate the area of this shape. Teacher then reviewed calculation of the area of a triangle, "pointed to the triangle and explained how to compare triangle with rectangle". At this point, "in dialogue" with the student with SEN and another student, the student with SEN concluded that the triangle was one half of the rectangle. Teacher "responded to this by saying 'Wonderful!', and then produced dots from the original triangle" making a rectangle. Teacher drew two new triangles on board and "in dialogue with the pupils, systematically reviewed the calculation of the area of triangles." Pupils were encouraged to go to the board and write their answers, and the teacher asked them to explain what they were doing. Following revision of the name of the parallelogram, pupils returned to "their respective groups" in their "regular seats" and started working on their assignments. The correct responses of students, including one student with SEN, to questions asked after the break on name and formula for area calculation of parallelogram and triangle, were taken as indicators that the lesson objectives had been achieved.

students' current abilities, interests and ways they learn best, the following claim is made:

When principles of differentiation are combined with meaningful curriculum design, classrooms become busy (and yes, sometimes noisier), productive work environments where learning is the focus as well as the result. (Ferguson, 2008, p.114)

However, incorporating differentiation in practice is challenging for teachers (McGarvey, Marriott, Morgan and Abbott, 1997). Research on teachers' experience of differentiation in primary schools in Northern Ireland found that the teachers' perceptions of an achievable vision of differentiation at the planning stage "was not necessarily the reality noted during case study observation" (McGarvey, Marriott, Morgan and Abbott, 1997, p. 363). While schools accorded priority to differentiation in their planning, without providing explanation, the research reports that teachers found it very difficult to sustain in practice. A case study investigating access to the curriculum for children with SEN in a mainstream Irish primary school found that large class size, teaching multiple classes and time constraints were impediments (Coffey, 2004). Among the senior classes, teaching approaches that allowed teachers who felt under pressure to cover subject content, but relied on whole-class teaching, textbook learning and pencil and paper activities, did not readily lend themselves to differentiation. Reflecting the dilemmatic perspective associated with inclusion, Baxter, Woodward, Voorhies and Wong (2002) acknowledge that some students with disabilities need more intensive teaching than can reasonably be expected for class teachers to accomplish within the time and conditions of the mainstream setting. The tensions associated with preparing students for standardised achievement tests and high-stakes assessments, intended to achieve accountability for teaching and learning (Corbett and Norwich, 2005; King-Sears, 2008) while addressing individual needs, exacerbate the complexities of differentiating for children with SEN. Faced with the pedagogical dilemma of 'covering the curriculum' at a particular pace and within a given timeframe, there are concerns that attempts at differentiation have led to a narrowing of the instructional focus and a restricted curriculum at the expense of more in-depth and meaningful learning (Heubart and Hauser, 1999; Porter, 2002). There are concerns also that

'matching expectations with abilities' leads to reduced teacher expectations of their students and the consequent setting of undemanding, unchallenging learning activities (McNamara and Moreton, 1997; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007).

Although a strong proponent of differentiation, Ferguson's (2008, p. 114) reference to "personalised" learning as a form of differentiation connects with a recurrent theme of responsiveness played out in the literature. To this end, as discussed in Chapter Two, Wedell (2005) endorses personalised learning in teaching-learning approaches for inclusion. Emphasising teacher knowledge and the practice of responsiveness rather than differentiation, Wedell (2005, p. 8) argues that "teachers have to know what determines learning at different ages, and in what circumstances and they also need to be able to use the evidence of pupil response to decide how and when they should alter their teaching approaches." Based on their investigation of inclusive practice in secondary schools, Florian and Rouse (2005) attribute teachers' practices of inclusion to their responsiveness which they exemplify as "plans ... constantly under review in the light of pupil responses" (p. 157). A basic tenet of responsive pedagogy proposed by Daniels (1993, 1996b) is that of socially negotiated responsiveness to the learning potential of every child. Although operating from a different ideological perspective, the advocacy of these researchers for responsiveness in teaching-learning approaches, lends substance to advocacy for differentiation where the common ground rests on matching teaching approaches to the range of experiences, abilities, needs and learning styles in the mainstream class and on catering for the individual needs of learners.

The equivocal outcomes and dilemmas associated with practising differentiation are significant for this enquiry in terms of contributing to the interpretative lens through which to analyse teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines for supporting inclusion while sustaining diversity. Apart from capturing teachers' intentions in practice, observation will facilitate documentation of the links between teachers' accommodation of individual needs within the context of class teaching and student learning, aspects of relevance to an enquiry of teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice.

With specific regard to pedagogy for inclusion, a number of articles in the literature focus on the practices of teaching children with SEN along with all students in the mainstream setting. As a perspective likely to emerge in teachers' constructions of inclusive practice, research relating to pedagogy for inclusion is reviewed in the final section of this chapter.

PEDAGOGY FOR INCLUSION

Countless articles focus on practices of inclusive teaching³⁵ and although informative, are based on teachers' recall of experience rather than implementation of any particular strategy of enquiry to guide methods of data collection. Typically, these articles read like diary entries. They are prescriptive in listing strategies to be applied and implemented by the teacher, and include useful 'tips' such as samples of planning records, cues for teaching and rubrics for assessment (Downing and Eichinger, 2003; Prater, 2003; Jenkins, 2005). To the extent that they typify a particular 'pedagogical bag of tricks' mindset regarding inclusive practice, they warrant mention. However, in terms of this enquiry's focus, an assumption inherent in these articles, that teaching is the application or implementation of strategies, is somewhat antithetical to the concept that teachers construct practices while their basis on advocacy rather than research limits their relevance.

In contrast, qualitative research conducted by Corbett (2001a, 2001b) to investigate teaching approaches that support inclusive education resulted in her proposal of a connective pedagogy for inclusion. Supporting observation as a method of capturing teachers' practices, extracts from the field notes described the teaching and learning situations being observed and provided detail of teachers' actions. However, without recourse to teachers' interpretations of inclusive ideology and their intentions in terms of planning for inclusion, the understanding that shapes and informs their inclusive practice remains unarticulated. This highlights the significance of this enquiry's research design to incorporate interview and observation in documenting

³⁵ To illustrate, examples of such articles can be found in the peer-reviewed journal *Teaching Exceptional Children*.

teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice, thus filling a gap in existing research literature.

Measures to support inclusive practice consisted of the following: a team meeting every morning to discuss key events of the day, interpreted as an indicator of "a culture of open co-operation in the school" (Corbett, 2001b, p. 56); allocation of school funding for additional personnel; and, deployment of learning support assistants (LSA) to ensure an allocation of additional support expertise and hours for each mainstream class on the basis of the combined needs of students at various stages of the *Code of Practice* in the class, leading to collaborative ways of working in skilled teams. Providing a theoretical framework, findings were analysed in relation to the key elements of school culture, policy and practice incorporated in the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth et al., 2000). Evidence revealed that across the school, teachers incorporated a range of teaching styles and diverse strategies to include all learners and to facilitate working at many different levels on whole-class tasks (Corbett, 2001b). Specifically, pedagogical elements identified by Corbett (2001b) included connecting with the individual learner, and connecting the learner to the curriculum and wider school community by making the learning experience meaningful, involving students as active participants in their learning, building on their existing levels of knowledge and creating situations in which they met with success. Her distinctive contribution to shedding light on teaching for inclusion, Corbett (2001a, 2001b) refers to the combination of these elements as a connective pedagogy, which she argues is contingent on a willingness to learn and a capacity to be highly flexible on the part of teachers and support personnel.

Regarding the Irish context, the key pedagogical elements of this 'connective pedagogy' are incorporated in a number of principles embodied in the philosophy of education guiding the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999); these principles include the child as an active agent in his or her learning, the child's existing knowledge and experience as the starting point for acquiring new understanding and the child's environment as an important context for his or her development. As such, a distinction between connective pedagogy and pedagogy for teaching generally is difficult to discern. Against the backdrop of research on special education specific pedagogy, this further substantiates the view that teaching to include children with SEN

is good rather than specialised teaching where generic pedagogical principles are adapted to address diverse learning needs. The principles of connective pedagogy may emerge as teachers' pedagogical intentions and routines regarding inclusion are documented in this enquiry.

SUMMARY

This review of research on teachers' practices of inclusion for teaching children with SEN in mainstream settings indicates that there is no blue print for inclusion and that pedagogy and practices are varied and complex. The review provides perspectives for subsequent framing of the enquiry's data as follows: complexities of practice and the dilemmatic perspective; teachers' understanding of pedagogy and curricula for including children with SEN and their accommodation of individual difference in the context of meeting the learning needs common to all; teachers' practices of co-teaching, attendant learning and supports in terms of staff development, preparation and dedicated time; pedagogical practices to support collaborative learning opportunities and promote learning; pedagogical practices of differentiation to address diverse needs while sustaining inclusion; and, good or specialised teaching. The review also substantiates the critical importance of documenting intentions as well as pedagogical routines and of incorporating classroom observations in the research design as a means of capturing teachers' interpretations in action.

Given the substantive focus of resource and class teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice and their promotion of children's learning, this enquiry requires a research design that is sufficiently complex and sophisticated to capture the dynamics of teachers' practice in a variety of settings. The research design for investigating such a focus and addressing the enquiry's questions is described in detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this final scene setting chapter is to document the research design crafted to capture the dynamics of teachers' inclusive practices. This chapter is set against the backdrop of rapid policy transformation, the multiple principles and definitions of inclusive ideology and the variation, ambiguities and complexities of practice to sustain inclusion discussed in the previous three chapters.

The research design is flexible and emergent, shaped by the enquiry's focus of the interplay between policy and principles of inclusion, resource and class teachers' interpretations of this, and the manner in which policy and principles are enacted in practice (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992; Anastas and MacDonald, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Cognisant of the multiple realities of educational settings in mainstream primary schools, it is anticipated that elements of the research will be "emergent rather than tightly prefigured" (Creswell, 2003, p. 181). As such, certain methodological details are pre-specified while the design unfolds as the research proceeds and subsequent detail is foregrounded as relevant. Set within the constructivist paradigm, precisely because it supports investigation of human understanding, intentions, interpretations and actions in natural contexts, the research design espouses a grounded theory approach and is interpretive. To this end, it involves a continuous interplay between data collection and analysis based on the constant making of comparison, through which theory is generated (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Vaughan, 1992; Sarantakos, 1993; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1998a; Strauss and Corbin, 1998b). The research design is also exploratory in purpose (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Robson, 2002); apart from enhancing understanding of inclusive practice by the systematic documentation of teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines, it is anticipated that documenting these 'realities' has potential to inform, refine and alter existing policies, while also providing insights relating to improvement of practice. Such documentation is dependent on methods of enquiry that capture the detail of teachers' intentions, interpretations and actions in various contexts in the mainstream setting and

therefore requires strategies based on a combination of phenomenological and ethnomethodological techniques (Garfinkel, 1967; Schutz, 1972). Within this context and with regard to fitness for purpose, the research design incorporates two interlinked phases which facilitate the progressive focusing of the enquiry's substance from emergent issues in teachers' understanding to prominent themes in their practice.

Documenting the enquiry's research design, this chapter is structured in seven sections as follows: focus, paradigm, strategy of enquiry and methods of data generation; participants; phase one; phase two; data analysis; ethical considerations; and, methodological limitations and establishment of trustworthiness.

FOCUS, PARADIGM, STRATEGY OF ENQUIRY AND METHODS OF DATA GENERATION

Researchers hold underlying sets of assumptions which hinge on fundamental beliefs about the nature of knowledge (ontology), how knowledge is constructed (epistemology) and how we gain insight into forms of knowledge (methodology) (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bateson, 1972; Guba, 1990). These assumptions make distinctive demands on the researcher in relation to research questions, approaches and outcomes. A number of research paradigms have been proposed as frameworks within which researchers can examine their assumptions and locate their ideas about research approaches. These are relativism, post-positivism, constructivism, and critical approaches including the feminist and emancipatory paradigms (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Robson, 2002). Among these, the constructivist paradigm is most compatible with the interpretive and naturalistic approach implied by this enquiry's focus of the interplay between policy and principles of inclusion, resource and class teachers' interpretations of this, and the manner in which policy and principles are enacted in their practice. The constructivist paradigm assumes that researchers and participants join in the co-construction of reality, and through mutual engagement, construct the subjective knowledge that is under investigation. In terms of methodology, extended periods of time are spent observing participants in their natural settings in an attempt to understand how participants make sense of their world. Within the constructivist paradigm, detailed

investigation of teachers' interpretations and actions requires strategies of enquiry based on phenomenology and ethnomethodology.

According to the tenets of phenomenology (Schutz, 1972), individuals use sets of constructs and categories that are social in origin to interpret the experiences, intentions and motivations of others to achieve intersubjective understandings. More general, flexible, shared constructs and categories are typifications, which make it possible to account for experience rendering events and actions recognisable as being part of a particular type or realm. Typifications are indeterminate and modifiable and vary across contexts, supporting a world of multiple realities. Language is central to transmitting typifications and thereby meaning (Stewart and Mickunas, 1990; Holstein and Gubrium, 1998; Denscombe, 2003; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

Ethnomethodology is concerned with how people create, sustain and make sense of reality (Garfinkel, 1967). It assumes that people have practical linguistic and interactional competencies through which observable, accountable, orderly features of daily reality are produced. As such, by way of interpretive procedures, realities are produced from within and the social circumstances of those involved are self-generating. This has two implications for meaning: indexicality and reflexivity. Meanings are indexical in so far as objects and events are dependent on social contexts, and through their situated use in talk and interaction, objects and events become meaningful. Meanings are reflexive in that all accounts of social settings give shape to these settings while simultaneously being shaped by the settings they constitute (Holstein and Gubrium, 1998; Cohen et al., 2007). The focus on how people interpret events and make sense of their personal experiences, and the shared and socially constructed processes of interpretation and of multiple realities associated with phenomenology render phenomenological techniques particularly appropriate for researching the intentions, experiences and actions, and the interpretive practices of the teachers participating in this enquiry. Additionally, interpretation of the fine detail of talk and interaction render the appropriateness of ethnomethodological techniques. As such, phenomenology and ethnomethodology support the use of interview and observation as methods of data generation.

Further support for the use of observation as a critically important means of capturing the dynamics of teachers' inclusive practice arises from the review of literature providing the backdrop, interpretative lens and perspectives for this enquiry and presented in the previous three chapters. Although a number of studies employed qualitative methods and some refer to observations of practice, findings relating to teachers' intentions and practices of constructing learning experiences to include children with SEN are neither reported nor considered in the analyses. While investigations of the efficacy of intervention programmes implemented in mainstream settings may shed light on the possible practices constructed by resource teachers who have opportunities to work one-to-one, this research does little to inform understanding of where and how 'individual-based, more intensive and focused instruction' fits in the overall context of teaching the mainstream class. Investigations of inclusive teaching practices such as co-teaching, collaborative learning and differentiation shed little light on the key pedagogical elements incorporated by teachers and largely ignore the quality of teaching-learning experiences arising from inclusion. From a methodological perspective therefore, the significant contribution of this enquiry is the use of interview combined with classroom observations as a critically important means of capturing the intentions and dynamics of teachers' practices of inclusion, of their accommodation of children with SEN within the context of mainstream class teaching and of the attendant teaching-learning experiences.

Based on data generation involving interview and observation, the research design has two distinct but interlinked phases. Prior to detailing the methodology relating to these phases, it is necessary to document the process of selecting and recruiting participants.

PARTICIPANTS

The selection and recruitment of participants was guided by the enquiry's purpose. Rather than counting views, the purpose was to explore a range of views held by the targeted-group, the "social milieu" of resource teachers and class teachers (Gaskell, 2000, p. 41). As such, a combination of purposive and snowball sampling was implemented (Cohen et al., 2007).

Selection of resource teachers was purposive. I was interested in documenting 'effective' practices for teaching children with SEN in mainstream settings, particularly in relation to resource teachers. Although problematic in terms of inherent assumptions and of reliably determining its characteristics, the criterion of effective practice of resource teachers assumed relevance in an investigation of teachers' interpretations and constructions of practice to include children with SEN. As such, the criterion carried with it the possibility of identifying those teachers likely to be more valuable to the enquiry as potential participants. To this end, I decided that completing a postgraduate diploma course in special education in St. Patrick's College and achieving a distinction or merit on teaching practice, one of the assessed components of the course, would be the criterion for selection of resource teachers. To the extent that I intended to use these resource teachers "as informants" to identify a class teacher with whom they had a positive working relationship and who was eager to include children with SEN, the selection of class teachers reflected snowball sampling procedures (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 104).

While teaching practice was always an assessed element of the postgraduate diploma course in special education in St. Patrick's College, the grading system including distinction and merit was introduced in the academic year 2002-2003. This had been in operation for two years at the time of participant selection. Over the two years, a total of twenty-four teachers who were providing additional educational support in mainstream primary school had achieved a distinction or merit. As issues of access and consent are elaborated in the section detailing ethical considerations, at this point, it is sufficient to indicate that a letter was forwarded by the Director of the Special Education Department in St. Patrick's College to these twenty-four teachers; this letter informed them that I intended to conduct research on inclusion in mainstream primary school and invited them to contact me if they were interested in finding out more or getting involved.

Eleven resource teachers responded positively to that invitation. During this initial contact, I outlined the purpose of the enquiry, the nature of the research method, which was to include interviews and observation and to involve both resource teacher and a class teacher with whom the resource teacher had a positive working relationship

and who was eager to include children with SEN. I also indicated the expected time commitment. Following consultation with class teachers, school principals and parents of children with SEN in the mainstream class of the class teacher involved, six resource teachers had identified six class teachers, all of whom agreed to participate.

Concerned regarding the “size of the corpus” to be analysed (Bauer and Aarts, 2000, p. 23), yet mindful of striking the appropriate balance between exploring the full range of views by involving different members of the social milieu with the reality that “there are a relatively limited number of views or positions on a topic in a particular social milieu” (Gaskell, 2000, p. 41), I considered twelve participants in the form of six resource teacher and class teacher pairings would be insufficient. Securing the rich detail necessary to enable systematic and rigorous documentation of teachers’ interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice in a focused and in-depth fashion was at stake. Bearing in mind Gaskell’s (2000) “upper limit” to the number of interviews necessary to conduct and possible to analyse by the single researcher (p. 43), I was prepared to settle for a minimum of eight resource teachers giving a total of sixteen teachers but would look for a ninth in case any teacher or school had to withdraw during the course of the enquiry.

In the academic year 2001-2002, while the official grading system for assessing teaching practice consisted of pass and fail categories, the pass category was differentiated formally by assessors and reported in terms of excellent, very good and good. When the official grading system was changed in the academic year of 2002-2003, the levels of excellent and very good were replaced by their equivalents of distinction and merit respectively. Of the total number of teachers who completed the postgraduate diploma in special education in St. Patrick’s College in the academic year of 2001-2002 and who had achieved excellent or very good on teaching practice, five were providing educational support in a mainstream primary school in September 2004. Following similar procedures with these teachers, an additional three resource teachers along with three class teachers whom they had identified, agreed to participate, giving a total of eighteen participants based in nine schools. Although not a requirement in the recruitment of participants, the variation of schools by type and location provided

“contrastive settings” and so, contributed to maximising the “scope of the information obtained” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 274) (Appendix A).

The enquiry’s methodology was based on the participation of eighteen teachers comprising nine resource teachers and nine class teachers, each pairing from a variety of mainstream primary schools. Detail of the methodology relating to the first phase is presented in the following section.

PHASE ONE: INTERVIEWS

Considering the interview’s purpose of eliciting and exploring the range of opinions and representations in relation to the enquiry’s focus, making implicit knowledge explicit and so, accessible to interpretation, I selected the semi-structured interview for data generation (Flick, 2002). Arising from perspectives discussed in the literature review, my teaching experience and my observation in a supervisory capacity in resource and mainstream educational settings, I identified certain key topics on the interview guide (Gaskell, 2000). These were introduced by an open question and in some instances, included a “hypothesis-directed” or “theory-driven” question oriented to the literature or based on presuppositions about teaching children with SEN in mainstream school (Flick, 2002, p. 81). Incorporating the questioning approaches associated with the semi-structured interview, questions were designed to elicit teachers’ understandings of inclusion and their intentions and interpretations regarding inclusive practices (Gaskell, 2000; Flick, 2002; Robson, 2002; Cohen et al., 2007).

The semi-structured interview was piloted with a total of four teachers, comprising two resource teachers and two class teachers, each pairing from two schools. Piloting indicated flaws specifically relating to a tendency to overuse technical language and a lack of follow through on leads provided by the participants; this could have been particularly problematic in an enquiry seeking to document teachers’ views, although the capacity to probe a lead improved over the course of the third and fourth interviews. Piloting outcomes influenced the structure of the final interview guide and led to use of a more conversational style of interaction throughout interviews. Teachers involved in this piloting phase were not included in the enquiry.

The interviews began with opening questions inviting participants to “talk at length, in their own terms, and with time to reflect” (Gaskell, 2000, p. 45). Working gradually from the general to the specific, a “grand tour” question was asked inviting participants to give an outline of their typical school day (Spradley, 1979, p. 86). The rich descriptive responses raised many aspects for more in-depth exploration, some of which related to the key topics identified, some of which introduced potentially new ideas, and each of which was investigated with increasingly targeted questioning and appropriate use of probes (Spradley, 1979; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Gaskell, 2000).

In formulating the questions, I was influenced by Spradley’s (1979) categorisation of “ethnographic questions”: descriptive, structural and contrast¹ (p. 60). Generally examples of research questions connect with these categories in so far as questions “inviting descriptions” are descriptive while those “eliciting contextual information” and “projective” questions are structural and those to test the researcher’s hypotheses are contrast (Gaskell, 2000, p. 52) (Appendix B). The sequence and phrasing of questions unfolded in the interaction, shaping and being shaped by the exchange of ideas and meanings, as the personal views and realities of participants were explored and developed (Gaskell, 2000). Mindful of the association between establishing a relationship of trust and confidence and the development of rapport, and hence, the greater likelihood of participants being relaxed and expansive, I was natural with my form of questions and verbal and non-verbal reinforcement. Before closing the interview I summarised the participant’s ideas, views and realities, inviting their reaction (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and sought their assurance that they had shared all they wished to share at that time. In an enquiry seeking to document teachers’ intentions, understandings and interpretations, this was significant in terms of putting participants “on record” and ensuring as accurate a representation of their views as possible.

I interviewed eighteen teachers on an individual basis, comprising nine resource teachers and nine class teachers each pairing in one of nine schools. The interviews were conducted during late October and early November 2004 during the first school term,

¹ In this context, responses to descriptive questions provide ongoing samples of participants’ language. Structural questions are devised to indicate how participants organise their cultural knowledge while contrast questions are devised to indicate how participants employ dimensions of meaning to distinguish and differentiate.

deliberately so that teachers would have had sufficient time to get to know their pupils and have made a start on the programme for those with SEN. Each participant chose the location of interview. Fifteen interviews took place on the school premises, in the resource room or classroom, and in two instances, in the staffroom and computer room. Two interviews took place in my office and one took place in the participant's living room. Interviews varied in length from one hour ten minutes to one hour thirty minutes and were audio recorded. Prior to each interview and following greetings and an initial chat, with each participant I reviewed the purpose of the interview and clarified the function of the research guide without revealing its contents. I choose not to record notes during the interview as my encoding and retrieval of information is greatly enhanced when I have a clear view of the person with whom I'm speaking and can engage and maintain eye contact.

After each interview, as a form of descriptive and surface analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994), I recorded a summary of ideas presented and my reactions to certain ideas in a journal. At this stage in the enquiry, the purpose of the journal was to contribute to ongoing analysis of interview data, to keep account of emergent issues and to track patterns in teachers' intentions. As interviews progressed, I added a record of links between ideas emerging across the multiple cases of interviews. Journal notes relating to analysis made a significant contribution to extending the scope of subsequent interviews. Even though teachers represented a range of teaching contexts which added variety to the data, saturation was reached during the thirteenth and fourteenth interviews as data being provided was a repetition of previously generated data. Nonetheless, all eighteen teachers who agreed to participate were interviewed as a measure of substantiating the pervasiveness of patterns and the persistence of recurring issues and as a precaution in case a participant exercised the right to withdraw from the research.

I transcribed the full text of each interview from the audiotape for data analysis. With regard to the emergent design of this enquiry and the progressive focusing of the substantive issue from one phase to the next, a systematic analysis of data was undertaken. Following repeated listening to the audiotapes and reading of transcripts and summary forms, in an iterative way of working back and forth through this material, I

unitised the data. A unit was determined on the basis that it fulfilled two criteria: it was heuristic in that it furthered understanding or indicated enquirer action and it was the smallest piece of information about something that could stand alone (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). I assigned a code to each unit located (Appendix C). While a number of codes had been considered prior to fieldwork, arising from the review of literature and research question (Huberman and Miles, 1998), an increasing number of codes were inductively generated during this initial data collection and analysis. I categorised the data by trawling through each unit, constantly comparing, and then grouping units together on the basis that they related to the same content and shared similar properties. As categories emerged from the coded units, I wrote memos to record the delineation of each category's properties and to devise a covering rule (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Bauer, 2000) (Appendix D). At this point, there were thirty one categories contributing to the emerging theoretical scheme of the enquiry (Appendix E). Following completion of fieldwork for the second phase of the enquiry, these categories became more focused and contained with some being amalgamated and others being eliminated during later data collection and analysis, reducing the number of categories to thirteen. The final outcome of data generation for phase one is presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven under three themes relating to teachers' understanding, intentions and interpretations regarding inclusion, as follows: teachers' interpretations of inclusion; planning for inclusion; and, pedagogical routines to facilitate inclusion.

Documentation of teachers' intended practice based on interview has potential to provide only a partial account of their inclusive practice. As such, recourse to teachers' actions through observation as a second phase of data collection was necessary to gain understanding of how teachers' intentions were interpreted in action and how this action influenced the particularities of the children's learning experiences. Progressing from first to second phase of the enquiry, detail of the methodology relating to this second phase is presented in the following section.

PHASE TWO

Observation enables the researcher to look at what is actually taking place in the natural setting, moving beyond perception based data (Patton, 1990; Denscombe, 2007). It draws the researcher “into the phenomenological complexity of the world, where connections, correlations, and causes can be witnessed as and how they unfold” (Adler and Adler, 1998, p. 81). Consistent with the emergent design of this enquiry, building on teachers’ intentions and understandings, the second phase began with observation of practice. However, with progressive focusing of the substantive issue, this evolved to incorporate unstructured, structured and focused observations, on-going dialogue and sharing of reflections, and an end of school year semi-structured interview. This data combined with data generated from phase one contributed to the crafting of nine cases studies. Detail of the methodology relating to key elements of this second phase is presented in five subsections as follows: researcher role; unstructured observation; structured and focused observations; semi-structured interview; and, case studies.

Researcher role

To enter into the ‘phenomenological complexity’ of educational settings in the mainstream primary school, into the how and why of teachers’ practices of inclusion, the observational researcher role I adopted was that of the peripheral-member-researcher² (Adler and Adler, 1987, 1998). As such, I espoused the view that the “insider’s perspective” was “vital to forming an accurate appraisal” of interaction, activities and events in the educational settings and so, I observed and interacted closely with the teachers and pupils “to establish an insider’s identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership” (Adler and Adler, 1998, p. 85). This stance was important in terms of sustaining and reinforcing the lead role of the teacher, thereby maximising the possibility that observation and dialogue would secure the rich detail necessary to strengthening the data on teachers’ interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice. In this context, I had opportunities to engage in

² The four modes of observation identified by Gold’s classic typology of naturalistic research roles (cited in Cohen et al., 2000) and the three modes identified by Adler and Adler (1998) support the proposal by LeCompte and Preissle (1993) that there are degrees of participation in observation along a complete participation complete detachment continuum.

dialogue with the pupils and through questioning, to assist them in completing their assigned learning activities. In all classroom settings, a number of pupils were randomly invited to share samples of their work with me, which generated discussion about preferred subjects and activities. For singing and certain class rituals, like saying prayers, I participated with all group members. Among the more intimate settings of some of the resource rooms, the resource teacher involved me in role modelling certain language structures or invited me to listen to the pupils reading an extract or presenting their project work. In this way, the role of peripheral-member-researcher made covert and overt stances possible, combining the key characteristics of objectivity and subjectivity (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983) throughout data generation. This facilitated the dual process of eliciting and interpreting; teachers' understandings of policy and their enactment of policy in practice were elicited and explored in tandem with interpretation of their significance in illuminating teachers' inclusive practice. Initial observations were unstructured and are detailed in the following subsection.

Unstructured observation

Unstructured observational research was piloted in one of the two schools with one pair of resource and class teachers who piloted the interview. This involved observing the resource and class teachers over the course of one school day each. The piloting process contributed to informing the content areas to be included in the observation notational records (elaborated in detail below). Furthermore, with regard to the enquiry's question and in order to get a sense of how teachers' practices of inclusion influence the learning experiences of the children, particularly those with SEN, the decision was made to allocate the daily observation time between the resource teacher and the class teacher based on tracking one child with SEN in each school. Again, these teachers and related data were not included in the enquiry.

Unstructured observations were based on spending two complete school days in each of the nine schools involved. The observations were conducted in late November and December 2004 and January 2005. The time allocated to observing the resource teacher and the class teacher in action was based on tracking one pupil with SEN. As such, when the pupil with SEN being tracked moved to the resource room, I

accompanied that pupil and observed in the resource room while for the remainder of the school day observation occurred in the settings in which the mainstream class was located. Typically, these consisted of classrooms, physical education (PE) hall, computer room, school yard and outdoor basketball court.

Although themes with subcategories relating to teachers' intentions emerged from the first phase of the enquiry, providing a lens for further data generation and interpretation, initial observations were unstructured. This was considered necessary to safeguard against the imposition of the researcher's conceptual framework of inclusion on teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice and to ensure openness to the intent and action of all teachers participating in the enquiry. Mindful of the association between the components of "thick descriptions" and the content areas recorded in field notes during observation (Spradley, 1980; Denzin, 1989; Carspecken, 1996), these included the following: a graphic layout of seating, furniture and movement; notes on resources, materials and displays of each of the educational settings in which I was present; reference to the participants, routines, rituals, action and interpretations, and temporal elements in terms of frequent noting of time and the timing of events; a record of interactions, verbatim speech acts and non-verbal communication; and, a note of goals and intended learning outcomes. In attending to each content area, I endeavoured to maintain focus on the levels of description identified by Spradley (1980), Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Le Compte and Preissle (1993)³. With regard to this enquiry's purpose, as each observation proceeded, there was an increasing and persistent focus on the actions and interactions of teaching-learning episodes. Specifically, this provided detail on topic, intended learning outcomes, teacher and learner activity in its form, content and sequence, and verbatim speech acts of teacher and learners, while also furnishing detail relating to teachers' interpretations of inclusion as enacted in their practice (Appendix F).

Recess presented a time for dialogue with the teachers who commented on decisions they made and clarified certain procedures, for example, the issuing of a yellow card as a behaviour warning. Also, at the close of the school day, I engaged in

³ These include description of the educational settings of events, descriptions of events, behaviour and activities, and descriptions of researcher's activity and behaviour as researcher.

dialogue with resource teachers and class teachers individually and in some instances, in pairs to share reflections on events and activities and their views on certain ideas and themes arising. Comments and reflections were also recorded on the field notes and on the subsequent visits these were shared with the teachers to substantiate their accuracy in interpreting and representing the teachers' interpretations and actions.

Following each school visit, I completed a 'contact' summary form (Miles and Huberman, 1994), identifying main issues or themes connected with the visit, its bearing on the enquiry's questions, and any speculations, hunches or new hypotheses suggested by the visit (Appendix G). Over the duration of these unstructured observations, I also completed the journal (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) arising from field experiences by noting common threads within and across settings and links to data from interview transcripts, along with peculiarities distinctive to specific contexts. A recurring pattern across all settings was the manner in which the teachers' verbal interactions facilitated the children's learning and particularly those with SEN. Re-reading and analysis of the verbatim interactions of teachers and learners revealed that those initiated by teachers could be grouped into categories by type and purpose. As teachers' identification of the use of talk and discussion as a key pedagogical approach to facilitating inclusion emerged during phase one, and the prominence of teachers' verbal interactions in facilitating learning and inclusion was emerging in phase two, consistent with the characteristics of the emergent research design, this led to the progressive focusing of the enquiry's substantive issue on teachers' communicative routines. At this stage in the enquiry, it was decided to conduct structured observations of the verbal interactions enabling learners' cognitive development. Details of the methodology relating to structured observation which was followed with focused observation are discussed in the following subsection.

Structured and focused observations

A systematic observation schedule was developed for the first phase of data collection on teachers' communicative routines. The purpose of this schedule was to provide an indication of the persistence and pervasiveness of teachers' verbal interactions in their constructions of inclusive practice. Informed by teacher verbatim

interactions recorded in the field notes pertaining to initial unstructured observations along with previous research on patterns of teacher discourse (Hertz-Lazarowitz and Shachar, 1990; Galton, Hargreaves, Comber, Wall and Pell, 1999), the schedule contained six categories of teachers' verbal interactions as follows: teacher directs, questions, disciplines, mediates, encourages and, maintains learning and relationships. Initially, the schedule had two sets of categories, one specifying types of interaction from left to right across the grid and a corresponding set below specifying direction of interaction from teacher to all learners or learner with SEN (Appendix H). Recording of each interaction involved ticking two boxes. This structured schedule was piloted with one resource teacher and class teacher pairing involved in the enquiry but data was not included for analysis. Piloting indicated difficulties with recording the dual tally per interaction, which was cumbersome to tabulate and prevented samples of interactions from being noted. The final structured observation schedule comprised of the categories of interaction being repeated twice. This allowed for clear distinction between teachers' communication with the class or group generally and with the child with SEN being tracked in particular, while facilitating event sampling and the noting of verbatim samples. Also, as piloting revealed that teachers issued directions through statements and questioning, the subcategory of questions to direct learning was added to the category of teacher questions (Appendix I).

Structured observations involved spending two school days in each of the nine schools between February and May 2005. In each school, structured observation was based on a number of lessons taught by the resource teacher in the resource room and by the class teacher in the settings in which the mainstream class was located. This accounted for approximately two hours teaching time per teacher, totalling thirty six hours of teaching time. In two schools, where the resource teacher and class teacher co-taught for certain periods of the school day, additional structured observations were based on the group including the child with SEN being tracked and the teacher working with that group. This accounted for approximately two hours teaching time per school, totalling four hours. Throughout, teachers' verbal interactions were coded according to frequency across each of the lessons observed and represent the total of teacher talk during the allocated time.

The remainder of each school day was dedicated to conducting focused observation. This involved completing a running record of the content and sequence of teacher-learner actions and interactions relating to particular teaching-learning episodes across all curricular areas (Appendix J).

As with previous observations, at the close of the school day, I shared the completed structured observation schedule with resource teachers and class teachers individually, and invited comment. Overall, the teachers expressed satisfaction with the high number of tallies which they interpreted as an indication of interactive teaching, but were disappointed that tallies relating to encouragement were low. Supporting the methodological significance of dialogue for increasing understanding of inclusion from the teachers' perspectives, it was only as a result of tentative researcher questioning that teachers' insights on the nature and purpose of questions were elicited, contributing to the enquiry's findings. Comments were recorded on contact summary sheets, on the evening of each school visit and on the subsequent visits these were shared with the teachers to substantiate their accuracy in interpreting and representing the teachers' interpretations and actions. Where summaries prompted teachers to add new but related material, this was included in the field notes recorded for that visit.

Continuously throughout the visits, patterns, common threads and exceptions were noted in the journal. Further focusing of the enquiry's substantive issue led to the emergence of the nature and dynamics of action in teacher-learner encounters and its contribution to learning along with the 'goodness of fit' between the resource and class teacher in constructing practices for inclusion. Consistent with the emergent design, a final round of focused observations was conducted between late May and June 2005. As previously, this involved completing a running record of the content and sequence of teacher-learner actions and interactions with the addition of all links between the class teacher's programme and the resource teacher's programme. Initially, it was decided to spend two days in each school. However, as data being generated was largely consistent with and a repetition of that recorded on earlier visits, saturation was reached during the sixth set of visits to each school. At this stage in the enquiry, the two schools practising co-teaching were also visited on a sixth occasion as these sites were potentially valuable in further generating data on links between resource and class teachers' programmes. As

such, observations for the enquiry totalled forty nine complete school days across the nine primary schools, with four schools receiving six visits and the remainder receiving five.

Focused observation was followed with a semi-structured interview. Details regarding this final form of data generation are presented in the following subsection.

Semi-structured interview at end of school year

As much to elicit teachers' reflections on their practices of inclusion as a response to their eagerness to discuss impressions and experiences of the school year and their participation in the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the school year, in late June and July 2005. On this occasion, the topic guide was shaped by the teachers while simultaneously reflecting areas relating to the enquiry's focus at that time (Appendix K). Their expansive discussion of aspects of practice that worked really well and not so well, their perceptions of the 'indicators of success' and their identification of priorities for the coming year while containing, served to add to the richness of data generated on teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice. Each teacher was interviewed on an individual basis, providing a total of eighteen interviews. Lasting approximately one hour each, nine interviews took place on the school premises, three in an Education Centre and six in participants' homes. As previously, interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

Data generated from both phases of the enquiry contributed to the crafting of nine cases studies. The following final subsection relating to the enquiry's second phase discusses the methodological significance of the case studies.

Case studies

Yin (1984, 1994, 2003) contends that the case study is a strategy for conducting research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context and using multiple sources of evidence. The defining characteristic is concentration on a particular case or small set of cases studied in their own right. Highlighting the importance of context, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 27) promote the term 'site' as a reminder that a case "always occurs in a specified

social and physical setting” and cannot be studied devoid of that setting. One resource teacher and one class teacher pairing from each of nine school sites participated in this enquiry and as such, data generated from both phases contributed to the crafting of nine case studies. By studying individual cases, insights are gained which can “illuminate the general” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 30) issue of inclusive teaching practices while information garnered through multiple cases can be particularly persuasive, leading to a more compelling study (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). As the power of the case study lies in the “relatability of the findings to similar settings” (Opie, 2004, p. 74), the onus is on the researcher to provide adequate contextual information to enable the reader to assess the “transferability” of findings to other situations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 124). Given this purpose, the case studies document the breadth, depth and variation of practice, while cumulatively increasing understanding of the pervasive elements of inclusion, elements that through analyses were centrally and intimately connected with teachers’ intentions and actions. Eight case studies are presented in the Appendices (Appendix V) while the ninth is presented as an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995, 2005) in Chapter Eight. The three recurring themes with particular relevance to teachers’ interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice regardless of site which emerged as central to inclusion are discussed in Chapters Nine, Ten and Eleven.

As previously indicated and consistent with assumptions of grounded theory associated with the constructivist paradigm, data generation for the enquiry involved the continuous interplay of data collection and analysis. Although details relating to data analysis have been foregrounded as relevant in previous sections, the following section provides elaboration.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of data was predominantly qualitative with an element of quantitative approaches. Regarding qualitative analysis, raw data consisting of audio-tapes, field notes, observation schedules and dialogue records were processed into transcripts of interviews and teacher-learner verbal interactions, accounts of teaching-learning episodes, summary contact forms and summary dialogue forms; notes relating to procedure, on-going analyses, memos and reflections were recorded in a journal. This

contributed to an interactive process of data analysis, occurring in situ during interviews, observations and dialogues, away from site between episodes of data collection and at the conclusion of data collection (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Quantitative analysis was based on raw data arising from the systematic observation schedule which was coded, tabulated and entered into SPSS. Initial statistical analysis was for the descriptive purpose of providing an indication of the persistence of teachers' verbal interactions in their constructions of inclusive practice. However, as qualitative analysis indicated links between particular verbal interactions and the intentional learning of children with SEN, comparative statistics based on the one-way ANOVA were calculated. Their purpose was to investigate differences in resource and class teachers' use of verbal interactions and links between teachers' use of verbal interactions and the teaching-learning context (Appendix L).

Consistent with the constructivist paradigm, qualitative analysis involved the processing and analytic strategies of constant comparison advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and operationally defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). As previously stated, following repeated readings of transcripts, field note accounts and summary forms, in an iterative way of working back and forth through this material, data was unitised and a code was assigned to each unit. Devised deductively prior to fieldwork and inductively generated during data collection and analysis, codes had clear operational definitions (Appendix M). As with categorisation of data relating to phase one, previously discussed, the data was categorised by trawling through each coded unit, constantly comparing, and then grouping units together on the basis that they related to the same content, shared similar properties and provided instances of a particular category. As categories emerged from the coded units, the delineation of each category's properties was recorded and a covering rule was devised (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1994) (Appendix N). Throughout the process of data analysis, later codes were assigned to categories on the basis of fit. Certain categories were subdivided into new categories or subsumed into an emerging category and some coded data initially unassigned was revisited and eventually assigned a category. Following categorisation of data, each category was checked for the goodness of fit of all assigned coded units (Strauss and Corbin, 1998b). These refined

categories formed the conceptual web contributing to the emergent theoretical scheme of the enquiry (Appendix O). Emergent themes and interpretations were challenged by a search for negative instances of patterns and for alternate explanations (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Marshall and Rossman, 1999).

As with data collection, saturation of categories and emergence of regularities were the criteria which informed the decision to stop data processing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). At this stage, the categories were referred to a professional outside the context for peer debriefing.

As the enquiry involved multiple sites, data analysis operated interactively at two levels: within case and across case. At one level, the categories indicated themes within each site. To analyse the persistence and pervasiveness of themes across sites, I combined case-oriented and theme-oriented approaches (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Extending the analysis strategy of constant comparison and referred to as “stacking comparable cases”, I employed two of five methods identified in the methodological literature⁴ (Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp. 176). Considering the conceptual content of the themes within each setting, I devised content-analytic meta-matrices, which noted the characteristics of each theme and the regularity of their occurrence across each of the nine sites (Appendix P). I also devised case-ordered meta-matrices, ordering the cases by a particular theme (Appendix Q). Analyses of matrices supported the persistence and pervasiveness of themes across all sites, transcending particular cases. As previously stated, the final outcome of data generation for phase one resulted in thirteen categories relating to three themes. The final outcome of data generation following phase two resulted in nine categories represented by three central themes (Appendix R).

From inception to completion, the conduct of this enquiry was governed by ethical considerations which are documented in the following section.

⁴ Five methods for cross-case analysis have been identified as follows: the *unordered meta-matrix* combines basic information from several cases into one chart in a stacking style; *content-analytic meta-matrix* and the *construct table* are conceptually ordered displays, indicating categories; the *case-ordered meta-matrix* displays data by arranging cases from high to low on key categories (variables); and, the *time-ordered meta-matrix* displays data from several cases in relation to chronology.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In making ethical choices, I was mindful of the core principles of beneficence, respect and justice identified by Sieber (1992) and of noncoercion, nonmanipulation and support for democratic values identified by House⁵ (1990). Within this context, I attended to informed consent, to treating others as I would like to be treated throughout field work, and to taking the measures necessary to ensure as accurate a representation of teachers' intentions and constructions of inclusive practice throughout. Detail of the ethical aspects to which the enquiry attended is documented in two subsections as follows: access and consent and, building and maintaining trust and power relations.

Access and consent

The "multiple gatekeepers" who held "the keys to access" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 253) were school Boards of Management, principals, parents of the children with SEN who were to be tracked, resource teachers, class teachers, and the children with SEN. A staged approach to the negotiation of access and consent was adopted. I first secured agreement to participate from those who were to be interviewed and observed before approaching the official gatekeepers at the highest level of the organisation (Festinger and Katz, 1966; Whyte 1984; Flick, 2002). My initial contact with the class teachers who had been identified by their resource teachers was a telephone conversation of approximately twenty minutes during which time I outlined the purpose of the enquiry, the nature of the research method, the implementation of member checking and the anticipated time commitment. Having secured a verbal agreement from the class teachers and resource teachers to participate, in order to obtain authorisation of access, I contacted each school principal by telephone. I identified the resource teacher and class teacher who had indicated willingness to participate, again outlining the enquiry's purpose, proposed research method and time commitment.

Once the verbal consent of class teachers and school principals was secured, I contacted the resource teachers by telephone where three procedural aspects were

⁵ These principles are linked to deontological and relational ethical theories. The deontological view invokes attention to informed consent, to treating others respectfully throughout fieldwork, and to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity while the relational view invokes attention to care, respect and cooperation (Punch, 1986; Deyhle, Hess and LeCompte 1992).

agreed: firstly, resource teachers would inform the parents of the children with SEN being tracked in the mainstream class of the class teacher involved regarding the enquiry's purpose and method, and negotiate their assent; secondly, all correspondence in relation to formally informing and obtaining consent from each gatekeeper would be forwarded to the resource teacher and distributed by the resource teacher to the relevant gatekeepers and that all signed consent forms would be collected by the resource teacher and returned to me; thirdly, on receipt of signed consent forms, I would make arrangements with each class teacher and resource teacher for data collection.

Following this, I wrote five sets of letters for resource teachers, class teachers, school principals, parents and Boards of Management respectively to formally obtain informed consent (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) (Appendix S and Appendix T). Each set of letters stated the purpose of the enquiry, the role of the participants, data collection procedures, the expected time frame and how the information would be used (Bell, 1991; Cohen et al., 2007). Also stated was my intent to maintain privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. In this regard, participants were assured that pseudonyms would be used throughout reporting. However, participants were made aware of the difficulty in guaranteeing confidentiality given for example, the links resource teachers have with one another through membership of IATSE and the links their school principals have through membership of the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN). I informed participants of their right to withdraw from the research, in which case data would be returned. Participants were assured that audiotapes and raw data would be archived when the research was completed (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Sieber, 1992; Miles and Huberman, 1994). I made an information and consent form for the nine children being tracked, informing them of my wish to find out about teaching and learning in the classroom and resource room and requesting their consent to visit while they were learning, which was to be indicated by them with a signature (Appendix U). Fully informed consent "attested by the respondent's signature" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 254) on the consent form was obtained from all nine resource teachers, nine class teachers, seven school principals (two were teaching principals and so also the class teachers), their Boards of Management, and the parents of nine children with SEN while all nine children responded favourably. Finally, I devised a letter for class teachers to

photocopy and distribute to the parents of the children in their classes, informing them that their child's class would have a visitor to observe teaching and learning on approximately five days randomly selected over the course of the school year.

Having gained entry to the nine primary school sites, it was necessary to attend to the ethics of building and maintaining trust and power relations throughout the process of data collection and analysis. Ethical considerations relating to these field relations are documented in the following subsection.

Building and maintaining trust and power relations

In naturalistic enquiry, the developmental task of building and maintaining trust requires attention from the enquiry's inception to its completion (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Cohen et al., 2007). It has been argued that if participants "respect the inquirer and believe in his or her integrity" they are much more likely to be candid and forthcoming (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 256). I was known to all nine resource teachers prior to initiating the inquiry. As a lecturer in the Special Education Department in St Patrick's College, I was known in a professional capacity to six while as a student of the post graduate diploma in special education course during the academic year 2001-2002, I was known to the remaining three. This contributed to fostering amicable relations; teachers were positively disposed to the purpose of the enquiry and supportive in my pursuit of it. However, it had implications regarding benefits and reciprocity as resource teachers eager to pursue further study at masters level may have felt an obligation to participate. This highlights the dynamics of power relations and their potential to shape data generation in the enquiry. Drawing on Bourdieu's (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) framework of the structure of power relations, resource teachers, class teachers and researcher adopt a certain stance (*habitus*) and bring particular expertise (*capital*) to the site of enquiry. Stance and expertise are integral to influencing action but, depending on the interplay of power relations among players of varying stance and expertise in the site, could constitute threats to the validity of the research.

Possible threats identified in the methodological literature include reactivity, respondent bias and researcher bias⁶ (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Padgett, 1998). To address threats relating to power relations, in an enquiry documenting teachers' intentions and practices of inclusion, being open and alert to resource teachers' expertise and class teachers' expertise, being accurate and complete in the detailing of it and reflective in allowing interpretation emerge, became a critically important means of recognising the teachers' legitimacy in the site, thus preserving the integrity of their intentions and actions. Consistent with assumptions of the constructivist paradigm, this called for adopting a reflexive stance throughout on my part as researcher. Apart from the measures taken to establish trustworthiness (elaborated in the following section), "reflexive bracketing" (Ahern, 1999, p. 408) was achieved by using reflexivity to identify assumptions, preconceptions and potential bias, to be self-consciously aware of them and to work with the evidence in that light. As such, the implications of power relations, potential role conflicts, and potential influence of my value systems and preconceived framework of inclusion were reflexively acknowledged, examined and challenged throughout (Flick, 2002; Hammersley, 2002; Patton, 2002). While the impact of researcher effect cannot be completely eradicated (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), this ongoing process of researcher reflexivity contributed to a systematic documentation of teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines which remains authentic to their understanding and action regarding inclusion.

As part of the process of self-reflection and as a means of establishing trustworthiness, certain measures were attended to. These measures along with methodological limitations are discussed in the final section.

⁶ Reactivity refers to the manner in which the researcher's presence may interfere with the site and the behaviour of participants involved. Respondent bias can take various forms ranging from obstruction to providing answers or impressions which they judge the researcher wants to hear or observe. Researcher bias refers to what the researcher brings to the site in terms of assumptions and preconceptions, which may effect how the researcher behaves, the questions asked, the selection of participants and selection of data for reporting and analysis (Robson, 2002).

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

A methodological limitation relates to the low number of schools and teachers involved which renders generalisation to all settings inappropriate. However, within the naturalistic tradition of interpretive enquiry, the issue is one of transferability, rather than generalisation. The nine case studies generated rich and illuminating data regarding contexts and actors which enables assessment of transferability to other sites. An unexpected consequence of the purposive sampling employed in the enquiry in relation to selection of the resource and class teachers was the involvement of a diverse range of schools which maximised the detail from and about each setting, contributing to the generation of typical and divergent data which further substantiates the emergent themes and insights gleaned. A second limitation relates to researcher effect and power relations arising from my position in relation to the enquiry, as researcher, as former class teacher and resource teacher in a mainstream primary school, and as lecturer involved in initial and continuing professional preparation of teachers. However, as previously stated, an ongoing process of reflexivity was undertaken throughout, to identify assumptions, preconceptions and potential bias, to be self-consciously aware of them and to work with the evidence in that light, thus securing rigorous and authentic documentation of teachers' intentions and practices regarding inclusion.

Other means of circumscribing researcher bias are connected with certain measures taken to establish the trustworthiness of the research. To this end, I attended to the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability associated with grounded theory appropriate to the constructivist paradigm influencing this enquiry. Credibility refers to the compatibility of the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the enquiry's participants with those that are attributed to them (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen, 1993). Measures to accomplish credibility were attended to as follows: triangulation of source was achieved by collecting information from resource teachers and class teachers while between and within method triangulation was achieved by obtaining data from interviews and observations, and by conducting a number and variety of observations in each setting

respectively (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998); peer debriefing was undertaken by reviewing my perceptions, insights and analyses with a professional outside the context who had sufficient knowledge to refine and redirect in providing feedback; member checking was achieved during and following each phase of data collection, by engaging participants in dialogue and presenting summaries of my interpretations for comment and verification.

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied in other contexts and with other actors, and in naturalistic enquiry, is dependent on the similarity between sending and receiving contexts (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Detailed contextual information has been provided within and across the nine case study sites to enable the reader to assess transferability of findings to other situations.

Dependability refers to the extent to which findings would be repeated if the enquiry was replicated with similar participants in similar contexts (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Confirmability is determined by the degree to which the enquiry's findings are the product of the focus of the enquiry and not researcher bias (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To accomplish dependability and confirmability, an audit trail has been provided attending to the six categories of "audit trail materials" identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 319-320). The interview guides, transcripts, field notes, observation schedules and summary contact forms facilitate an external check on raw data. The grids and diagrams specifying codes and categories at descriptive and interpretive levels connected with related interview and observation data and peer debriefing notes facilitate external checks on data processing. Memos, data analysis sheets and mini reports were devised as forms of data reconstruction and allow tracking of the logic used to synthesise and determine interpretations into coherent themes. The diary, scheduling appointments with participants for data collection, and signed letters of consent constitute process notes and facilitate a check on certain processes by which the enquiry was conducted. The initial doctoral proposal, journal (two volumes) and peer debriefing notes facilitate examination of researcher intentions and dispositions at stages throughout the enquiry while materials related to piloting of interviews and observations are available in the appendices as a source of information relevant to the development of data collection instruments. Each of these measures to establish trustworthiness enhances the credibility and rigour of this enquiry.

SUMMARY

Having detailed the emergent, two-phased, interpretive research design, the task of the remaining chapters is to report each of the two phases of this enquiry. Teachers' intentions with a specific focus on their interpretations of inclusion are documented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHERS' INTERPRETATIONS OF INCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

In this and the following six chapters, findings on teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice for teaching children with SEN in mainstream primary school are presented and discussed. As indicated in Chapter Four, phase one of this two-phased research design involved interviews with eighteen teachers, nine resource teachers and nine class teachers each pairing in a particular school. The purpose of these interviews was twofold: to elicit information on teachers' understandings and interpretations of inclusion, particularly as communicated through policy documentation; and, to elicit teachers' intentions in terms of constructing inclusive practice in a context which has seen rapid policy changes towards inclusion. Analysis of interview data led to the emergence of three key and interrelated themes: teachers' interpretations of inclusion, planning for inclusion, and pedagogical routines to facilitate inclusion. The theme of teachers' interpretations of inclusion forms the substance of this chapter and focuses on teachers' understandings of inclusive ideology and of what including children with SEN means for them in theory and in practice. The focus of the second theme in Chapter Six, planning for inclusion, is on teachers' intentions towards planning, and on how teachers go about preparing and organising for teaching all their children including those with SEN. The final theme of pedagogical routines presented in Chapter Seven includes data on the curriculum emphases and teaching methods considered by the teachers in their constructions of practice. Each theme has a number of sub-themes. While separating the themes is appropriate in the interests of clarity and the logic of presentation, their intended impact is cumulative, to provide as comprehensive a picture as possible of teachers' intended practice from their perspectives.

Following a brief outline of participants' biographies and school contexts, the chapter is structured to present each of four sub-themes relating to teachers' interpretations of inclusion: teachers' understanding of inclusive ideology; teachers' interpretations of school policy; needs of learners with SEN; and, teachers' roles.

PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHIES AND SCHOOL CONTEXTS

The eighteen teachers were qualified primary teachers, having pursued a number of alternative routes to achieving that qualification. All nine resource teachers had a Diploma in Special Educational Needs. Apart from this, one resource teacher had a Masters of Education, another had a Bachelor of Arts and a third had a Certificate in Learning Support. Regarding the additional qualifications of class teachers, one had a Certificate in Learning Support and another had a Masters of Arts while the third was completing a Masters of Education. The teachers are listed in sequence following resource and class teacher pairings in each of the nine schools, while their qualifications, number of completed years teaching and where applicable number of completed years teaching resource (at time of enquiry), along with the school type are presented in Table 5.1 overleaf. As indicated in Chapter Four, to protect the anonymity and identity of participants and their schools, pseudonyms have been assigned throughout reporting and presentation of data. The number of completed years of teaching for class teachers ranged from one year to over forty years, with this teacher due to retire at the end of the school year during which data were collected. While the completed years of teaching for resource teachers ranged from twelve to thirty one, five was the longest term spent on resource teaching and this was accomplished by four teachers. However, six of the nine resource teachers had additional experience of teaching children with SEN with two previously involved in learning support, two teaching special classes and the remaining two in special schools.

Table 5.1: Teachers' biographies

Name	Qualifications	Years teaching	Years teaching resource	School type
Aileen	BEd; Grad Dip in Sp Ed	26	4	Coeducational Senior
Ann	BA; Post Grad Dip in Ed	4		
Marie	BEd; Cert in Learning Support; Grad Dip in Sp Ed	21	5 plus 4 in LS	Girls Vertical Coeducational to first class
Breda	BEd; Cert in Learning Support	26		
Eilish	BEd; Grad Dip in Sp Ed	18	3	Coeducational Senior
Aoife	BEd; (completing MEd)	4		
Helena	BEd; Grad Dip in Sp Ed	26	4	Coeducational Vertical
Catherine	BA; Post Grad Dip in Ed	1		
Anita	BEd; Grad Dip in Sp Ed	16	4 plus 2 with a special class	Coeducational Junior
Rhona	BA; Post Grad Dip in Ed; MA	7		
Jacqueline	NT; BA; Grad Dip in Sp Ed	31	5 plus 3 as learning support 2 with special class	Coeducational Senior
Nicola	BEd	2		
Noelle	BEd; Cert in Learning Support; Grad Dip in Sp Ed	26	5 plus 9 in LS	Coeducational Vertical
Lucy	BEd	4		
Oonagh	Montessori Degree; Grad Dip in Sp Ed; MEd	15	5 plus 10 in special schools	Coeducational Multi-grade
Christine	BEd	22		
Niamh	BEd; Grad Dip in Sp Ed	12	3 plus 5 in a special school	Coeducational Multi-grade
Treasa	NT	40+		

Key for abbreviation of qualifications: BEd refers to Bachelor of Education; NT refers to National Teacher, a diploma awarded to teachers prior to the introduction of the BEd first awarded in 1977; MEd refers to Masters of Education; MA refers to Masters of Arts; Grad Dip in Sp Ed refers to Graduate Diploma in Special Education; Post Grad Dip in Ed refers to Post Graduate Diploma in Education.

The school contexts in which teachers were based, including the numbers of class teachers, additional support teachers and SNAs, whether the principal was administrative only or involved in teaching and the social environment in which the school was located are presented in Table 5.2. The order in which schools are listed by pseudonym corresponds to the sequencing of resource and class teacher pairings in Table 5.1.

Table 5.2: School contexts

School pseudonym	School type	No. of CTs	No. of ASTs	No of SNAs	Principal	Social context
Pine Senior National School	Coeducation, senior	16	5	4	Admin	Suburban, working class
Poplar Girls' National School	Girls, vertical Coeducation to first class	15	5	2	Admin	Inner city, breaking the cycle and designated as DEIS 1
Ash Senior National School	Coeducation, senior	12	3.5	1.5	Admin	Suburban, middle class
Sycamore National School	Coeducation, vertical	8	3	2.5	Admin	Suburban, mixed
Beech Junior National School	Coeducation, junior	6	4	1	Admin	Inner city, breaking the cycle and designated as DEIS 1
Elm Senior National School	Coeducation, senior	12	6	4	Admin	Suburban, breaking the cycle and designated as DEIS 1
Lime National School	Coeducation, vertical	23	4	2	Admin	Urban, middle class
Oak National School	Coeducation, multi-grade	3	2	1.5	Teaching	Village rural, mixed
Fuchsia National School	Coeducation, multi-grade	2	1 / 3	1	Teaching	Remote, rural, mixed

Key for abbreviations: CTs refers to class teachers; ASTs refers to additional support teachers; SNAs refers to special needs assistants; DEIS, the acronym for Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools, is an initiative designed to ensure that the most disadvantaged schools benefit from a comprehensive package of supports (Band One – DEIS 1) while ensuring that other schools continue to get supports in line with the level of disadvantage among their pupils (Band Two – DEIS 2). ‘Breaking the cycle’ incorporated a number of schemes and programmes that were integrated into the School Support Programme (SSP) under DEIS in 2005.

The grade levels taught by the class teachers, along with the total number of children in each class grouping, the number of children receiving some form of additional support and a breakdown of this number by category to indicate the basis for the additional support are presented in Table 5.3. Again, the order in which grade levels are listed corresponds to the sequencing of resource and class teacher pairings in Table 5.1.

Table 5.3: Grade levels and pupil cohort

Grade level	Total number of children	Children receiving additional support	Children with SEN	Children with LS needs	Children with EAL needs	Children with traveller needs
Sixth	28	5	1	4	0	0
Fourth	21	7	2	5	0	0
Fourth	21	7	1	3	3	0
Second	28	12	1	9	1	1
First	14	5	2	0	3	0
Fifth	23	7	4	2	0	1
Fourth	30	11	4	5	2	0
4th -6th	26	11	5	6	0	0
3rd -6th	17	1	1	0	0	0

Key for categories indicating basis for additional support: children with SEN refers to all children with high and low incidence needs as identified in Circular 02/05 and discussed in Chapter One but excluding those LS needs as described herewith; children with LS needs refers to children scoring between the 2nd and the 10th percentiles on standardised literacy and mathematics assessments; children with EAL needs refers to speakers of English as an additional language; children with traveller needs refers to children from the travelling community.

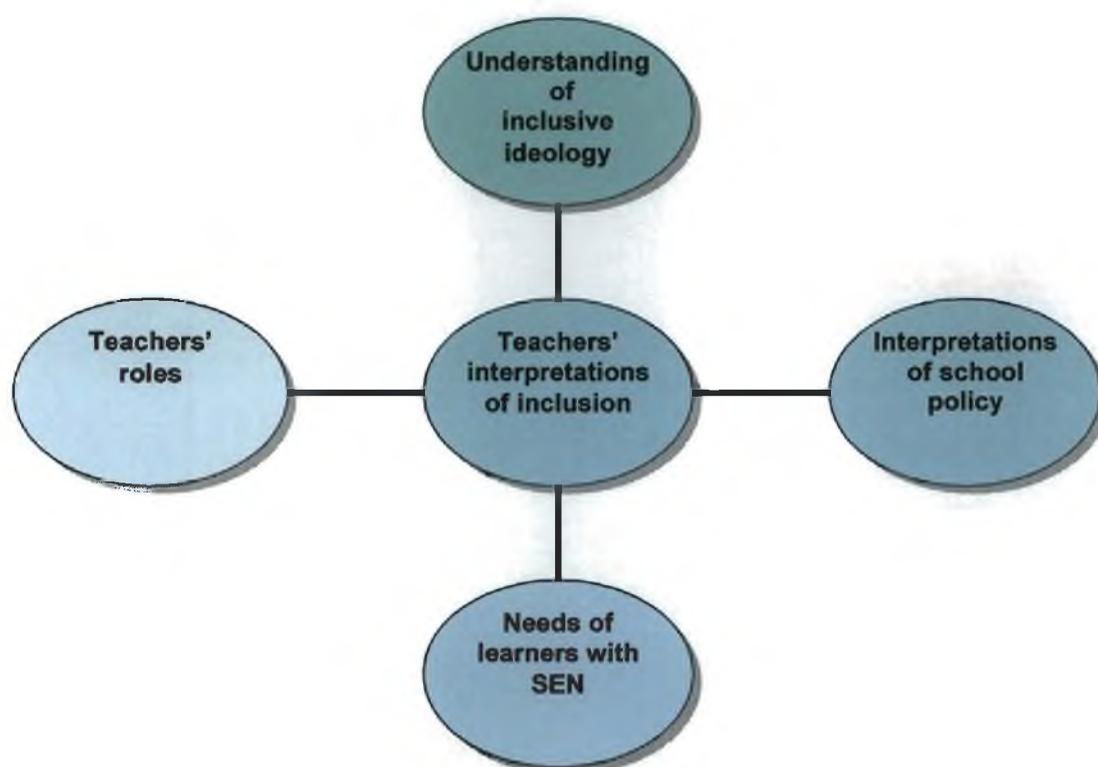
The assessed needs and gender of the child in each class who was tracked across mainstream and additional support teaching during the observation phase of this enquiry, the child's age at the start of the enquiry, the form of additional teaching being provided for that child and whether the child had been assigned an SNA are presented in Table 5.4. As previously, the order in which the children are listed corresponds to the sequencing of resource and class teacher pairings in Table 5.1.

Table 5.4: Age, gender and assessed need of and additional supports for child being tracked

Pseudonym	Age	Grade level	Assessed need of child being tracked	Gender of child	Support for child being tracked	SNA
Fiona	12 yrs	Sixth	Mild GLD	Female	Withdrawal 1:1	Yes
Lisa	10 yrs	Fourth	Mild GLD	Female	Withdrawal group	No
Colm	9 yrs	Fourth	Asperger's syndrome	Male	Withdrawal 1:1	Yes
Frank	7 yrs	Second	Asperger's syndrome	Male	Withdrawal 1:1	Yes
Philip	6 yrs	First	Emotional Behavioural Disorder	Male	Withdrawal group	No
Kathleen	11 yrs	Fifth	Mild GLD	Female	Combined: in-class and withdrawal	No
Patrick	10 yrs	Fourth	Dyslexia	Male	Withdrawal 1:1	No
Liam	12 yrs	4 th – 6 th	Asperger's syndrome	Male	Combined: in-class and withdrawal	Yes
Paul	12.11 yrs	3 rd – 6 th	Mod GLD	Male	Withdrawal 1:1	Yes

The theme of teachers' interpretations of inclusion is composed of four sub-themes as represented in Figure 5.2. In the following four sections, each sub-theme is discussed in turn while their impact on contributing to a composite understanding of teachers' intentions is intended to be cumulative.

Figure 5.1: Sub-themes contributing to teachers' interpretations of inclusion



TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF INCLUSIVE IDEOLOGY

Teachers were asked about their understanding of inclusion and what including children with SEN meant to them. In their initial responses, each teacher without exception expressed an understanding of inclusion as accepting all children who enrol in the school regardless of disability or need, where the school puts the required resources in place to support these children. None of the teachers made reference to “an unending *process* of increasing learning and participation for all students” (Booth et al., 2000, p. 3), an understanding of inclusion promoted in the literature. Nor did teachers hint at their schools as diverse problem solving organisations with a common mission that

emphasises learning for all students, a definition promoted by Ballard (1997), Clark et al. (1995) and Rouse and Florian (1996). However, as teachers articulated the meaning to them of putting the required resources in place and including children with SEN, their understanding that inclusion involved varied practices across locations within the mainstream setting was revealed. Typically, for children with SEN who were described as “not really all that different to their peers” (RT2.194, p. 21), but as having and causing difficulties, not coping, falling behind in their work and not keeping up in their class, the necessity for individual programmes featured strongly in teachers’ understanding of inclusion. This is captured by Eilish’s comment:

These kids would be on tailor made programmes for them. They’d be way behind anything in their class, what the children in their class would be doing ... and you’d have to design your own programme of work really for a lot of them, for each one. (RT3.13, p. 2)

Class teachers in particular expressed the view that including children with SEN required much one-to-one teaching. Referring to her sixth class student with SEN, when it comes to teaching maths, Ann admits that she could “never leave her working with the class” (CT1.55, p. 9). While indicating uncertainty about the practice, the following description of accommodating one-to-one teaching within the context of class teaching provided by Ann is representative of the class teachers’ descriptions generally:

I have no other way round it. I haven’t worked any other way round it apart from me talking to the class, teaching them, letting them work for a few minutes by themselves and then me going to her ... the input after that, it’s extra. Like I mean she would definitely need monitoring all the time just to make sure she’s on the right track. (CT1.55, p. 9)

Although not articulated in teachers’ definitions of inclusion, also conveyed in the above commentary is a sense of grappling with the unending process of increasing learning and participation for all learners (Booth et al., 2000).

Like the other class teachers, Aoife acknowledges the need for individual teaching. However, as her fourth class child “doesn’t like receiving individual attention and doesn’t like somebody sitting down beside him and telling him and doesn’t react well to individual attention ... in front of peers in the classroom” (CT3.123, p. 13), Aoife regards withdrawal to the resource room for one-to-one teaching as a necessary

element of inclusion. Reflected in her comment is a view shared by class teachers that children who are conscious of labelling in the presence of peers, and therefore reluctant to participate in one-to-one teaching in the classroom, are however positively disposed to individual teaching in the context of withdrawal. Treasa, a teaching principal in a two-teacher rural school, argued that “from the point of view of rural children ... it’s very important for them to be integrated locally ... cause if you’re brought away at three or four, if you’re brought away into a school (*in the city*), you will never belong” (CT.9.79, p. 14). Although the argument was based on environmental context, this perception was not confined to rural districts as teachers in urban, suburban and city areas also argued in favour of children with SEN going to local schools with their siblings and neighbours. Despite such advocacy for inclusion, a place for withdrawal to resource was also acknowledged, as the following extract from Treasa reveals:

Or do they have to be inside in the classroom all the time? I don’t think children like that are able for the classroom all the time. They’re not. I think it’s the withdrawing that children need from time to time. Back and over. Flexibility. (CT.9.82, p. 14)

All resource and class teachers in this enquiry perceived withdrawal to the resource room for individual or group teaching as a necessary element of inclusion. Generally, withdrawal was justified on the basis that these children were “way behind anything in their class” (RT3.13, p. 2), needed “sustained work at a very low level” not required by “the vast majority of the class” (CT2.116, p. 15), and they benefited by being removed from “any distraction” that could “further augment their difficulties” (RT.5.124, p. 9). These reasons resonate with research previously reviewed reporting that students with SEN require the additional academic support provided in the resource room to supplement teaching in classrooms (Marston, 1996; Manset and Semmel, 1997; Baxter et al., 2002; Magiera and Zigmond, 2005). Furthermore, the practice of withdrawal in the context of inclusion is consistent with investigations of practice in ‘inclusive schools’ where the withdrawal of students from their classes for individual or small-group tuition continued despite a commitment to inclusion (Clark et al., 1995b; Clark et al., 1999; Dyson and Millward, 2000). Observation of practice, relating to the second phase of data generation, facilitated investigation of the teaching-learning

experiences and outcomes for learners with SEN associated with the range of settings across the mainstream school site, thus supporting the significance of the two-phased design of this enquiry.

Although the teachers expressed the view of inclusion as accepting all children in the school regardless of SEN, and interpreted withdrawal from the mainstream class as an element of inclusion, their elaboration revealed a shared understanding that inclusion in mainstream was not for all. Severe disabilities represented the ability cut-off point for teachers beyond which they felt children could not be included in mainstream. This view is reflected in the following forthright statement from Aileen:

I think I'd have to draw the line at the severe, those children with severe disabilities. I mean even in terms of physically, wheelchairs, getting them in and out of the place and the nursing care that's required for them on a one-to-one basis you know, or children who would suffer from epileptic fits on a regular basis. You know it's just frightening to see it ... but I think I would draw the line there. That's just my personal opinion. (RT1.138, p. 18)

Also, teachers considered that children with challenging behaviour were "the hardest to cope with" and questioned the appropriateness of inclusion for these learners. Teachers' negative disposition towards inclusion of children with challenging behaviour is captured in Eilish's comment:

We don't mind children with learning disabilities once their behaviour is okay but the children who are constantly say with the ODD defying the teacher, constantly standing up to the teacher, just in general hurting the other children, calling the other children names, pushing and fighting, that's basically where we have most problems in the school. (RT3.249, p. 26)

This paradoxical interpretation of inclusion for all but with 'cut-off point' and preference resonates with research on teacher attitudes reporting that teachers have a hierarchy of inclusive preferences towards types and levels of SEN, with least positive attitudes towards the inclusion of children with severe disabilities and challenging behaviour (Forlin, 1995; Soodak, Podell and Lehman, 1998; Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Ghesqui re, Moors, Maes and Vandenberghe, 2002; Visser and Stokes, 2003).

The restructuring of school practices called for in policy guidelines issued by the DES (2003, 2004, 2005a) was evident in the understanding of inclusion conveyed by four teachers in the enquiry. Their collaborative practices involved co-teaching as a

means of securing in-class support. Nonetheless, these teachers also acknowledged the benefits of withdrawal to address difficulties and to “have that little bit of support” (CT6.141, p. 25). As such, on the one hand, their practice of in-class teaching represents the school’s attempt “to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organisation and provision and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity” (Sebba and Sachdev, 1997, p. 9). On the other hand, their endorsement of withdrawal is representative of giving primacy to the school’s core mission of providing “high-quality, appropriate education” (Hegarty, 2001, p. 248).

Oonagh, one of the two resource teachers who practised in-class teaching, argued withdrawal was a useful means of extending additional support to children experiencing difficulty with concept or skill acquisition regardless of the reason. In broadening their focus to accommodate all vulnerable students and not just those with SEN, Oonagh and her multi-grade class teacher Christine were, to an extent, subscribing to the “social inclusion perspective” promoted by Dyson (1997, p. 154). Articulating what inclusion meant in practice, Oonagh, who had just completed a Masters of Education, with a focus on special education, was the only teacher to use the term “restructured”; this was with reference to the introduction of in-class teaching the previous year which she argues “has really benefited everybody because if you’ve kids at the borderline, they’re suddenly getting the concrete materials and they’re being taught in a way that targets the children with difficulties but benefits everybody, they’re benefiting” (RT8.111, p. 21). The following explanation illustrates the fluid and flexible approach Oonagh claims is integral to what inclusion means to her in practice:

We would get to know the pupils much better from going in class so therefore then you can kind of spot difficulties and pull them out and just because they come out doesn’t mean that they’ll always come out ... this child has a difficulty with say addition of fractions or something so we might just take them out for two weeks until that difficulty is surmounted and then they would go back again. So it’s all very kind of fluid and flexible. (RT8.2, p. 1)

References to the practices of devising individual, tailor made programmes and one-to-one teaching by the class teacher in teachers’ interpretations of inclusion reflect definitions in the literature proposed by Friend and Bursuck (1996), Ryndak et al. (2000) and Stainback et al. (1996). These definitions focus on classroom practice and

emphasise requirements to make appropriate learning individually accessible to pupils with SEN in their mainstream classes by adapting curricula and modifying instructional approaches. However, the endorsement by the teachers in this enquiry for withdrawal to the resource room as an element of inclusion is at odds with inclusive ideology; it gives substance to criticisms voiced in the literature of special education colonising rather than transforming the mainstream (Dyson, 1997; Ainscow et al., 2004). As such, teachers' interpretations of inclusion reflect a somewhat contradictory combination of specialist and inclusive principles. However, as this is an enquiry about documenting teachers' intentions, it is their perspectives that determine the legitimacy of such apparent contradictions and what becomes evident therefore is that teachers' interpretations of inclusive ideology and policy are fashioned by ambiguities and tensions. Thus, teachers' understanding of inclusion resonates with the integral-distinctive conceptualisation of educating people with SEN discussed in Chapter Two, which proposes that dilemmas and tensions arise in any attempt to pull together the contrary tendencies towards specialisation and inclusion. Observation, as a second phase of data generation in this enquiry, was significant in facilitating investigation of the manner in which the contradictions and tensions in teachers' intentions are played out in practice and this is documented in relation to the theme of coherence-fragmentation presented in Chapter Eleven.

Progressing from teachers' understanding of inclusive ideology, a second aspect of interpretations to emerge in this enquiry relates to their understanding of school policy and how this informs their intentions and sets them up for action. Teachers' interpretations of school policy are discussed in the following section.

INTERPRETATIONS OF SCHOOL POLICY

As previously stated, the rapidly changing policy context towards inclusion in Ireland is a key factor in shaping this enquiry's problem. To reiterate, within a decade from 1998, the mainstream primary education system has experienced a significant change in terms of its requirement to include and appropriately educate all children regardless of need. Such change, not necessarily initiated by those most affected by its implementation, constitutes a challenge to the established practices of teachers.

However, the measures and incentives to implement change have been piecemeal, while the ideology, definitions and concepts of inclusion are many and varied. Within this web of contextual factors, teachers have to interpret the changing policies and the definitions and principles of inclusion in their constructions of practice. Regarding changing policies, the system of resource teaching allocation was modified by the DES in June 2004, immediately prior to the school year during which data were collected for this enquiry. The modified system¹ combined general allocation of support for children with high incidence SEN with a specific allocation of support for those with low incidence SEN where the hours of support were determined on an individual basis in relation to one of eleven categories of disability (Circular 09/04) (DES, 2004). As a result, schools could provide immediate support for children with high incidence SEN while making individual applications for support for those with low incidence SEN. Also, the necessity to match the level of support provided to the level of need was emphasised, along with flexibility in the deployment of differential support levels by implementing one-to-one and group teaching and combining withdrawal and in-class support. Two years prior to data collection, collaboration of special needs support teams in schools was advocated (Circular 24/03) (DES, 2003)². Policy at national level is briefly repeated here as it is against this changing landscape that policies at school level are interpreted by teachers and played out in action.

In discussing the evidence on teachers' interpretations of school policy, it is necessary to distinguish between their knowledge of the 'document' outlining school policy and their implicit understanding of the school's guiding principles in relation to inclusion. Significantly, in only one school was the policy termed one of inclusion while in the remaining eight, it was referred to as a 'special needs' policy. As a crude measurement, all nine resource teachers were aware of the existence of some form of policy document, had contributed or were contributing to its drafting and could list off the contents of information typically covered. In contrast, four class teachers, two of

¹ This modified system, referred to in DES circulars as "the weighted system" or "the general allocation model" (GAM), is discussed in detail in Chapter One.

² Coming down the pipeline but released following data collection was Circular 02/05 (DES, 2005a) which set out in detail the deployment and organisation of teaching resources for pupils with SEN in mainstream primary schools, and re-advocated collaboration of special needs support teams, copperfastening the intent of Circular 09/04 (DES, 2004) and Circular 24/03 (DES, 2003) respectively.

whom were the school principals, indicated awareness of such a document. Regardless, all teachers discussed at length the policy in their school on educating children with SEN. Based on the responses of those familiar with the document, typically, it included information on monitoring, identification, assessment, referral, prevention strategies, intervention and supports, the role of parents, and home-school links. For most of these teachers, the document was “basically what was going on in the school” (CT5.141, p. 22) or “evolved in accordance with what was already going on in the school” (RT3.263, p. 28). For the five who hinted at change, it was with reference to their school’s “learning support policy” which needed to be “tweaked” to reflect “this new weighted system” (RT4.181, p. 22). One teacher stated “it would be a policy of inclusion” but elaborating on what was in the policy added “to withdraw or include or whatever and the type of special class” (RT2.199, p. 22). Such a focus on listing administrative and organisational procedures may have limited potential to inform practice, while tweaking existing school routines in conformity with the most recent circular displays a ‘conformity’ mindset, one of compliance rather than transformative engagement with a policy of inclusion. Furthermore, tweaking and modifying existing arrangements falls short of the transformation, restructuring and reorientation of practice advocated in the literature and necessary if schools are to increase the participation in learning of all students (Clark et al., 1999; Dyson, 2001; Ainscow et al., 2003; Ainscow et al., 2004; Ainscow, 2007; Slee, 2007).

As teachers discussed the school’s guiding principles on educating children with SEN, changes to practice in response to DES circulars became apparent. These changes were signified in a number of ways and to varying degrees: by a movement beyond one-to-one teaching to include groups on a withdrawal basis; by grouping children with learning support needs with children with SEN for additional support who traditionally had been grouped as two distinct categories and taken separately by either the learning support teacher or the resource teacher; and, by including children who were under-achieving regardless of reason in additional support arrangements who had previously been excluded. Such change in school policy brought about as a direct response to DES directives is evident in the following extract from Helena:

Well the way it is that the two children that I do on a one-to-one, they have been allocated five hours so that's why. In this new system they would be in the low incidence as they're called so we decided right that I would continue to take those on a one-to-one basis ... the other children in the group in fourth class were children who were allocated the two point five hours ... because they now more or less come under the weighted system ... we decided to put them together in a group for this year ... we're pooling the two point five hours and the two point five hours and we're giving them maybe overall four hours and then trying to give somebody else a little bit of time as well. What it means I suppose is that more children get access to special education or to extra support. (RT4. 30, p. 4)

This change to deployment of additional support teachers in a fashion that attempts to match the level of support provided with the levels of need constitutes a pragmatic response to the GAM and is relatively straightforward to implement. However, the deployment of differential support levels by combining withdrawal and in-class support constitutes a restructuring and transformation of practice and although also reflected in DES policy directives, had been introduced in only two of the nine schools. A view on how this change in school policy came about in Elm Senior National School (SNS), along with a glimpse of the support teachers' reservations towards it, is provided in the following extract from Jacqueline:

You asked earlier where did it come from. It basically came from Keith (*school principal*), I presume from circulars we've had from the Department, from other schools, you know, "I want people to be in classes this year." And we're kinda going okay but let's put a shape on this, let's have a reason for this, let's structure it and I think in a sense everybody was really happy when it changed to maths because it's much easier to structure a maths programme. It's done for you and it's step by step and systematic or whatever. But one of the reluctances I know very strongly from special ed was that we would be glorified SNAs, that basically we were going in to hand out the materials, to correct the copies or whatever. (RT6.27, p. 7)

Drawing on previously reviewed research, the threat to professional identity evident in Jacqueline's understanding which was shared by other teachers could be addressed by the establishment of 'communities of practice' where change is instigated through the social process of generating and using knowledge (McLaughlin, 2002; Ainscow et al., 2004). Regarding the switch of focus of in-class teaching from literacy to maths, further commentary revealed that this decision was based on "the Drumcondra

tests³ which were “absolutely atrocious” (RT6.11, p. 3). In fact, Jacqueline admits that the principal asked them “specifically to target that middle group that they’re the ones that he wants to try and see that the results are improved on” (RT6.16, p. 4). Similarly, standardised assessment results were a stimulus to changing practice in the direction of in-class teaching in Oak National School (NS) as evidenced in Oonagh’s claim that “it was more out of necessity than thinking let’s try some team teaching” (RT8.24, p. 5). This initiative on the part of the principal in Elm SNS and the principal and resource teacher in Oak NS suggests a more enlightened attitude regarding the benefits of assessment for learning and of evidence-based practice, both concerns featuring prominently in more recent research literature and particularly the focus on assessment by the NCCA (2005) and the DES (2005c). Furthermore, the initiative resonates with definitions of inclusion that regard schools as diverse problem solving organisations with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students (Clark et al., 1995; Rouse and Florian, 1996; Ballard, 1997; Ainscow, 2007). However, an unintended consequence of policy change is ability grouping within the class⁴. Recourse to observation of practice was a critically important means of capturing the teaching and learning experiences associated with in-class teaching and the grouping arrangements during those teaching-learning episodes. In-class teaching-learning experiences associated with context are of particular relevance to the central themes of this enquiry and are elaborated in the chapters relating to communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation.

As much as change was occurring in response to DES circulars, context influenced how practices were shaped. For example, in the small multi-grade, three-teacher school where the number of children with SEN was high enough to secure a full-time resource teacher and the school also had a learning support teacher, each additional support teacher provided support for all the children who had needs across one set of grades. The arrangement meant class teachers had only one additional support teacher to

³ Standardised norm-referenced assessments, in this instance relating to mathematics

⁴ Nicola’s fifth class in Elm SNS is divided into two ability groups for maths, with the two teachers alternating the groups with which they work when a given topic changes. In Oak NS, although the ability grouping is “very much kind of fluid and changes” (RT8.10, p. 2), the children in the multi-grade fourth to sixth class are grouped according to their needs in literacy and maths and as the resource teacher, Oonagh always works with the groups which include children with SEN.

liaise with. In some larger schools with higher numbers of additional support teachers, all the children within one class who needed support were withdrawn at the same time but to different teachers. This arrangement was favoured by class teachers as their classes were intact for a greater proportion of the school day which ensured “the children who needed to be there” were present while they were “actually doing the teaching” (CT7.30, p. 5). Although not cited as a drawback, if the legislation (EPSEN Act 2004) (Government of Ireland, 2004) mandating consultation to devise IEPs is enacted and if the collaboration recommended by the DES (Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05) (2003, 2004, 2005a) is to occur in practice, then this arrangement also requires class teachers to collaborate and consult with more than one support teacher, complicating planning and practice. In schools with lower numbers of additional support teachers, the children who needed support could be withdrawn from the one class at different times throughout the day, and again to different teachers. The yoyo effect of this particular arrangement is captured by Catherine whose plan to teach Irish when one of her children with an exemption was withdrawn to resource came asunder:

Then it just worked out that I couldn't do it because some of them were going, there's a lot of in and out, in and out, because Frank will be going sometimes in the morning, sometimes after little break, sometimes after big break depending on the timetable. And then the resource groups, they go out Tuesday to Friday and the maths group go from a quarter past eleven to half twelve Thursday and Friday, and now I have Joyce and she'll be going out after little break. Amparo goes out after lunch... So it's just in and out constantly. That's every class really like I mean. That's the way it goes. (CT4.78, p. 9)

The scheduling of withdrawal from the mainstream class invariably has consequences for the learners. Overall, apart from capturing the types of change occurring in practice, the extracts reveal that teachers' interpretations of policy are shaped by context in a manner that has given rise to varied and multiple practices with attendant implications for children's learning experiences. Observation was critical to capturing the complexities of inclusion in practice and to illuminating the nature of teaching and the particularities of learning experienced by learners, specifically those with SEN. This is documented in detail under the theme of coherence-fragmentation in Chapter Eleven.

Teachers' understanding of the needs of children with SEN was prevalent in their discussion of inclusive ideology and practice. Emerging as a third theme of teachers' interpretations, discussion of the needs of learners with SEN forms the focus of the following section.

NEEDS OF LEARNERS WITH SEN

In initial expressions of the needs of their children with SEN, all teachers with one exception made reference to category terms. Regarding terminology, Christine's account of her senior, multi-grade class is typical, although the other teachers tended to elaborate on one child's needs before listing the next:

I have a great mixture, great variety. I have one child with Asperger's. He has only been recently diagnosed. I have one general learning disabilities, the lad was diagnosed at infant level. I have six dyslexics, but then I have two, one in fourth, one in fifth who are severe dyslexia. Then I have one lad with dyspraxia. (CT8.27, p. 4)

Teachers' references to category terms and children being "diagnosed" with a particular syndrome or condition reflect a psycho-medical conceptualisation of need and subscribe to the within-child deficit understanding of SEN discussed in Chapter Two. However, as teachers articulated the implications of these needs for teaching and for children's learning, a more detailed and sophisticated understanding of needs delving into and beyond the label was revealed.

As a first step, class teachers, none of whom had the experience of CPD on teaching children with SEN, 'surfing the syndrome'. In preparation for her second class which had a child with Asperger's Syndrome (AS), Catherine recalls: "in the summer I checked up Asperger's on the computer and you know they give you kind of the short list of what the symptoms are. Like it gives you what the characteristics are" (CT4.199, p. 26). Resource teachers, all of whom had completed post-graduate studies in special educational needs, had existing knowledge of the 'characteristics' associated with each category. Regardless of how the information was sourced, for all of the teachers, knowing about the characteristics influenced their intentions towards practice to an extent. This is illustrated by commentary from Helena who is "very conscious" that for the child with a hearing impairment she "would pronounce words very clearly ... would

be conscious with the equipment how to use it and that it's used properly" (RT4.127, p. 15). Helena also notes that the child "has to sit with her back to the window so that she can see (*the teacher*), sit opposite (*the teacher*) so that she can lip read" (RT4.127, p. 15). Indeed, while the sentiment is representative of the other teachers, Helena phrases the influence of category on teacher intentions neatly when she concludes: "there are special considerations and it would influence how I'd act with that child and the programme that I would make out for that child" (RT4.128, p. 15).

By drawing on category characteristics to make sense of the child's needs, teachers' conceptualisation of SEN reflects the concept of distinctive needs⁵ discussed in Chapter Two (Visser, 1993; O'Brien, 1998; O'Brien and Guiney, 2001; Norwich, 2002; Norwich and Kelly 2005; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007). Although knowledge of distinctive needs was useful and influenced teachers' intentions, it had limitations as the following extract from Ann reveals:

Now it didn't tell me, it didn't tell teachers what to do. It's more to tell parents what the Cornelia de Lange syndrome is and what the characteristics of it are and what to expect from a child with the syndrome. But it didn't tell you what to do with the child or what subjects would be best or whatever like that. (CT1.64, p. 10)

As a next step, class teachers spoke to other teachers who had previously taught the child while the inevitable third step was going beyond the label and getting to know the child, as the remainder of Catherine's account indicates:

So the teacher last year, I spoke to her and I asked her what did she do with him. So I took that on board and then I would say to myself, okay, now I need to get to know Frank. I need to find out myself, like what is he interested in. (CT4.199, p. 26)

Getting to "know the child" and not just the "condition" or "syndrome" was important for teachers. However, knowing the children, while necessary, is not sufficient in order to meet their needs. This highlights the importance of capacity building (Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2005) to enable teachers to move beyond the label in identifying meaningful learning outcomes and experiences for the children. In this

⁵ To reiterate, this refers to needs shared with some people by virtue of membership of a particular sub-group but not with others.

respect, resource teachers, all of whom had the experience of CPD on special needs, interpreted needs as aims in priority learning areas and this interpretation shaped their intentions towards practice as the following extract from Helena typifies:

Em, I suppose I would see them (*needs*) in terms of, it would depend on the subject first of all I suppose. Okay, if you take literacy, you want the child to attain a certain standard of literacy before they leave the primary school. Now with a child with special needs you know they're not going to reach that stage that's going to be suitable for secondary school and reading at that level. But if you can get them to the certain stage where they have enough reading for life skills, I would see that as an aim for certain children. Now not indeed that I would hold them to that and if they could go further than that, that's great. But I think that I would set then certain targets I suppose to be reached long term and I would break down those targets to weekly or fortnightly steps or whatever. The same with maths, you want them to achieve a certain standard that they can be independent, tell the time, handle money, use ... calculators if they can't maybe retain number facts or whatever. But skills, depending on the level of the child and the level of ability of that child ... and the same with social skills they have to have. (RT4.123, p. 14)

In contrast, class teachers were more likely to identify the needs of the child with SEN relative to typical children. Referring to a child with Mild GLD in her fourth class, Breda comments "she's functioning at the level of say a six or seven year old child" (CT2.22, p. 3). The influence of this understanding on Breda's intentions is captured in the following statement:

I look in relation to the curriculum and in relation to the level of the present class, in other words, what I need to teach the class and how much of that can I actually teach those children. (CT2.29, p. 4)

Similar understanding of need is conveyed in Lucy's account of her fourth class child who is "very, very dyslexic":

Has major difficulties with all parts of the curriculum. Well apart from sport, he's pretty handy. Em, like even blending two letters, like even /op/, he mightn't get the sound right. So his reading, because of that as you get further up, fourth class maths problems, reading the instructions, decimal point, signs, plus or multiply, tables not there. In English, the level he's at is way below ... at three letter and sure the fourth class reader is all highfalutin. (CT7.53, p. 8)

Class teachers' perception of need as a level of ability relative to typical children conveys understanding predicated on the presumption of homogeneity of learners while

reference to the extent of class learning that can be taught to children with SEN has undertones of the common element in the conceptualisation of need proposed by Norwich (2002), in so far as it considers needs shared by all. However, given the variation in levels of ability between the child with SEN and same age peers indicated in the class teachers' extracts, it is only at a very general level that needs can be conceptualised as common. Furthermore, in such circumstances and with regard to teachers' intentions, it is difficult to envisage how class teachers can promote the inclusive ideology of increasing participation in their learning of all students by following a class level programme without adapting and modifying teaching methods and materials and adjusting the conceptual levels of the curriculum to accommodate the children with SEN within their class grouping in any teaching and learning arrangements. Evident, therefore are differences between class and resource teachers' interpretations of the needs of learners with SEN; resource teachers focus on individual needs converted into aims and class teachers consider common needs with a consequent emphasis on what the child can not do. Investigation of the implications of these varying interpretations for practice and for the learning experiences of the children was facilitated by observation and is documented under the themes of attunement and coherence-fragmentation in Chapters Ten and Eleven respectively.

The fourth dimension of teachers' interpretations of inclusion relates to their understanding of role, the class teacher's role vis-à-vis the resource teacher's role and visa versa in arrangements for teaching children with SEN. This theme of teachers' roles is discussed in the final section.

TEACHERS' ROLES

All but one of the teachers regarded the responsibility of teaching the children with SEN as shared. Indeed three of the five class teachers in the enquiry with less than five years teaching experience went so far as to include the SNA and school principal, although perhaps not in as round about a fashion as conveyed by Catherine:

Oh God I would say me because the class teacher, this is just from your colleagues saying to you that at the end of the day it rests with you, do you know? ... but Helena (*resource teacher*) here, she does so much work and I kinda take my cue from her because Helena is so experienced ...definitely Ms

Thornton (*SNA*), she would play a part, but like I mean she just takes guidance, she does her best with what we give her ... and then Mr Ward (*principal*) as well, you know if I was to talk to him about Frank, he will have an insight into Frank that I'll only be learning about now because he's seen him for the past four years ... So I'd say it's a three way thing, you know, there's myself and there's Helena and there's Mr Ward and then Ms Thornton to a lesser extent. (CT4.228, pp. 30-31)

The exception was one resource teacher who expressed the view that "the class teacher has to have the ultimate responsibility for them and they accept that themselves" (RT1.143, p. 19).

Regardless of the overriding perception of shared responsibility, teachers' elaboration on the practices of teaching children with SEN revealed understanding of a division of labour between resource and class teacher. Specifically, when it came to determining and delivering on the IEP targets for these children, all of the teachers indicated these were predominantly the responsibility of the resource teacher. Setting targets is one of two planning duties⁶ for resource teachers identified by the DES (Circular 08/02) (2002a). For example, as the resource teacher in her school, Eilish tests the children and knows their needs "in literacy and numeracy" so she is "the person who dictates what's happening in the programme and if the class teacher does have time he or she might listen to the child's reading out of (*Eilish's*) book or they might look at where they are in the maths book and give some help but in general they just don't have the time" (RT3.217, p. 22). For the child whom Lucy described as "very, very dyslexic", Noelle, as resource teacher, teaches him a "reading programme separate from the class programme" and "would take responsibility for those targets" (RT7.83, p. 14). As such, despite the dominant perception that teaching children with SEN is a joint responsibility shared by class and resource teachers, the extracts on teachers' roles support their understanding of a specific role being assigned to and undertaken by the resource teacher which involves overseeing the individual programme for children with SEN and teaching these children in order to achieve "specially" selected targets. Implicit in this role designation is an acceptance that resource teachers have specialised knowledge not necessarily shared by class teachers. Although such role designation accords with DES

⁶ The second planning duty is agreeing the targets with the class teacher and the principal (as discussed in Chapter One).

directives on the role of the resource teacher (Circulars 08/02 and 02/05) (2002a, 2005a), it also supports a clearly demarcated division of labour between resource and class teacher in teachers' intentions regarding teaching arrangements and practices for children with SEN. Teachers' interpretations of separate roles undertaken by resource and class teacher which have implications for practice and for the children's learning experiences, were further investigated through observation and contribute to the theme of coherence-fragmentation presented in Chapter Eleven.

As reported in Chapter One, one of the seven responsibilities for resource teachers directed by the DES involves the resource teacher advising class teachers on curriculum adaptation, teaching strategies, appropriate textbooks, information technology and resources (Circular 08/02) (2002a). In their responses, all resource teachers made reference to this particular aspect of their role, typified in Aileen's account below:

I suppose the fact that I'm here as resource teacher, they do come to me for advice even in terms of say adapting the curriculum or differentiation, they would ask for advice ... there would be certain teachers who would be totally unaware of certain conditions out there and they would certainly always ask and they would be looking for particular information on a particular child if they have a particular syndrome. (RT1.131, p. 17)

This sharing of information and resources was an aspect of the resource teacher's role not only acknowledged but appreciated by all class teachers, who attributed the ability to advise to the expertise of their resource teachers. Catherine, who in her second year of teaching, is the teacher with the shortest amount of professional experience in this enquiry, is aware that Helena, the resource teacher "did the course last year and it's so fresh in her head and she's so many different ideas on what to do" (CT4.228, p. 30). Catherine concludes she "would look to her (*resource teacher*) for guidance because she's so experienced in the area" (CT4.230, p. 30). Although expertise may be relative, nonetheless, at the other end of the professional experience scale, Christine, the teaching principal with more years of teaching experience than either the resource or learning support teachers in her school, welcomes their support and readily acknowledges their expertise:

The girls can see things. The girls because of their experience would be able to pinpoint and I have no problem what so ever with letting them at it ... the girls do the planning. They actually work out the plan. They have IEPs for each child, but they would work out even for the other children, from the Drumcondras⁷, they would work out a programme ... they will tell me “this group need more comprehension” or “this group need more work on vocabulary.” They can assess the tests, is the word I’m looking for and diagnose the tests ... I would be very open, especially when they come in to me and it’s all worked out, they would be constantly working on ideas. I think it’s fantastic because I mean the children are benefiting and learning something new everyday. (CT8.80, p. 13)

The combined extracts from resource and class teachers reveal a perception that resource teachers have specific expertise when it comes to teaching children with SEN. Arising from this understanding, observations enabled investigation of how this expertise is drawn upon, and shared in practice, and again this contributes to the substance of the theme of coherence-fragmentation.

A particular dimension to the resource and class teacher roles surfaced in the two schools where in-class support teaching was practised. Precisely because of the nature of team teaching, both teachers had to determine who would teach what to which children and how, within the same classroom and for a set period of time. This added certain dynamics to the roles and relationships of class and resource teacher pairings not experienced in the schools that practised withdrawal support only.

When team teaching was introduced in Elm SNS, Nicola admits to being “a bit apprehensive about the whole thing cause someone coming into your class and all” (CT6.28, p. 5). From experience, she claims “it’s worked really well because (*they*) split the class into two groups” and each teacher works with one of the groups to teach a particular topic while both groups do the same topic but at varied levels. Jacqueline, the resource teacher speaks positively about this “grouping in fifth class” for the following reason: “I feel I’m responsible for a particular group, I’m actually teaching them and I can see whether there’s progress happening or not” (RT6.21, p. 6). However, as the account continues, a number of concerns are raised that shed light on the dynamics of this in-class resource and class teacher role:

One of my worries and I think one of the worries we’ve discussed in learning support is that we know very strongly that the class teacher is the one in charge.

⁷ Standardised norm-referenced assessments in literacy and mathematics

And you know, when they're in their early twenties and I'm in my fifties, they're kinda looking at me and thinking maybe she would do this better. And it's to get those barriers broken down. There are reluctances on our part and you know the way sort of at times a child says "teacher" and you're kind of wondering will I go and answer that or does that child specifically want the class teacher. And you want to be really, really careful. But I mean apart from clearing it with the class teacher that you don't want to intrude on their class territory and if you do please tell me, which I think is terribly important because when you're looking at the needs of the child maybe you're doing something that the teacher doesn't really want you to do so it's got to be open communication and you've got to constantly keep asking, you know, just tell me if there's something you don't want me to do or tell me if there's something you do want me to do. That would be one of my biggest worries about it is that I would do something inadvertently that would annoy or interfere with the class teacher. (RT6.21, p. 6)

This encroachment-interference phenomenon is echoed in comments from the teachers in Oak NS with reference to their practice of team-teaching. Christine, who was very favourably disposed towards in-class teaching support nonetheless admitted: "I wouldn't be used to, Oonagh comes into my class there now, what five years ago I wouldn't have been comfortable passing over my class to anybody, but I mean, it's absolutely fantastic, it's shared" (CT8.83, p. 13). These teachers' intentions relating to co-teaching raise interesting issues that connect with a wider literature on teacher privacy (Lortie, 1975), 'balkanisation' (Hargreaves, 1992, 1994) and what Stenhouse (1975) described as the 'restricted' and 'extended' professional, while issues of establishing trust and openness are clearly evident also in terms of creating a collaborative culture (Hargreaves, 1994). Investigation of how these intentions are played out in practice was facilitated by observation, and practices in the context of co-teaching are documented as relevant under the three central themes of this enquiry.

SUMMARY

The views expressed by the teachers on inclusion, school policy, the needs of learners with SEN and teachers' roles reveal multiple and varied interpretations of inclusive ideology and practice. Although their interpretations are shaped to an extent by policy documentation, specifically DES directives and impending legislation, context also has a shaping influence and different contexts contribute to the variations in teachers' interpretations. While some of these interpretations are consistent with

inclusive ideology, others reflect the principles of specialist approaches consistent with the psycho-medical model of understanding SEN. Such contrary interpretations support a combination of special and inclusive understandings and influences at force in teachers' intentions towards practice, underscoring the complexities associated with balancing appropriate learning experiences and sustaining inclusion. As previously claimed, supporting the significance of the sequence of data collection in this enquiry, observation facilitated the documentation of teachers' interpretations of inclusion in practice.

Progressing from inclusive interpretations, a key aspect of teachers' intentions is their planning for constructing inclusive practice. The details of how teachers prepare and organise for teaching all their children including those with SEN form the substance of the second theme relating to teachers' intentions and are discussed in the following chapter.

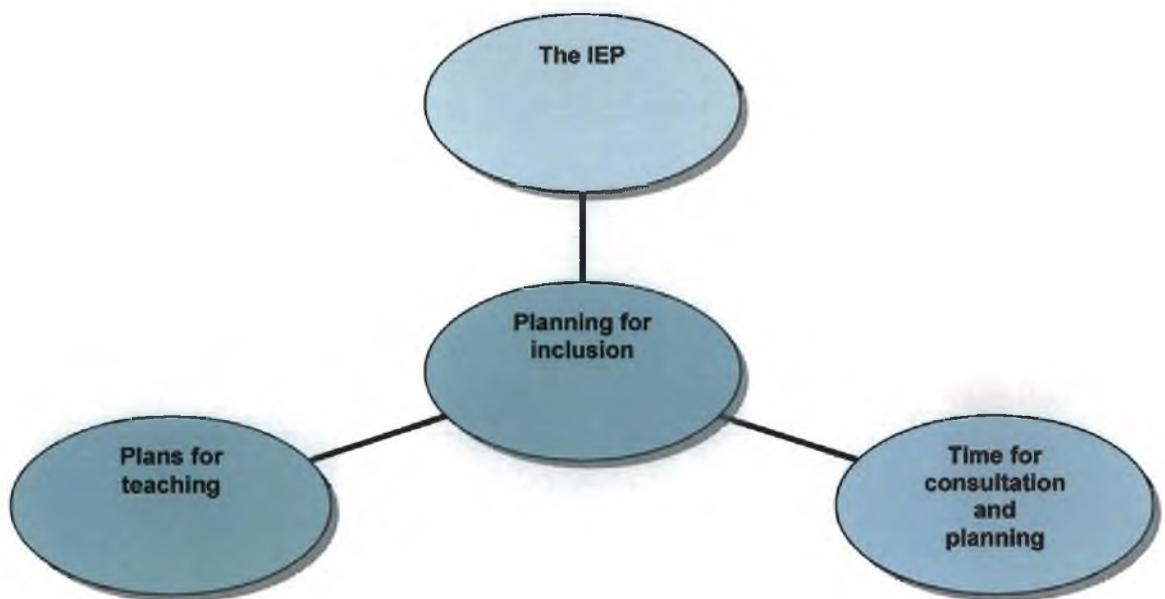
CHAPTER SIX

TEACHERS' PLANNING FOR INCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is teachers' planning for inclusion, the second of the three themes emerging from teachers' intentions. This theme is composed of three sub-themes as represented in Figure 6.1. As previously, each sub-theme is presented in turn while their impact on further contributing to a composite understanding is intended to be cumulative.

Figure 6.1: Sub-themes contributing to teachers' planning and organisation for constructing practices



THE IEP

As discussed in Chapter One, although deferred, the EPSEN Act 2004 (Government of Ireland, 2004) outlines the legal specifications regarding the preparation, implementation and review of the IEP, the key areas to be included in the IEP, the types of special education and related support services required by the individual with SEN to be listed on the IEP and the persons to be involved in the IEP

process. The centrality of the IEP in their teaching arrangements for children with SEN was revealed in teachers' responses to questions on how they went about their planning for teaching, to the extent that all of these children had an IEP. However, as teachers discussed their experiences of the IEP process, varied practices emerged, particularly in relation to levels and types of consultation in the preparation of the IEP.

In seven out of nine schools, resource teachers consulted with class teachers during the preparation stage of the IEP. The minimal levels of consultation implicit in the following account from Eilish were practised in two schools, where neither school had dedicated time for consultation: "I know it is a weak point in the school. Basically I do it on my own and I try and maybe grab five minutes with the class teacher here and there if they're willing, but you know, we don't have any structured plan in the school" (RT3.43, p. 5). Aoife, the class teacher corroborates that they "didn't plan in any great detail what was going to be going on" but "knows that Eilish would follow a particular plan" and adds that they "would discuss what (*Eilish*) thinks his needs are and what (*Aoife*) think(s) and kind of work towards that" (CT3.175, p. 18). The influence of context on teachers' planning, acknowledged by Eilish's reference to the school in her statement above was also evident in the five schools where, because of dedicated consultation time, the teachers practised somewhat higher levels of consultation. The typicality of practice in these schools where both resource and class teachers contribute to the preparation of the IEP but the process is driven by the resource teacher is conveyed by Aileen:

I would meet with the teacher for about half an hour session and we would go through, I have my own sheet with the strengths and needs and priority needs and we'd just chat about the child, how the teacher finds him in her class. Write down the strengths as she sees them and as I see them. You know we both have an input and then the strengths, the needs and prioritising the needs. So when I have that form then I would meet the parents of the child ... and I'd write down on another sheet the additional information I'd get from home and I would also at that stage have drawn up the IEP. Once I get the information I'd have the targets done and I would share the targets with the parents. (RT1.30, p. 4)

In one of the two schools where resource teachers did a solo-run on IEP preparation, the resource teacher admits: "I would photocopy my IEP and I would give a copy to the teachers that are involved" (RT9.85, p. 21), while the class teacher

comments: "I know Niamh (*resource teacher*) writes a plan. Niamh has a plan, the programme that she uses, but I wouldn't be involved in that. I trust her as a professional person" (CT9.93, p. 16). Niamh states that her approach "isn't professionally correct but it's a reflection on the system that" class teachers "have absolutely no support ... there just genuinely isn't supervision" and as a resource teacher shared among three schools her "timetable is chocker block anyway" (RT9.85, p. 21). In the second school, Jacqueline acknowledges "there should be a huge consultative process in these ... the ideal for the IEP is input from the teacher" but "it's hugely time consuming" (RT6.39, p. 9). For the first time in Jacqueline's school, substitute cover was provided for class teachers "who expressed an interest", freeing them to read IEPs that had been prepared by the resource teachers. However, as reading the IEPs was optional, for reasons of trust and preoccupation with the "whole class", Nicola was one class teacher who gave it a miss as she explains:

They're (*the IEPs*) there to be seen but personally and I'd say I speak for all teachers, I don't really know if that many teachers go down and read them, because you've so much trust in that teacher that you're just, "that's grand". Now really I should be going down and taking them out but at the end of the day, you're going through your day, you've the whole class and you kinda forget about that, just being honest like. (CT6.84, p. 15)

Regardless of levels of consultation between resource and class teachers during the preparation phase, in their responses eight of the nine class teachers revealed they did not have a copy of the IEP. In the words of one class teacher: "it tends to be handed back and I just come away and do my job ... everything on the IEP that we have put in tends to be for the resource teacher to do" (CT5.65, p. 10).

There was similarity across all schools regarding the use of diagnostic assessments and professional reports to obtain information where the collection, collation and recording of this information were undertaken by the resource teachers. Typically, resource teachers spoke of "doing a battery of tests, you know, diagnostic tests on the children" (RT1.59, p. 7). Even in her junior school, Anita "did small assessments with them and decided these are their strengths, these are their needs, this is what I'm going to target" (RT5.70, p. 11). The comprehensive approach to diagnostic

assessment in Noelle's school evident in the following extract, although more specific in its detail, was common practice across the schools:

We'd look at standardised tests and so on that they would have had. Basically in June we go through a series, they'd each have a series of diagnostic tests. We'd give them Neale Analysis, Jackson Phonics, McNally Word Recognition, the Schonell Spelling, the free writing and then the interview and maths test ... and then we'd have our pupil profile, you'd write down the results of those tests, the Drumcondra tests, and oral language we'd have sort of a tick list we go through with the teacher for oral language and SPHE. (RT7.72, p. 12)

As her account continues, it becomes further evident that along with diagnostic information, those in Noelle's school consider "class teacher's observations ... parents' observations ... the previous class teacher's ... the youngsters themselves" and they "also look at the reports, but some of the reports would be out of date, you know" (RT7.74, p. 13). Overall, resource teachers admitted to "actually do(*ing*) the typing out" (RT4.56, p. 7), while class teachers concurred that "the resource teacher writes up the IEP" (CT5.59, p. 9), underscoring separate roles and the dominance of those with perceived specialist knowledge in the IEP process.

There was also similarity across all schools regarding the format of information on the IEP. As substantiated by the case studies, teachers' extracts revealed that IEPs were constructed in terms of the child's strengths, needs, priority needs and learning targets consistent with the key areas specified in the impending legislation (EPSN) (Government of Ireland, 2004), while the IEP content invariably focused on language, literacy, maths and SPHE depending on the particular child. The emphasis on assessment and diagnosis of priority learning needs for the IEP resonates with the psycho-medical model discussed in Chapter Two; it reflects a within-child deficit understanding of the learning needs of children with SEN without reference to the learning environment or nature of the learning experiences.

As stated in the discussion on teachers' roles in Chapter Five, resource teachers were predominantly responsible for teaching the child so that IEP targets could be achieved. In the majority of schools, targets addressed by the resource teachers were differentiated from the mainstream class programme as the following comment from Eilish typifies: "then for the literacy, for my children who don't do the class spellings, I

do my own spelling programme with them down in resource and the class teacher doesn't bother about their spellings" (RT3.208, p. 21). Furthermore, in devising plans for some of the children, there was a sense in which one curriculum area was divided into conceptual and skill components and divided out between class and resource teacher, as Noelle's commentary conveys:

I think the way we're working it is that Lucy would be doing more reading and reading skills and a reading programme with them and I would be doing more of the word attack skills with the youngsters. I think that would be the way we're working it at the moment, that she's following more the reading programme and doing the 'Wellington Square' and I know that she's doing that so I wouldn't be worrying about a reading programme with them and I would be concentrating more on the word attack skills with them. (RT7.84, p. 14)

Contrastingly, the planning practices in two schools linked IEP targets to varying degrees with the mainstream class programme; in Elm SNS, targets for maths linked with the mainstream class curriculum, while in Oak NS, children's IEP targets were addressed across the mainstream class curriculum, as relevant.

In all nine schools, review of the IEP was undertaken by the resource teachers, which is hardly surprising given their dominant role in its preparation and teaching towards achievement of its targets. Consistent with the identification of individual goals and objectives, driving a task-analysis programme involving an 'assess, teach, assess' cycle associated with the behavioural-analytic model critiqued in Chapter Two, resource teachers commonly spoke of "ticking and dating targets achieved" and at a certain stage during the school year, "review(*ing*) it in January and set(*ting*) out another list of targets maybe or repeat(*ing*) targets that weren't reached before Christmas" (RT4.67, p. 8). The following extract from Anita illustrates how this review process occurs in practice:

Okay, I said they were going to know the first fifteen words, to recognise them on flashcards, to recognise them in context, to be able to read them in context, to be able to put them in context. You know, say the word cat, can, what, that they can either use the words to make a sentence on the board or to actually write it. So I would look have they achieved that and I would assess them. I'd have the list of the first forty-five words out over a week and as they do their reading with me, they recognise that and I'd tick it, date it ... ask them to write a sentence with the word and if they can spell words independently, I'll record that as well. So then I look at that and I'd say okay, they have all fifteen words so we can move on to the next fifteen. Or I might identify four of them that they can't so I'd highlight them. So I've a record sheet and I'd clip that to the back of the

termly plan and I'd photocopy it and I'd include it in the next termly plan ...
(RT5.85, pp.13-14)

The driving role accorded to and undertaken by the resource teacher in the IEP process underscores the division of labour between resource and class teacher at the level of planning for teaching children with SEN. It indicates that the perception and expectations of resource teachers having specialist knowledge are rooted in teachers' intentions. It also indicates continuity with the tradition of assigning specialist status to teachers of children with SEN who need specialist measures, resonating with implications of the psycho-medical understanding of SEN discussed in Chapter Two. Observation facilitated the documentation of how this division of labour in teachers' intentions was played out in practice and the consequences for learning, and this is detailed under the theme of coherence-fragmentation in Chapter Eleven.

Having discussed their planning intentions in relation to children with SEN, further questioning invited the teachers to elaborate on their planning for all children and for those with SEN within the context of the class grouping. Teachers' plans for teaching are presented in the following section.

PLANS FOR TEACHING

All teachers with one exception devised long- and short-term plans for teaching. Such planning is consistent with the long standing planning requirements initially specified by the then Department of Education¹ and reiterated in more recent publications from the DES². The exception, Treasa, was the class teaching principal with over forty years of teaching experience, and was most frank about the merits of devising plans at this stage in her career:

And I wouldn't be doing up any notes, plans, now at this stage. If I didn't know now at this stage for all my years teaching, what I was supposed to be doing or how to do it, all the notes and plans in the world wouldn't help me. Writing plans. No, no, that'd be a waste of time for me now at this stage. Anyway, we have to be flexible. If something happens locally or in the news, a big news item,

¹ Rules for National Schools (1965)

² Introduction to The Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999) reaffirms the short-term and long-term dimension of classroom planning stating: "planning for a week, a term, a year ... provides the means by which the teacher can ensure that all the principal elements of the curriculum are covered adequately in a way that is relevant to the needs of the different individuals in the class" (p. 65).

we follow that up, we go with that and it means something to the children. Where would you be going with a plan then? No, a lot of time is spent on unnecessary paper work and I wouldn't do that. (CT9.93, p. 16)

Treasa aside, it was typical for resource teachers to use the IEP as a basis for devising termly plans for teaching either groups or individual children, and then to devise monthly, fortnightly or weekly plans "in much more detail but based on the termly plan" (RT4.57, p. 7). Although concerned to avoid giving the 'text-book' answer, Eilish's explanation of her approach to short-term planning is representative of the resource teachers generally:

The realistic answer to planning for their work, okay, first of all I'd have to look at the child and have the termly plan to see what I wanted to achieve and basically where I thought the child should be going and then I normally do out a grid for the month about what days I'm going to cover maybe spellings, writing, numeracy, self-esteem, just so I've a plan for the month and that every area is going to be covered. (RT3.38, p. 4)

Justification for the prominence of the IEP as the key reference and starting point in resource teachers' plans for teaching is provided by Niamh when she states: "I find the IEP very good because I think you can lose sight and maybe start running with the programme as opposed to looking at the plan for the child, so it keeps you focused all the time to have the IEP to go back to" (RT9.83, p. 21).

In contrast, the key reference and starting point for class teachers in devising plans for teaching is the 'curriculum content' appropriate to the grade level being taught while their approach to planning parallels the progression from long- to short-term planning followed by the resource teachers. Ann's comment that "I would work out what I'm doing with the children for the term and I then kind of go well where does Fiona (*child with SEN*) fit into my plan" and "then when I make my weekly plans, I do my class plans and then I'll do my Fiona plans as well" (CT1.103, p. 15) typifies the way class teachers devise their plans for teaching. To this end, class teachers prioritised the mainstream class by planning first for the class and then considering where the child with SEN fitted into that plan.

Four class teachers in the enquiry planned collaboratively with same grade-level class teachers. The extent to which teachers' collaborative planning focused entirely on the mainstream class is captured in Nicola's account of their meetings:

Yeah, well we meet, the fifth class group meet once a month so we kinda go through basically what we want to get taught in the month. Now I have the advantage, this is my third year in fifth, right and I kinda know what works and what doesn't work so I've kinda learned a fair bit along the way. But as regards thinking about the specials, we don't really say, "ah God no the specials wouldn't be able for that." It's just, it's a whole class thing, and like you'll take them to a certain level. They'll never pass it. If some of them have the aptitude to pass it they're not special, you know that way. Whereas once they get the main concepts of it, that's grand. (CT6.59, p. 10)

Ann, one of four sixth class teachers in her school "would have a meeting once a month" and corroborates that they "wouldn't be discussing the special needs at all at that stage" (CT1.82, p. 13). Reiterating the class focus of the fortnightly collaborative planning of their three fourth class teachers, Lucy finds it "quite beneficial ... a good exchange of ideas" but concludes "with our resource and learning support teachers, it's very haphazardly done" (CT6.21, p. 3). In none of these schools was the resource teacher involved in the class teachers' collective planning sessions. Furthermore, in only three schools were attempts made by class and resource teachers to plan jointly for learners with SEN. In Sycamore NS, Catherine, the class teacher is given a copy of the IEP which she consults when devising plans for teaching the class. Furthermore, her resource teacher confirms that she "would do a fortnightly plan ... and would photocopy it and give it to the class teacher so she has a record of what's being done" (RT4.58, p. 7). The influence of referring to IEP and resource teacher's fortnightly plans on the class teacher's planning intentions for including the child with AS is indicated in the following commentary from Catherine:

I would have basically a copy of what Helena (*resource teacher*) is doing ... I'd check the IEP and what the targets are and what the aims are and I would just try to back them up. So for example, if I was writing down weekly plan English and I'd have oral language, it would be basically social interaction with another person, describe your weekend, what were your activities, so for him it would be like broaden his vocabulary by you know, could you use a different word for that and he has to tell one thing that went on, not just relate his own interests, but has to actually say something that happened, you know. (CT4.118, p. 14)

In Elm SNS, resource and class teacher jointly planned the maths programme which they co-taught in the mainstream class. In Oak NS, resource and class teacher jointly planned for English and maths which they co-taught and although the class teacher devised plans for the remaining curriculum areas, she consulted with the resource teacher as the following account reveals:

...when it comes to Gaeilge, when it comes to geography, history and other subjects ... I get ideas, Oonagh (*resource teacher*) has ideas, has a few pointers, like the mind map ... but you just have to get on with it and hope that they take something up. (CT8.38, p. 6)

Overall, teachers' extracts on planning reveal an individual focus in resource teachers' planning that contrasts sharply with the collective focus and curriculum starting point of class teachers' planning. Regarding teachers' intentions, the demarcation in terms of the division of labour between resource and class teacher becomes more pronounced and the specialist role of the resource teacher further reinforced at the level of planning for those with SEN. Such demarcation substantiates the perception of special education colonising rather than transforming the mainstream (Dyson, 1997; Ainscow et al., 2004). Decisions on where and how to "fit" the child with SEN within the class plans represent a dilemma for class teachers neither experienced nor addressed by the majority of resource teachers in this enquiry. The low rate of class teachers intentionally planning to address IEP targets for the child with SEN within the context of class plans is perhaps predictable based on teachers' understandings and expectations of the role of resource teacher and the low levels of consultation among resource and class teachers regarding the preparation and review of the IEP. However, it raises questions regarding the extent to which the learning experiences of the children with SEN actually address their priority learning needs, and the extent to which learning experiences across locations are linked. Again, observation was a critically important means of facilitating the documentation of teachers' interpretation of role in practice, and of learning experienced by the children, and this contributes to the theme of coherence-fragmentation presented in Chapter Eleven.

The low levels of consultation between resource and class teachers in planning an educational programme for children with SEN highlights difficulties regarding the

process of sharing teacher knowledge in a manner that enhances the children's intentional learning. Levels of consultation were attributed to time in teachers' intentions. As an integral aspect to emerge in teachers' planning for inclusion, time for consultation and planning is discussed in the final section.

TIME FOR CONSULTATION AND PLANNING

As highlighted in Chapter One, policy directives advocate that special education support teams are formed to include all teachers in the school providing additional support and that members of this support team collaborate closely with the principal teacher and class teachers to assist in the planning and delivery of educational provision for pupils with SEN (Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05) (DES, 2003, 2004, 2005a). However, no formal time is allowed for consultation or collaborative planning in the allocation of resource teaching hours or in timetabling for primary schools in Ireland generally (Government of Ireland, 1999). In the absence of the designation of formal time from DES directives, lack of dedicated planning time emerged as an issue for teachers' planning for inclusion. Consequently, the practices of securing dedicated time to consult, plan and collaborate among teachers were multiple and varied across the nine schools.

In five schools there was dedicated time either at the end of one or at the beginning of the next school year for resource and class teachers to consult. The focus of this meeting was on planning the IEP for the children with SEN. While resource teachers were free to meet by not withdrawing children during these times, there was adhocery in the cover arrangements to free class teachers, entirely dependent on the goodwill and cooperation of colleagues. Typically, teachers of the infant classes released from school one hour earlier, the school principal, or another additional support teacher in the school covered for the class teachers. In some cases, doors were left open between classes where the class teacher present kept an eye on the neighbouring class. In a sixth school, the resource teacher reported: "some teachers feel listen isn't this child getting all this one-to-one like why should the rest of my class suffer so I can talk to you about this child?" (RT3.49, p. 5); remembering her days as a class teacher having "to come back in and correct thirty essays or thirty pages of maths", Eilish as their resource

teaching colleague empathises. While her commentary illustrates teachers' resistance to changing established practices, along with the adhocatic cover arrangements it highlights the persistent dilemma for class teachers in balancing the needs of all with the needs of a minority (Norwich and Kelly, 2005).

Apart from initial consultation, five resource teachers had dedicated time for consultation and planning throughout the school year. This was on a monthly basis for one, a weekly basis for another, a daily basis for two and in exchange for the children's contact time as necessary for the fifth resource teacher. This fifth arrangement is explained by Aileen as follows: "If I'm meeting the parent, I meet them during the child's time with me or if I'm meeting the teacher, I meet the teacher during the child's time because it's benefiting that child anyway but I don't cancel too often" (RT1.34, p. 5). Helena has it "arranged to finish with the children about two every day" and as the school day continues to half past two, she has "that half hour for meetings or preparation or whatever it is" (RT4.47, p. 6). While she acknowledges she is "very lucky to have that extra half hour" still "one of the biggest problems really is time and with some class teachers almost every other day you have something to say to them" (RT4.49, p. 6). In Noelle's school, the additional support teachers "take half an hour every day for planning at that time" dedicated to teaching religion in the mainstream classes (RT7.7, p. 2). However, the resource teachers typically used the dedicated time to meet with other members of the 'special needs' team and to plan learning and prepare resources for the learners with SEN, rather than to collaborate or co-plan with class teachers. As for the four resource teachers who did not have dedicated consultation and planning time, they referred to very busy timetables and shared the view expressed by Anita that "there's no built in time into the day that I would have say an hour on a Friday afternoon, because I would feel some child in the school needs that time" (RT5.153, p. 25).

It was the practice in five schools in the enquiry that class teachers had dedicated planning and consultation time. In three of these schools, there was dedicated time during school hours on a weekly basis for one, a fortnightly basis for another and monthly for the remaining two teachers. In the fifth school with a total of six class teachers, four of whom taught junior classes that finished an hour before the school day

ended, there was dedicated time after the teaching day on a weekly basis. However, in each of these five schools this dedicated time was for class teachers to consult with same grade level class teachers and not with the additional support teachers.

Regardless of the amount or frequency of dedicated consultation and planning time, teachers' responses revealed that where collaborative planning occurred, class teachers planned together, but separately from resource teachers who may also have planned together if the school had more than one. Furthermore, it was common practice across all schools for resource and class teachers to consult informally, particularly as "issues" or "difficulties" to do with the children with SEN could arise at any time. The "informal" process of these consultations is captured by Noelle's account below:

No, no, there's no formal structured time for resource teachers meeting with class teachers, no there isn't, no, no. A lot of it is informal like, with, a lot of it's in the staff room. If I've a difficulty I would go to Lucy, we would, a lot is informal and just sort of chatting on the corridor, chatting in the staff room, meeting here in my room. But we don't set up times to meet on a regular basis, you know, it's very informal. (RT7.87, p. 15)

Typically, class teachers referred to informal meetings with their resource teachers "during lunch time, or after or before school" (CT1.92, p. 14), "in the staffroom, on the way up, standing on the stairs when the class is going in" (CT2.39, p. 5), "over coffee" (CT3.177, p. 18), "sitting at the same table down in the staffroom" (CT4.262, p. 34), "all after school" (CT5.148, p. 22) and "at the class room door" (CT6.80, p. 14). Reiterating the absence of dedicated time for collaboration between resource and class teachers experienced by the majority of teachers in this enquiry, Niamh confirms "definitely that would be our weak area, I suppose we don't really consult" (RT9.86, p. 22). As for informal consultation, Niamh has this to say:

... and it has actually come up in the staffroom at a meeting that maybe at lunch time we will not be speaking about the children with special needs because there are so many other children in the school, and I think teachers think I have thirty other children, why should I? And they're already giving so much energy into them because they're acting up or they're acting out or whatever. (RT9.85, p. 21)

Exceptions to the lack of resource and class teacher collaborative planning were evident in the intentions of teachers from two schools. In Elm SNS, resource and class teacher met after school hours once a week to discuss the plans for co-teaching the fifth

class maths programme. In Oak NS, resource and class teacher had dedicated planning time once a week to co-plan and co-review the multi-grade fourth to sixth class programmes for English and maths while ideas for inclusion of the children with SEN for other curriculum areas were also considered. However, the context of Oak NS was particularly significant in securing time for collaborative planning. As indicated in the case study seven (Appendix V), class teachers were freed to meet with resource teachers as every Friday from after break to home time, the two classes from first to sixth, totalling forty-nine children, were grouped together for science which was taught by one class teacher, for PE taught by the second teacher and art which was taught by the teacher of junior and senior infants following the release of these grades an hour before the end of the school day. This flexible approach to grouping for learning invariably contributed to the restructuring of practice evident in Oak NS in terms of co-planning and co-teaching. Although facilitated by context, it may be possible to replicate such flexible approaches to grouping for learning across varying contexts.

The research literature highlights the significance of the school and school community as key sites and sources for teachers' learning (McLaughlin, 2002; Ainscow et al., 2003; Ainscow et al., 2004; Ainscow et al., 2006). To this end, communicative practices that facilitate professional interaction and knowledge sharing are critical to how school communities engage with and respond to the competing tensions associated with supporting inclusion and sustaining diversity while creating appropriate learning experiences for all. Although a number of schools in this enquiry are to be complimented on their imaginative solutions for securing dedicated time for collaborative consultation, the adhocery of these local arrangements is hardly sufficient to facilitate the communicative practices reported in the literature. In the absence of formalised time for collaborative planning, the communicative practices necessary to guarantee appropriate levels of knowledge sharing among the relevant parties appear to have been left to chance. This sheds light on why eight of the nine class teachers in this enquiry plan teaching for all their children, regardless of need, without any reference to the child's IEP.

SUMMARY

Evidence from the teachers' intentions regarding the IEP, their plans for teaching, and time for planning and collaboration indicate many and varied intentions in their planning for teaching. Again, these intentions are influenced by legislation, the curriculum and DES directives, leading to consistency among the teachers in relation to certain aspects of planning, for example, the long- and short-term approaches to planning, the format and structure of the IEP and the dominant role undertaken by the resource teacher in overseeing the IEP process. However, context also has a bearing, giving rise to variations in teachers' planning, particularly in terms of the levels and types of communication and collaborative planning among resource and class teachers which in turn contribute to varying combinations of special and inclusive tendencies in their intentions towards planning. For class teachers in particular, there are competing intentions related to simultaneously planning to accommodate the commonalities shared by all the children and the differences between them. This dilemma surfaced in teachers' interpretations of including children with SEN and persists in their planning for teaching. A partial resolution to these competing intentions appears to be the acceptance of a division of labour between resource and class teacher, which assigns specialist knowledge to resource teachers who devise, implement and review individual programmes for the children with SEN. This resolution connects with the principles of special education reflected in the psycho-medical conceptualisation of SEN discussed in Chapter Two. However, children with SEN spend the greater part of the school day in their mainstream class, and what emerges as critically important therefore, is how the division of labour evident in teachers' intentions is reconciled by resource and class teachers in practice. Observation enabled documentation of this division of labour in practice, contributing to the theme of coherence-fragmentation in Chapter Eleven.

Following teachers' interpretations of and their planning for inclusion, the culmination of teachers' intentions relates to their pedagogical routines for inclusion. Teachers' intentions regarding the pedagogical routines that facilitate inclusion are discussed in the following chapter.

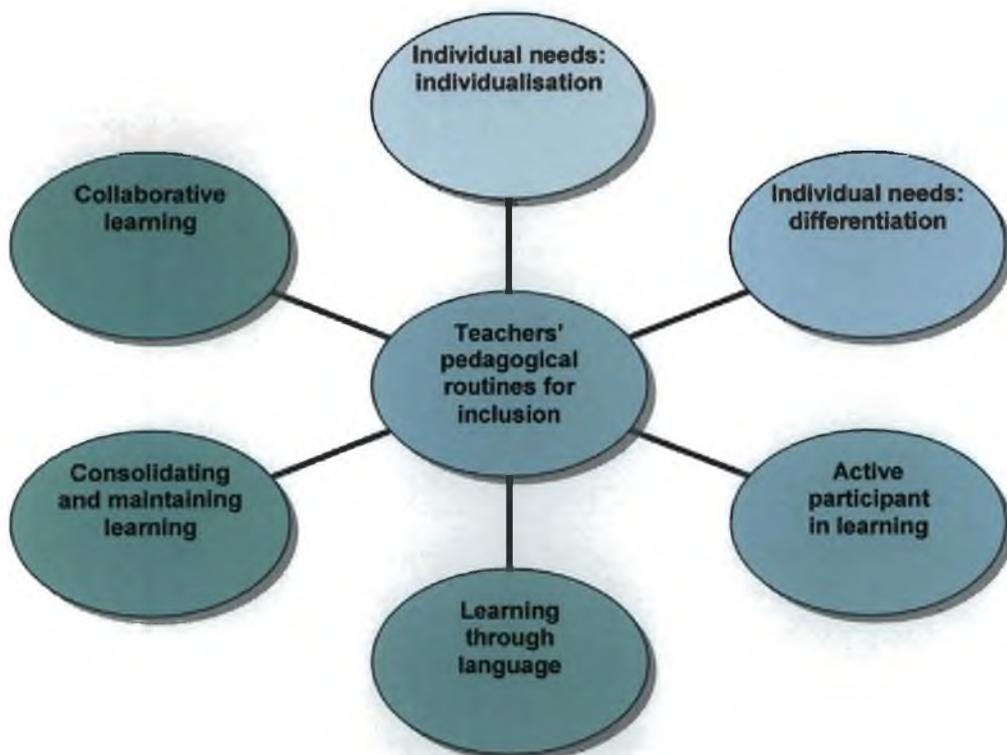
CHAPTER SEVEN

PEDAGOGICAL ROUTINES TO FACILITATE INCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is teachers' intentions regarding the pedagogical routines that facilitate inclusion. Given the definition of pedagogy provided in Chapter Three as the decisions and actions taken in classroom settings that aim to promote learning, the purpose of this chapter is to document the teaching methods and curriculum emphases considered by teachers in their inclusive practices. As teachers elaborated on their intentions regarding outcomes, curricular focus of learning and teaching approaches that contribute to the types of activities pursued by teachers and learners to enable learning and inclusion, six sub-themes emerged as central to their pedagogy for inclusion. Represented in Figure 7.1, each sub-theme is discussed in turn providing structure to the chapter and furthering insights into the complexities of practice associated with inclusion, while completing the composite understanding of teachers' intentions.

Figure 7.1: Sub-themes contributing to teachers' pedagogical routines for inclusion



INDIVIDUAL NEEDS: INDIVIDUALISATION

A key principle of the Primary School Curriculum is “celebrating the uniqueness of the child”, supported by the pedagogical principles of cultivating the child’s natural curiosity, using the child’s knowledge and experience as a base for learning and taking account of individual difference in the learning process (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 8). These principles are further endorsed by the Curriculum Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities (NCCA, 2007) which reiterate their relevance to teaching learners with distinctive needs determined on the basis of mild, moderate or severe and profound GLD. Revisiting these principles serves to highlight that the underpinning assumption is one of a common curriculum with flexibility to accommodate adaptations for diverse and individual needs. As they discussed curriculum and approaches to teaching, consideration of individual needs, interests, existing knowledge and experience featured strongly in teachers’ pedagogical intentions, influencing the nature of the learning experience. Such emphasis on responsiveness to their learners led to the emergence of the sub-theme of individualisation in the pedagogical intentions of resource teachers. In contrast, for class teachers who addressed individual needs and difference in the context of class teaching, responsiveness to learners led to the emergence of differentiation in their pedagogical routines for inclusion. Individualisation forms the focus of this section while differentiation is discussed in the following section.

As reported in Chapter Six, it was the practice of resource teachers to devise IEPs based on assessment of strengths and needs of each child. Consequently, a key element embedded in their practice was building on the child’s strengths as in interests, existing knowledge and experience, while addressing their needs. Within this framework, individual goals and objectives were determined on the basis of priority learning needs of each child and this in turn determined the curriculum focus and teaching methods. For example, commenting on her programme for the children with SEN Noelle notes: “it would depend on the youngster, again all of them would be different” (RT7.97, p. 16). The importance of accommodating individual difference in Noelle’s pedagogical intentions becomes evident in her elaboration that “for the two

junior infants who are dyspraxic” she is “doing physical things with them because both of them, that would be their need, you know, so their programme is basically doing zips, colouring, mostly fine motor control with both of them” (RT4.98, p. 16). However, different needs determine a different set of objectives and curriculum for a fourth class pupil who “has average ability but specific learning difficulty” and with whom Noelle “is doing *Toe by Toe*”, a synthetic phonics-based programme, “because that’s what his needs are at the moment, he needs to learn to break up words and how to blend his words and letters and so on, so that’s what he’s doing” (RT7.100, p. 12). For a “sixth class youngster” who has “a hearing impairment ... speech and language problems and specific learning difficulty” but “who’s very good at art”, apart from “doing *Toe by Toe* ... paired reading and quite a bit of verbalising and visualising, which is a programme for comprehension” he also “does quite a bit of art” (RT7.99, p. 17). Noelle justifies the art “because he’s very good at it ... and it’s a huge boost to his confidence”. At one level, evident in her commentary, and typical of the resource teachers in this enquiry, is the deliberate selection of curriculum foci and teaching approaches that are responsive to the needs, interests, knowledge and experience of these children, supporting the shaping influence of responsiveness to individual difference on pedagogical intentions.

Further evident in Noelle’s commentary and characteristic of resource teachers’ pedagogical intentions is the manner in which they consider and account for each child on their ‘caseload’ in isolation, on a case by case basis, somewhat reminiscent of the psycho-medical model of teaching children with SEN discussed in Chapter Two. Their teaching arrangements of withdrawing children on a one-to-one or in small groups determined on the basis of similar needs, while facilitating resource teachers’ responsiveness also reinforced this case load perception. Furthermore, as they elaborated on what their responsiveness to individual needs entailed in practice, the pattern to emerge was the according of priority to literacy and maths, and to a lesser extent language and SPHE. This curricular emphasis in response to individual needs is captured in Marie’s account:

I do a variety of things with them but I concentrate on literacy and numeracy because that’s where they’re weakest and they em, you see if a child say is in third as you know yourself and operating at a senior infant or first class level, well the class teacher is not going to be able to devote that time, so I really feel

that my biggest responsibility is in both of those areas. Particularly in reading, you know, I sort of feel you have to get them reading so em, I'd spend a lot of time with those basics ... but then I would do a variety of things like maybe music and computers and a bit of art and you know a lot of different things like that. But my absolute priority, yeah, like every day I spend time on literacy and numeracy with every child. (RT2. 26, p. 3)

What becomes evident therefore is that in responsiveness to individual needs, the curriculum focus in resource teachers' pedagogical intentions is evocative of the 'core and periphery' curriculum postulated by Tansley and Gulliford (1960)¹ five decades ago. Such a focus is hardly compatible with trends towards inclusion and runs contrary to the aim of providing full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Rather, it supports the 'relevance' argument² based on the principle that as the time available for education of children with SEN imposes the task of curriculum selection on teachers, they have to ensure that what the children are required to learn will be relevant to their needs and "to the tasks and roles of later life" (Brennan, 1985, p. 74). It also supports the operation of a dual system in the mainstream school governing teachers' pedagogical intentions, where resource teachers prioritise the 'weaknesses' of children with SEN to be addressed through 'core' curriculum areas, and with little reference to the mainstream class curriculum.

Describing their teaching to include children with SEN, resource and class teachers used terms like "trial and error" (RT3.14, p.2), "going with the flow" (RT8.5, p.2), "getting us back out of the rut" (CT6.140, p. 25) and "switching track" (CT7.98, p. 15). Such terminology supported teachers' recognition of the need for flexibility in pedagogical approaches for learners with SEN. Within this context, a key aspect of resource teachers' pedagogical intentions was the innovation with which they constructed learning experiences, tailoring their pedagogies to the interests and learning style of the child. Among the many examples of innovative adaptation to accommodate individual difference provided by resource teachers, the following account from Helena

¹ This curriculum was developed for 'slow learners' and was based on a central core of language and number and a periphery of useful knowledge about the environment, aesthetic activities and practical interests (Bovair, 1992).

² More recently, Jordan has argued that children with ASD are entitled to "a broad and relevant" and not necessarily balanced curriculum to meet their unique needs (2005, p. 116) while Ware (2005) reiterates doubts about the relevance of curriculum subjects and areas of learning for children with SPLD.

has been selected. In this, she describes her approach to teaching social skills to a second class child with AS who was reluctant to communicate directly with her and had a fixation with the Fuzzbuzz reading scheme:

Well for example, now in the beginning when I started with him, he just wouldn't co-operate at all. "No, no, can't do that" and he'd fly over to the Fuzzbuzz and be lost in the Fuzzbuzz and start talking about Fuzzbuzz to me. So I discovered anyway that he would talk to me if he had a telephone. So I've two telephones there as you can see and that was the only way I could actually have a proper conversation with him was on a telephone. But he had to pretend to be Mr Cheese. Now don't ask me who Mr Cheese is. But that's OK and I would phone him up and ask him, "Mr Cheese, I have a little boy here" and I'd show him the picture (*scenario depicted in cartoon form*), "He's standing on his own in the yard. There's another little boy here. What should he do?" and we would have a conversation that way. But it had to be on the telephone and he was a character. He couldn't play himself and talk to me directly. Now he's gotten over that and he now talks to me and we can actually discuss these social skills as Frank and the teacher. (RT4.97, p. 12)

Helena explains that by using a visual timetable with a selection of cards depicting learning activities like "looking for sounds, a bit of writing, reading, cutting out, listen" along with the child's preferred activities such as "computer" and "telephone" and initially allowing the child "pick the cards himself", but progressing to interspersing one teacher-selected learning activity with one preferred activity and then two and later three learning activities with one preferred activity, the child was weaned off the telephone (RT4.105, p. 12). Eventually it reached the stage where Helena "now can put in whatever pictures (*she*) like(s), he doesn't mind because he knows what's coming up next, so that worked a treat for him and ... (*they*) don't bother with the telephones much at all now" (RT4.107, p. 13). Following a number of examples illustrating how she adapts her teaching to accommodate the children withdrawn to resource, Helena concludes: "I suppose it's about sort of determining the learning style of the child and what works for different children" (RT4.122, p. 14).

The above commentary is cited at length to indicate the innovation inherent in resource teachers' responsiveness to the child's curiosity, interests, needs, existing knowledge and experience, and integral to their pedagogical intentions. However, it also reveals insights into the nature of the learning relationship, characterised by reciprocal interactions between teacher and learner. In this instance, the teacher's interactions are

modified in response to the child's desire to be called Mr Cheese and his willingness to use the telephone for communication while the child's are modified in response to the social skills being taught and the way they are being taught, contributing to a mutually reciprocal nature of the interactions while learning is evident in the progression of the learner from the use of telephone to use of visual timetable. Such interactions hinge on teachers' knowledge of the child's learning characteristics, the learning environment, the nature of the learning tasks and the teaching styles contributing to the dynamic of teacher-learner interactions. Although not immediately apparent at the time of interview, teachers' revelations of the dynamics of the learning relationship in their accounts of teaching highlighted the responsiveness of both teachers and learners to each other in contributing to effective learning experiences and thus, were to foreshadow attunement, As a theme of particular importance for the enquiry, attunement is discussed in Chapter Ten.

The responsiveness evident in resource teachers' pedagogical intentions resonates with the principles of using the child's knowledge and experience as a base for learning and taking account of individual difference in the learning process. These principles are central to celebrating the child's uniqueness and fundamental to the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999). Furthermore, the contextual differences between small numbers and withdrawal in the case of resource teachers in contrast to the challenge of catering for individual needs in a classroom situation, particularly with multi-grade levels no doubt facilitate resource teachers' responsiveness. However, interpretation of this responsiveness within the context of the teaching arrangements practised by resource teachers reconfigures the influence from one of child-centeredness to the dominance of individualisation in shaping pedagogical intentions. As resource teachers withdraw the children on a one-to-one or in small groups, and the two involved in providing in-class support teach certain groups within the class determined on the basis of ability, their pedagogical intentions indicate giving primacy to the provision of appropriate education above inclusion while opportunities for collaborative learning associated with child-centeredness are greatly diminished. Such practice may accord with Hegarty's assertion that primacy has to be given to the school's core mission of providing "high quality, appropriate education" over other

principles that “suffuse the school’s ethos” (2001, p. 248). To an extent, it is consistent with the practice envisaged in documentation issued by the DES outlining the role of the resource teacher³ (Circulars 08/02 and 02/05) (DES, 2002a, 2005a). Although the intent is to promote in-class support for learning, by omitting reference to resource and class teachers working collaboratively to determine how the learning needs of children with SEN will be met within the context of long- and short-term plans for the class, these duties as prescribed effectively subvert teaching practices that promote inclusion. Recourse to observation facilitated investigation of resource teachers’ pedagogical intentions of responsiveness and individualisation in action; interpretations of responsiveness in practice are documented under the theme of attunement while interpretations of individualisation in practice are documented under the theme of coherence-fragmentation.

Like a flipside to the coin of responsiveness to individual needs, differentiation emerged in class teachers’ pedagogical intentions. The sub-theme of differentiation is discussed in the section which follows.

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS: DIFFERENTIATION

As reported previously, in their discussion of curriculum and approaches to teaching, consideration of individual needs, interests and existing knowledge and experience featured strongly in teachers’ pedagogical intentions, influencing the nature of the learning experience. However, unlike resource teachers who considered each child with SEN in isolation, not alone had class teachers many individual needs and interests to consider, but in relation to all curriculum areas. As indicated in Table 5.3 (see page 124), class sizes ranged from fourteen in first class in a DEIS 1 school to thirty in a fourth class in an urban middle-class school with five and eleven children respectively receiving additional support. Overall, the number of children receiving additional support ranged from one child with Mod GLD in a multi-grade class of seventeen children to twelve out of a total of twenty-eight children in a second class.

³ As discussed in Chapter One (see page 29), this specifies that resource teachers “assist schools in providing support for children with special educational needs” by assessing the child’s needs and setting specific targets for each child, by direct teaching of the children with SEN in a separate room or in the mainstream class and by team-teaching so long as the children with SEN are deriving benefit from it (Circular 08/02, p. 1).

Specifically, one class teacher taught a class with approximately one sixth receiving additional support, five class teachers taught classes where this proportion was approximately one third and for two class teachers, two less than half of the total class received additional support. For the class teacher who had only one child out of seventeen receiving additional support, this class combined four grade levels from third to sixth. As such, class teachers in this enquiry were potentially faced with multiple and diverse needs in planning and teaching each curriculum area.

As class teachers articulated how they planned and taught the curriculum to include children with SEN, differentiation emerged as a consistent feature of their pedagogical intentions. Differentiation took a number of forms: by the conceptual levels; by teaching approaches, typically more intensive one-to-one teaching; and, by outcomes, specifically related to the amount of work to be completed and the medium or format of demonstrating learning. These forms are consistent with the many definitions of differentiation promoted in the literature and presented in Chapter Three. As also discussed, although the term is not specifically cited in the documentation of the Primary School Curriculum, “taking account of individual difference” is nonetheless a key principle of learning in the curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 17).

Based on the widely accepted claim that “differentiation involves attempting to cater for the individual needs of the student/pupil while teaching in an ordinary classroom” (Griffin and Shevlin, 2007, p. 150), class teachers in the enquiry planned and taught curriculum areas, particularly English and maths, differentiated by conceptual levels within the class. Two of these teachers, Catherine and Lucy, had particularly diverse class groupings. Catherine differentiated on both group and individual bases while Lucy differentiated on a group basis. Although a third teacher, Ann, had five of twenty-eight children in sixth class receiving additional support, four with learning support needs in maths were withdrawn by a learning support teacher during the class maths lesson while the fifth child with Mild GLD and Cornelia de Lange syndrome remained in-class “doing a separate programme ... on the same topic but working at a way lower, working at her level in fact” (CT1.12, p. 2). In Elm SNS, the resource and class teacher co-taught separate maths programmes with two ability-based groups. Extending the co-teaching arrangement to cover English and maths in

Oak NS, again children were grouped on the basis of ability and co-taught separate programmes by resource and class teacher.

The practice of differentiation to accommodate diversity in conceptual levels within the class grouping in an attempt to enable all children access the curriculum, particularly English and maths, was associated with reservations, tensions, complexities and at times, frustration. Typically, these teachers had groups and/or individual children on different programmes based on ability, although linked by topic or theme where possible. By way of illustration, in Lucy's outline of her school day, ability grouping is evident in her unprompted reference to differentiating for the students in her class:

... and the first thing I do is your prayer and then you have the test of the five spellings and the five tables that we've done the night before. I do differentiate in the class. I have eight students on different spellings than the rest of the class. (CT7.7, p.1)

Further elaboration reveals one group "does the PAT spellings, so it's just /ell/, /at/ all those each day, they get a column each night" while "the others get them out of *The Magic Spell Adventure* big words, important, no pattern at all" (CT7.49, p. 7). Regarding "word recognition from the story" and reading, the children are "on different readers" (CT7.12, p. 2). One group has "the fourth class reader that the other two classes are using" while "eleven children are on Wellington Square"⁴ (CT7.12, p. 2), which Lucy states is her "real contribution to actually doing something concrete with the children ... (*her*) effort to maybe differentiate for them" (CT7.43, p. 6). Although claiming not to "put much kind of 'meas' on those Drumcondras (*standardised assessments*)" for the ten children "in maths under the tenth percentile" who "have the actual maths book" she nonetheless "photocopies the shadow books for third and second class" so they work on the class topic but complete activities at a level suitable to their existing knowledge (CT7.99, p. 16). Similarly, Catherine explains that when the class is "doing two D shapes", working with Frank she would "take a page maybe out of the first class shadow book and they would look at a two D shaped man" and she confirms "it would be the same concept but it wouldn't be at the same level" (CT4.150, p. 19).

Despite differentiating for reading, spellings and maths "because a lot of the kids, they were just finding it way too hard" (CT7.49, p. 7) Lucy states: "My worry

⁴ This is a graded reading scheme designed specifically for learners experiencing reading difficulties.

would be meeting the needs of everybody” (CT7.119, p. 19). Specifically, she expresses concerns for the “ones who are bright” and claims: “I don’t think they’re getting enough challenge, I have to simplify everything, they’re left waiting to move on, just doing more of the same when I’m working with the others, trying to drag them up to scratch” (CT7.97, p. 15). In conveying the teaching of parallel programmes matched to ability, Lucy’s account is representative of the other class teachers’ intentions regarding differentiation by conceptual level. Also representative are the concerns and tensions associated with differentiation revealed in her commentary. Typifying class teachers’ frustration is Catherine’s account below of ‘juggling’ to include twelve children receiving additional support in her class of twenty-eight:

It’s the maths that I would juggle a lot because you know, some of them fly through the maths book and you can just give them an extra worksheet. The ones going out for resource, they have to do the maths book because the parents paid the money and they expect it to be done even though we know like it’s not the B all and end all but to a lot of them it would be. And then if you hold the brighter ones back, their parents want to know why and it’s not fair on them. But the others, like you’re trying to pull them up here and there and then I have Amparo (*Portuguese child*) and she would be doing different maths as well and I’d have Joyce (*traveller child*) out with the concrete, you know, with the Diennes blocks, with the transition boards and she would be doing something else as well and now Frank always has his blocks, that’s what he’d be using ... it’s just, you’re all over, you’re writing home work for different people. It’s just all juggle, juggle, juggle you know. (CT4.88, p. 11)

Contrary to research on teachers’ experience of differentiation in primary schools in Northern Ireland which found that the teachers’ perceptions of an achievable vision of differentiation at the planning stage “was not necessarily the reality noted during the case study observation” (McGarvey, Marriott, Morgan and Abbott, 1997, p. 363), the class teachers in this enquiry articulated difficulties and problems associated with differentiation from the outset. These concerns and complexities indicate the dilemmatic nature of the pedagogical intentions of class teachers who differentiate to enable all children in the class access the curriculum, particularly English and maths. They highlight the challenges of catering for individual needs in the classroom situation, challenges not experienced by their resource teaching counterparts given their practices of working with small groups and of withdrawal.

In response to questioning on their teaching approaches for inclusion, the adaptations to her teaching to address individual needs described by Rhona as follows are representative of the class teachers' descriptions generally:

I would find that the thing that would really work, rather than class teaching, small groups, small group teaching you know, sit them on the floor in a small group or even sit around a desk and go over again the instructions that way and for the ones then with the learning difficulties, give them the one-to-one in the small groups. (CT5.41, p. 7)

Regardless of teaching method, more concentrated and intensive teaching facilitated by small groups and one-to-one arrangements evident in the above commentary was a hallmark of class teachers' differentiation by teaching approach to include children with SEN. Similar concentrated teaching is implicit in Ann's report that she teaches English reading on a one-to-one basis with Fiona for about "fifteen minutes, but it wouldn't be every single day" while for story writing "she will always be the first person that (*Ann*) will go to, to make sure she knows what she's doing" (CT1.56, p. 9). Catherine's account of "pulling the weaker ones up" and spending "more time calling them up" for one-to-one teaching (CT4.84, p. 10) are further examples of intensive teaching. For Aoife, the "instruction wouldn't be different" but it "would be very specific" and she adds: "I suppose I kind of make sure he's paying attention, call on him a lot and call his name a lot" (CT3.93, p. 10). Such intensive and concentrated teaching to include children with SEN resonates with the perspective on pedagogy and curriculum reported in the literature that supports common principles, generic methods and a common curriculum attuned to individual difference by degree of deliberateness, attention and intensity of teaching depending on learners' needs (Norwich and Lewis, 2002; Lewis and Norwich, 2005; Norwich and Kelly 2005).

Regarding learning outcomes, all class teachers varied their expectations in relation to the amount of work children were to complete, and altered the required medium or format for demonstrating learning, depending on the child's knowledge and experience. Explaining her expectations for Colm with AS, "who wouldn't really have any difficulty with maths" but has motor coordination problems, Aoife comments: "he wouldn't really get as much as the other children in the class but if he grasps the main concept, if it's long multiplication and he does five of them I'd be happy ... I just lower

my expectations in that way” (CT3.72, p. 8). Similarly, when Ann asks questions during Irish, Fiona “will always get ‘Cad is ainm duit?’ [*What is your name?*]” (CT1.46, p. 7). Regarding history and geography, Ann states: “she’ll take part but I mean obviously she won’t know the rivers or the mountains and I don’t expect her to know them like I mean if she knew one or two I’d be happy with that” (CT1.46, p. 7). For Paul, the sixth class child with Mod GLD, Treasa comments that on a topic like “solemnity in water” she would not expect him to “understand why the egg is floating in water but to know there’s a lot of salt in it” (CT9.14, p. 3). Treasa adds that for a subject like geography, he “could do China as it’s easy to understand travel through China because it’s all about food and people and the way they live” but “for something more complicated like longitude, latitude, or say time zones” she would not expect him to learn as “he wouldn’t know what you’d be at or wouldn’t understand it and you’d only frustrate him” (CT9.11, p. 3). Also, when other children in his class “have to read parts of the newspaper for about ten minutes and pick one item of interest and then tell it to the class”, Paul has to “pick out the words in the titles that he knows, and then he cuts out those and pastes them in his scrap book” (CT9.17, p. 4). The typicality of class teachers’ varied expectations regarding learning outcomes is captured in the following statement from Rhona:

... a lot of the time in language I teach overall the same thing but it’s the end result, I would expect a different result. I would expect the better people to be able to do it independently and I would then sit with the other people and try to help them do you know just even to produce just a couple of sentences type of thing. (CT5.40, p. 6)

The purpose of differentiation is to “personalise” students’ learning “to their current abilities as well as their interests” (Ferguson, 2008, p. 114), and in so doing, teachers are acknowledging principles promoted by the NCCA (2007) and NEPS (2007). However, the long-term consequence of this practice is the ever widening gap between the learners for whom the curriculum is being differentiated and their peer group, where the kind of differentiation being provided is no longer a possibility.

Overall, differentiation was a consistent feature of the pedagogical intentions of class teachers who confronted many and diverse needs in planning and teaching the broad range of curriculum areas. Paradoxically, resource teachers, all of whom had

completed CPD in special educational needs which included a focus on the principles and practices of differentiation, did not necessarily plan for this as they taught children with SEN on a one-to-one or in small groups determined on the basis of similar needs. As such, those teachers least qualified through CPD to differentiate appeared most required to do so in practice. Class teachers conveyed an understanding of differentiation fraught with concerns, tensions and complexities. While the dilemmatic framework of analysis presented in the literature as an interpretive lens for this enquiry (Clark et al., 1995b; Clark et al., 1997; Clark et al., 1999; Dyson and Millward, 2000; Norwich and Kelly, 2005) indicates that such concerns and tensions inherent in practices of inclusion are to be anticipated, by moving beyond the level of the school, this enquiry's analysis of teachers' intended practices of differentiation shaping their pedagogical routines for inclusion adds to the current literature. Apart from resonating with the pedagogical principle of taking account of individual difference, the forms of differentiation practised by all the class teachers in terms of content, method and outcome are consistent with recommendations by its proponents. However, as revealed in Chapter Three, the nature and key aspects of the learning experiences arising from differentiation remain undocumented in the research literature. Observation as the second phase of data collection in this enquiry was critical to capturing this, revealed for example through the learning activities in terms of pitch, pace and challenge, the levels of children's engagement, the coherence of curriculum and the extent of individual or collaborative effort. This is documented under the themes of attunement and coherence-fragmentation in Chapters Ten and Eleven respectively.

As the teachers discussed their teaching practices for inclusion, an understanding of the centrality of children's active participation in the learning process shaping teachers' pedagogical intentions emerged. This sub-theme is discussed in the following section.

ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN LEARNING

Describing teaching methods for inclusion, although resource teachers had recourse to specific terminology not necessarily evident in the commentary of class teachers, all emphasised the importance of teaching in ways that facilitated 'hands on

learning' and having the children 'actively involved'. Elaborating on how they created opportunities for active involvement, teachers revealed a variety of teaching methods matched to "the curriculum content and learning styles of the children" (RT2.128, p. 15), shaping their pedagogical routines. This emphasis on active involvement resonates with an underlying Primary School Curriculum principle of the child as an "active agent" in his or her learning (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 14).

Resource teachers' descriptions of actively involving the children indicated the significance they attributed to multi-sensory and kinaesthetic approaches specifically for these children, thereby shaping their pedagogical intentions. Apart from the need for repetition, there was a consensus that children with SEN "don't need anything that's going to take too much time, they need to have their activities changed very often as they've only a certain concentration span" (RT2.126, p. 14), "they need visuals, they need the kinaesthetic, and they need to be handling and doing" (RT8.95, p. 18). Anita's account of teaching letter, number and word recognition to the children with SEN in her junior school is representative of the resource teachers' methods of devising learning activities that incorporate "the elements" of "handling and doing" (RT8.95, p. 18):

OK, for teaching letters, numbers and words, one of the first things I do is multi-sensory, I use the tactile letters and numbers where they're actually cut out, of soft material, plastic magnetic, wooden material, felt on card and sand paper. So the children actually trace over the surfaces and they feel the outline, that this is the shape that we've made and so they're looking at it, they're saying it, they're feeling it and tracing the shape of it over and over. Then I have sets of flash cards for numbers, letters and words and I would have individual sets that the children would get and they use those as a back up and what's inside is recorded on the envelope and they tick them off when they know them and hand them back and move on to the next lot ... So say now for the letters, we start with the curvy shapes that are easier to make like 'o' and 'c', and then move on to curvy with lines like 'a' and then curvy with longer lines, say the 'ds' and then letters that go below the line like 'f' and it's building up like that. I would use different resources to teach the same thing, so if I'm using letters I might use magnetic one day, soft another day, I might use chalk board, white board, copies, pencil and paper, marker, crayon so that they are repeating the same thing but that there's a different stimulus and it's very much the kinaesthetic approach. (RT5.112, p. 17)

Along with the multi-sensory teaching recommended for learners with dyslexia over half a century ago (Gillingham and Stillman, 1956), evident in this brief account

are the “structured, cumulative and sequential” principles of teaching children with dyslexia also well-documented and recommended in the literature (Ott, 1997; Reid, 2005). Rather than being dyslexia-distinctive, these principles are among a number identified by Cooper (2005) for teaching children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Furthermore, they are incorporated in the principles of learning on which the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999) is based, namely “the child as an active agent in his or her learning” and “the developmental nature of learning” (p. 14) and thus, are intrinsic to teaching that benefits all children.

Among the many examples provided by class teachers of involving all children in their learning, the following accounts from Nicola have been selected. Outlining what qualifies as a predominantly direct approach to teaching both oral Irish and English literacy to her fifth class, in this account she describes how she “keeps the children active”, particularly those with SEN. Also revealed is the way class teachers accommodate individual needs within the context of meeting needs common to all:

For teaching Irish, I put up a story, I'll draw say five pictures up on the board and I'll say like “Taispeáin dom liathróid or whatever?” and now they might not know which one I'm talking about and I might kind of describe it a bit, you know. And if they don't have a clue still like that, I'll pick the strong kid. They'll go up and say, “sin é, seo í an liathróid” you know, and then I'll get them to go up. They're always picked for everything. So they're always active and they're always up and they're doing stuff and they do actually, especially with the Irish, they will remember it if they've actually physically walked up. Sometimes now I'll do English reading with the whole class and what we'll do is we'll read say two pages and every so often I would say, “oh right, what does this word mean?” for example “shuffled” and I'd just write it up on the board and after reading two pages I might have ten words up on the board and I get one of the strong kids to go up with a ruler and read out each one and then I'll do, a few kids will do that and then a few of the special kids would go up and read it out and then they'll sit down and I'll say “could someone get up and do a mime of one of those words?” The specials love getting up and doing the words and they might get up and pretend to shuffle across the room and someone else would put their hand up and say that's the word, you know. And then we'll read through the story again. Like they're usually the hard words I'll put up and they can read them you know, like they're actually quite good when they've got that bit of help. But there's no way I could do a reading lesson if they're involved where I didn't have them doing something. They'd have to be always up because they do find it even hard just sitting there in their chair. Cause if it's going over their head, you know, they're just plain right bored. But that's really it, definitely get them involved. (CT6.46, p. 8)

Similarly, practising an experiential approach which involves learning through guided activity and discovery, the children are “very much involved” because “it’s practical” (CT6.15, p. 3). By way of illustration, in this second account below, Nicola recalls a science lesson based on investigating the effect of liquids on teeth:

Like we did an experiment on teeth there and they were working in their groups and each group had egg shells in various kinds of liquids like coke and milk and stuff and they had to set it up and watch and record and they knew exactly, they knew the eggshell represented enamel on your teeth and they could explain it, they could explain that the coke blackened your teeth and it was unhealthy and you’d have to brush your teeth after it and I’ll always ask them to explain it and once they can explain it to me I know the whole class has it, you know that way. (CT6.15, p. 3)

A common practice of ‘getting children involved’ was through games. Typically, class teachers described playing a variety of games like Word Bingo and Word Snap “just to help the children with their new words from their readers, with their syllabication and stuff” (CT7.66, p. 10). Teachers also welcomed opportunities for “hands on work” afforded by SESE, where “rather than we’ll say have them write a lot” the children with SEN could “demonstrate it more” using equipment for science experiments, using “artefacts and making models” for history or “taking photographs and using the environment” for geography (CT3.87, p. 10). Active participation in music was facilitated by the “music box” where “there was an amount of lessons that you could do” and the view was shared that “the kids love all the percussion instruments” (CT6.52, p. 9). Teaching ‘skills and drills’ for games such as uni-hoc, basketball and soccer were among the many examples provided by the teachers of actively involving all children in PE.

While resource teachers considered it necessary for children with SEN to have concrete materials for learning, and many claimed withdrawal to the resource room facilitated this, class teachers’ accounts indicated their use of a range of resources for teaching particular topics within curriculum areas to all children, precisely because they were suitable for the learning purposes and facilitated children’s active involvement regardless of levels of ability. Furthermore, no concrete materials were identified by resource teachers that were not also identified by class teachers. Indeed, evident in the

commentary from all teachers was the sense that “in the last few years” schools had “really built up (*their*) supplies of concrete materials” (CT2.108, p. 14) and thanks to “small grants” from the DES, had purchased equipment for science, PE, and music (CT8.60, p. 9).

Specifically, five of the children with SEN being tracked in the enquiry had their own laptops grant-aided by the DES. Their class teachers commented on the children’s use of the laptops for completing writing activities in class and for homework and for sourcing information in history, science and geography, while some students followed specific programmes such as Lexia and Fuzzbuzz to reinforce literacy skills and one followed a “back up maths programme” (CT3.102, p. 11). Although acknowledging that use of ‘hands on’ resources contributed to the children’s active involvement, overall, class teachers considered that the children with SEN “don’t seem to be picking up any more or any less from using those to be honest” (CT5.51, p. 8). The following comment by Aoife is illustrative of the view that resources were beneficial to all children regardless:

I think with the concrete resources in maths and the science equipment and that, he would benefit as much as the other children. I wouldn’t really use them specifically for him even though he would enjoy using them and he would learn from them, but I think the other children would probably be similar. (CT3.102, p. 11)

Based on the teachers’ pedagogical descriptions, it is evident that they neither ‘apply’ nor ‘implement’ interventions for the children with SEN. This resonates with the research literature, where the number of investigations of interventions by class teachers for children with SEN relatively low. Furthermore, such interventions were initiated by an outside researcher, but when the class teachers were involved, they were released from class teaching to work one-to-one with the children with SEN (Dowker, 2001)⁵ or they were supplied with an “instruction script” (Johnson and McDonnell, 2004, p. 25). Rather, shaping teachers’ pedagogical intentions is the perception that a range of teaching approaches is appropriate for all learners and more specifically, that inclusion is facilitated by creating opportunities for active involvement of the children with SEN, regardless of the approach practised. As predicted by leading researchers in their

⁵ This arrangement was facilitated by the employment of a supply teacher.

critiques of pedagogy for SEN (Cooper, 2005; Dyson and Hick, 2005; Fletcher-Campbell, 2005; Porter, 2005; Reid, 2005), teachers in this enquiry demonstrate knowledge of key pedagogical principles and generic teaching methods which they adapt by specific targeting of questions and by incorporating sensory and physical elements in the children's learning experiences. Observation of teachers' intentions in practice captured the nature of active participation in these teaching-learning experiences for inclusion, the detail of which is documented under the theme of attunement in Chapter Ten.

Apart from creating opportunities for active involvement, teaching methods that incorporated learning through language were identified by the teachers as another critical means of facilitating inclusion, giving rise to a fourth sub-theme which is presented in the following section.

LEARNING THROUGH LANGUAGE

In response to questioning on inclusive teaching approaches, all teachers in this enquiry expressed the view that incorporating talk and discussion promoted inclusion. Class teachers indicated ways in which discussion contributed to facilitating the children's access to and participation in a number of curriculum areas. These included Irish, English, SESE, SPHE, maths and drama. In contrast, resource teachers indicated explicit uses of language as a teaching method to target acquisition of particular communicative, language and social skills that enabled learning and facilitated inclusion.

There was a consensus among class teachers that the child with SEN "tends to cope better if we're discussing something and rather than have them write about it get them to talk about it" (CT3.87, p. 10). They considered that "with oral discussion ... you can bring him (*the child with SEN*) into it" (CT4.150, p. 19) while they reasoned that "most of the curriculum is accessible to all children, because a lot of it is the story" (CT2.95, p. 12). For Paul, the sixth class child with Mod GLD, Treasa the class teacher comments: "if it's interesting and there's a lot of language in it then he comes in for it ... drama, Religion, SPHE, poetry, singing and music, and those aspects of geography, history and science that are easy to understand" (CT9.12, p. 3). Learning through

language featured in the inclusion of children with SEN in teaching Irish where class teachers agreed that “unless it’s revolving round a game” or a quiz “it’s very difficult to get participation” (CT3.4, p.1). A language dimension to inclusion in the maths programme was also evident in class teachers’ commentary on “spending time doing a lot of oral maths ... table games, countdown, a lot of different games like that where they’re kind of using their heads more rather than just working through a book” (CT6.30, p. 5).

Class teachers’ use of talk and discussion as a key teaching and learning strategy across curriculum areas reflects the Primary School Curriculum principle of “learning through language” which acknowledges “that much learning takes place through the interaction of language and experience” (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 15). Furthermore, it resonates with the typical developmental sequence of language skill acquisition where the primary language system skills of listening and speaking develop in advance of the secondary language system skills of reading and writing. Although class teachers considered that learning through language constituted a pedagogical route to inclusion, nonetheless, as the following account illustrates, they held ambiguities regarding the learning outcomes for children with SEN:

Religion, SPHE, any of the oral stuff, you read a story, you ask them questions, they’ve heard the story the very same as any other child and they’re able to answer. They can give their own life experiences and that would be true to a point with geography. Where I do find the learning support children in geography, like the likes of learning off the counties, learning off the rivers, major towns, just a nightmare, they can’t sound out the words so they can’t read them to start off with ... but they can, say if we’re chatting about people’s roles and the community, something like that, same in history chatting about the past, they’ve no bother with that ... basically the Irish, the English and the maths are where the difficulties are. Everything else you would get over. In saying that, they’re not achieving probably to the (*level*) of other children even in those subjects either. (CT7.58, p. 8)

Such ambiguities echo research indicating that many students with learning disabilities do not do well in situations requiring extensive language interactions and conversations (Bryan, 1997; Tallal, Allard, Millar and Curtiss, 1997; Torgesen, 1998). Precisely because “the use of language is central to the educational process” (Frederickson and Cline, 2007, p. 275), children’s language competency is critical to

their experiences of learning. However, for a number of the children with SEN in this enquiry whose resource teachers have identified language as a priority learning need, their levels of competency and proficiency would require careful consideration in teaching methods that incorporate use of language. Although class teachers typically shared Christine's view that "you have to adapt your teaching methodologies in that (*you*) would have to do a lot more discussion for the children who are just not capable of putting it down on paper" (CT8.38, p. 6), adapting the language of discussion would also appear necessary to accommodate various levels of language competency and proficiency among the children. Although not immediately apparent at the time of interviewing, teachers' intentions regarding the use of talk and discussion in their accounts of inclusion were to foreshadow communicative routines in teaching-learning encounters, a theme of particular importance for the enquiry and discussed in Chapter Nine.

Rather than using language as a means of facilitating children's access to a range of curriculum areas, resource teachers indicated very specific uses of talk and discussion as a method for teaching skills. For example, in relation to social skills, language was embedded in resource teachers' use of Circle Time, a method proposed by Mosley (1996) to facilitate teachers and pupils in achieving a "better understanding of themselves and their interpersonal relationships" while offering the children a forum "away from academic pressures" (p. 74). For younger children with SEN, Circle Time presented the opportunity to "each tell their news and talk about how they're feeling or whatever" (RT9.3, p. 2). For older children from "fifth and sixth class" who "have a big worry about going to Secondary schools and issues about changeover and will they get in" basing Circle Time on "changes in their lives" allowed them "chat about and talk about and deal with all those issues ... talking about it together so they see that they're not the only ones with those difficulties" (RT7.24, p. 5).

Devising programmes to address oral language development was central to resource teachers' planning and teaching where the focus was on vocabulary acquisition and the development of particular language uses, structures and pragmatics depending on the children's needs. By way of illustration, using "teaching strategies" that included "a lot of discussion, a lot of scaffolding, a lot of recasting, a lot of prompting ... debates

... and activities that bring in learning but they're not conscious that they're working at learning" Jacqueline describes her language programme for the children with SEN from fifth classes as focusing on "what ifs, what if the house was on fire, if the cake burned ... and how do you order a pizza, how do you book a hair appointment, you know, practical stuff, this kind of thing" (RT6.86-88, p. 18). These practices described by resource teachers are neither specialised nor qualitatively different from those described by class teachers. However, they are dependent on intensive one-to-one interactions that allow each child sufficient opportunity to acquire and practise selected vocabulary and particular language uses and structures, and to experience key aspects of the listener-speaker relationship. Such interactions are facilitated by the teaching arrangements of withdrawing children on individual and small group bases practised by resource teachers, but which represent an artificially privileged situation in the typical mainstream class with one teacher. Again, recourse to observation was critical in capturing the pedagogical intentions of talk and discussion in practice, leading to the prominence of teachers' communicative routines for inclusion which is documented in Chapter Nine.

A key issue to emerge in the inclusion of children with SEN and shaping teachers' pedagogical intentions, centred on teaching methods that enabled these learners to consolidate and maintain learning. The following section presents this sub-theme of consolidating learning and maintaining learning gains.

CONSOLIDATING AND MAINTAINING LEARNING

Two pedagogical principles that contribute to characterising the learning process envisaged by the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999) are the fostering of skills that facilitate transfer of learning and the development of higher-order thinking and problem solving skills. Transfer of learning refers to "the child's ability to apply what he or she has learned in dealing with problems, choices, situations and experiences that are unfamiliar" (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 16). Regarding the principle of higher-order thinking and problem-solving, the documentation states that "in the curriculum the child is encouraged to observe, collate and evaluate evidence, to ask questions, to identify essential information, to recognise the essence of a problem, to

suggest solutions and make informed judgements” (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 16); it concludes that “these activities help to foster the higher-order thinking skills, such as summarising, analysing, making inferences and deductions, and interpreting figurative language and imagery” (p. 16). Although teachers, and more typically resource teachers, described practices to facilitate transfer of learning and problem-solving, one of the greatest challenges in teaching children with SEN and influencing the pedagogical intentions of all teachers, related to consolidating learning and maintaining learning gains.

Typically, teachers referred to the learning of children with SEN and particularly those with specific or general learning disabilities, not going in, being gone and forgotten. As summed by one resource teacher: “It is one of the down sides of teaching the children with learning disabilities that you rarely see much progress and you think you’ve something cracked and you come back after the holidays and it’s gone again” (RT6.31, p. 7). Among class teachers, there was a sense of resignation regarding the inevitability of children with SEN forgetting what they knew. For example, regarding those with Mild GLD in her fifth class Nicola comments that “even if you’d taught them where the counties are they don’t seem to remember it” (CT6.14, p. 3). Further illustrative of this is the following commentary from Treasa, the class teacher, referring to a basic sight vocabulary that Paul with Mod GLD had been working on:

Now that would be basic, name, address, age, father’s name, mother’s name, brothers, sister, Paul likes. Very simple. Now that would have been done several times and I’m quite likely to tell you that he’d come out here now and it’ll be totally gone, forgotten. He’d read it on the day and he’d be able to read it maybe around that time that you’d be doing it but I wouldn’t guarantee that he’d be able to read it come four weeks or five weeks later, and you see we have to go back over it again and again and again. (CT9.28, p. 5)

Along with going “back over it” repeatedly, planning in terms of “minimal competencies” was a second strategy considered by teachers to facilitate consolidation of learning. For example, referring to the maths programme for her multi-grade fourth to sixth classes where children are grouped on an ability basis and the resource teacher joins the maths class to co-teach the groups with children with SEN, Christine, the class teacher comments:

They're not being forced to do *Mathemagic Six* or *Mathemagic Five*⁶ like everybody else in the class. They are just doing what they are capable of doing and we work on the basic, you know, there's a basic mathematical list that every child leaving primary school has to have, the minimal competencies that they would have to achieve by the time they would leave school. That's what they'd be working on. (CT8.73, p. 11)

While resource teachers also referred to the need for the children with SEN "to have the basics" by the time they left primary school, their pedagogical intentions incorporated varied teaching approaches and resources for facilitating repetition. Furthermore, they considered this variation in their teaching set it apart from mainstream class teaching, as the following extract from Eilish reveals:

Over-teaching with most of the children with problems and you just teach, teach, teach, teach, teach all the time just coming from different angles, be it the PAT words, the writing them on the board, we're saying them, we're feeling them, we're singing them. You definitely need to be, I find in the job you have to be very, very inventive and especially for the children who have mild general learning disability. You definitely, I make up songs, you know what I mean, maths songs, tables songs in the hope that they'll learn them and they'll stick. I do an awful lot of teaching and there wouldn't be that much written work. An awful lot of oral work and hands-on activities and in that way it would be totally different to the classroom teaching. (RT3.202, p. 20)

Not alone is the 'inventiveness' conveyed in the above commentary consistent with teachers' responsiveness previously reported, but it underscores the prerequisites of pacing and time in the learning experiences for learners with SEN. The dominance of consolidating and maintaining learning gains evident in teachers' pedagogical intentions regarding inclusion resonates with the well-documented "poor retention ability" of children with GLD (SERC) (Department of Education, 1993, p. 118) and the "shortcomings in the understanding and/or recall of the material which has been seen and heard" (p. 87) experienced by children with specific learning disabilities⁷.

⁶ Text books devised for sixth and fifth class respectively.

⁷ Current definitions of intellectual disabilities refer to significant limitations in intellectual functioning and in adaptive functioning with implications for general mental capability, involving ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience (AAIDD, 2006). Along with reference to "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language", definitions of specific learning disabilities typically refer to "inefficient information processing, including difficulties in phonological processing, working memory, rapid naming and automaticity of basic skills" (DES, 2002b, p. 31)

Furthermore, teachers' attempts to maintain learning over time by creating ample opportunities for repetition, are supported by a body of research literature on memory that emphasises teaching children with SEN strategies to extend the time information is held in short-term memory, and to facilitate its storage and retrieval in long-term memory (Fisher, Schumaker and Deshler, 1995; Greeno, Collins and Resnick, 1996; Gersten, 1998; Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1998; Lerner and Kline, 2006). Nonetheless, while appropriate pacing to promote learning can be safeguarded in the resource setting of withdrawal, adjusting pace to accommodate individual needs within the context of class teaching constitutes a challenge for class teachers. Observation facilitated the documentation of teaching-learning experiences and pacing for learners with SEN, contributing to the theme of attunement.

Regarding the principles of transfer of learning, problem-solving and critical thinking, these were considered in class teachers' pedagogical routines for their classes generally. As an example of developing critical thinking, five class teachers described their use of newspaper articles and magazine advertisements to enable the children distinguish facts and opinions. Class teachers also identified maths, science and art as affording opportunities for developing problem-solving skills. However, they considered that children with SEN experienced difficulties with these skills. As summed by Breda: "you give them cardboard, boxes, cylinders and you ask them to make a building with a slanted roof and a tower but in fact children with problem-solving difficulties have problem-solving difficulties with art as well as with everything else" (CT2.96, p. 13). Furthermore, they conveyed a sense of inevitability and resignation regarding the problem-solving difficulties experienced by these children, as the following extract from Lucy illustrates:

I see it so much during the activities and that's why I give them cause the other kids will get a whole page done and they're getting on to the extended work at the bottom, the more tricky questions, the problems, the teasers, and they've flown through them and they get through the silent reading at the end or whatever, whereas the child who's having difficulties gets the first three done, I'm happy out, at least they can do them, the three, but I sit on them. (CT7.61, p. 9)

Applying the dilemmatic perspective to analysis of class teachers' pedagogical intentions regarding the problem-solving difficulties experienced by children with SEN, not alone illuminates the complexity of value judgements class teachers continually have to make in their practices of inclusion (Norwich and Kelly, 2005), but it indicates their resolution of these dilemmas by investing their energy in the learning priorities relevant to the majority of children in the class. Such a resolution is understandable given teachers' commonly held perception reported in Chapter Five that priority learning needs of the children with SEN are the remit of the resource teacher.

In contrast to class teachers' intentions and challenging the notion of "fostering" higher-level thinking promoted in the curriculum documentation (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 16), resource teachers described their explicit and direct teaching of strategies devised specifically to enable children with SEN to understand, think and problem-solve. For example, to facilitate understanding and generalisation, Oonagh guides children through the process of making mind maps "with the chapter title in the centre and the headings coming from the title and key points recorded under, that go with the headings" and then she tries "to get them to realise that if this strategy is given to you for English reading well it'll work on history reading and it'll work on reading in other curricular areas" (RT8.59, p. 12). Her practice is supported by research in cognitive psychology which indicates that the meaningful chunking of information required to complete the graphic organiser is beneficial for children with SEN, facilitating their understanding and recall (Fisher et al., 1995; Lenz, Ellis and Scanlon, 1996). Also common among resource teachers, particularly in their work with senior children, is Jacqueline's practice of teaching 'RAVECCC'⁸ as a maths problem-solving strategy. To this end, resource teachers described "direct teaching and modelling" of the problem solving strategy, "walking and talking" the children through the steps, and providing "lots of opportunity for guided practice" leading to "independent use of the strategy" (RT6.88, p. 18). Specific teaching of problem-solving strategies is supported by evidence that children with learning difficulties can be helped to become more

⁸ The mnemonic identifies the following sequence of problem-solving steps: Read the problem carefully; Attend to key words that suggest the process to use; Visualise the problem, make a sketch or diagram; Estimate the possible answer; Choose the numbers to use; Calculate the answer; Check the answer against your estimate.

proficient at solving problems (Xin, Grasso, Dipipi-Hoy and Jitendra, 2005; Xin, Jitendra and Deatline-Buchman, 2005). Although knowledge of teaching strategies for problem-solving may fall within the pedagogical remit of all teachers, the time commitment required to 'walk and talk' specific children within the class through each step, allowing ample opportunity for 'guided practice' may be too much of a luxury for class teachers.

The development of higher-order thinking aside, consolidating and maintaining learning gains for learners with SEN constitutes a challenge to the pedagogical routines of teachers. Recognition of diversity in the pacing of learning required by some children is evident in teachers' intentions. However, in teaching arrangements where priority learning needs of children with SEN are the resource teacher's remit and where faced with the value judgement, class teachers focus on the needs of the majority, the necessity for class teachers either to teach skills related to transfer of learning and problem-solving or to adapt their teaching to accommodate diversity of pace is diminished if not eliminated. The in-depth investigation of teaching-learning experiences across mainstream settings afforded by observation facilitated detailed documentation of teachers' interpretations of pacing and consolidating and maintaining learning in practice. This contributes to the themes of attunement and coherence-fragmentation presented in Chapters Ten and Eleven respectively.

Organising children to work in pairs and groups featured in their accounts of inclusive teaching, leading to the emergence of opportunities for collaborative learning as the final sub-theme of teachers' pedagogical routines for inclusion. As such, collaborative learning forms the focus of the following section.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Teachers identified opportunities for collaborative learning afforded by group work and peer tutoring as a means of facilitating inclusion. However, elaboration of their collaborative learning practices revealed ambiguity regarding the extent to which they were actually inclusive.

For teaching English and mathematics, in seven of the nine schools and regardless of resource teacher's involvement in class-teaching arrangements, children

were invariably grouped on the basis of ability. Christine's justification for ability grouping was representative of teachers who considered that "you have to allow for the different abilities and inabilities in the class" (CT8.39, p. 6). Her perception of "it working" was also typical where she "got to every child in the group because the groups were small and nobody could escape the net" (CT8.69, p. 11) and the children "actually like sitting down because they're working to their ability" (CT8.73, p. 11). Whether an unintended consequence of policy change, the practice of ability grouping runs counter to inclusive ideology; it subscribes to the notion of separate programmes consistent with the psycho-medical model of SEN and is redolent of more traditional concepts of teaching associated with the rise of industrialism where assumptions of homogeneity among learners based on chronology were the underpinning understandings. Furthermore, ability grouping practices are seriously challenged by research indicating more favourable academic outcomes for children taught in mixed ability groupings (Boaler, William and Brown, 2000; Ireson, Hallam and Huntley, 2005; Farrell, Dyson, Polat, Gallannaugh and Hutcheson, 2006). Paradoxically, although identified as a means of including children with SEN, such ability grouping, shaping their pedagogical intentions, has potential to diminish class teachers' responsibility while disempowering their professional capacity to support inclusion and sustain diversity.

Contrary to their grouping arrangements for English and maths, for teaching curriculum areas of SESE and for project work, class teachers considered that organising the children into groups determined on a mixed ability basis promoted all children's learning. Furthermore, their justification for putting "a weak with a strong" (CT7.11, p. 2), typically hinged on the perception that "the stronger kids could help the specials ... get the weak kids to do it" (CT6.111, p. 21) and "could take the lead and organise others in the group" (CT1.10, p. 2) while overall, children "learn from others in their group ... and the experience of working in the group is good learning in itself" (CT8.122, p. 21). Such justification echoes the pedagogical principle of collaborative learning embodied in the Primary School Curriculum which envisages that "the interactive exchange" afforded by collaborative learning "will help to broaden and deepen individual children's understanding" (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 17).

However, simply placing children in small groups does not guarantee learning will occur. As discussed in Chapter Three, research indicates that gains from working with others are dependent on the nature of students' participation in group work⁹ (Webb and Palincsar, 1996; King, 1999; Webb, 2009). Research also highlights that programmes of preparation in communication, explaining and reasoning skills can increase the quality and depth of group discussion and can improve group on-task performance and student achievement (Mercer et al., 2004; Blatchford et al., 2006; Baines, Blatchford and Chowne, 2007; Reznitskaya et al., 2007; Baines et al., 2008). Such prerequisite communicative skills for effective group collaboration are less likely to be the preserve of children with SEN who themselves are more likely to need extensive teaching to acquire these skills. However, according to their accounts, class teachers' preparation of children for group work is confined to describing the activities, behaviours and roles expected during group work and assigning children to particular groups to ensure composition reflects mixed abilities, with an appropriate balance of 'weak and strong'. Recourse to observation of practice was critical to capturing the essence of collaborative learning experiences arising from the ability and mixed ability grouping arrangements practised by teachers and is documented under the themes of communicative routines and coherence-fragmentation.

Along with group work, teachers from three schools identified peer tutoring as a means of facilitating inclusion, reflecting research over two decades which confirms the effectiveness of peer tutoring for improving learning outcomes for students at all age and ability levels (Heron, Villareal, Yao, Christianson and Heron, 2006; McMaster, Fuchs and Fuchs, 2006). In one school, peer tutoring occurred for ten minutes of the daily English lesson co-taught by both class and resource teacher. As explained by Oonagh, they "try to change it every term" so "they do 'Reading as Friends' for one term every year, it keeps everybody's reading up and they really like it" (RT8.51, p. 10). As such, the focus of peer tutoring activities alternates termly to cover reading, spelling and writing. However, this practice of peer tutoring, focusing on specific aspects of

⁹ To reiterate, this is specifically in relation to the quality and depth of student discussion determined by the extent to which they give and receive help, share knowledge, build on each others' ideas and justify their views, and the extent to which they recognise and resolve contradictions between their own and other students' perspectives.

literacy development while facilitating inclusion, was the exception. In the remaining two schools, with single grade classes, cross-age tutoring for paired reading was practised for a number of weeks during one term. In one case where children from first class in a junior school were paired with fourth class in the neighbouring senior school, paired reading worked “very well for the fellow with EBD ... but the child with hearing difficulties... it’s completely lost on her” so, for the duration of the paired reading programme this child joins “a group from the other first class with the resource teacher” (CT5.46, p. 7).

In the second school, the child with SEN was in sixth class, had a lower standard of reading than the fourth class children with whom her class was paired and therefore was not involved in the paired reading programme. Instead, during this time she received one-to-one instruction in-class, as Ann, her class teacher reports: “You see the paired reading is just a ten week stint so it’s perfect. I have this chance to do this with her one on one ... we were doing magnetism there the other day, she was doing predicting ... going around and using the magnets” (CT1.46, p. 7). While opportunities for individual instruction are welcomed by the teacher, an exclusionary experience of paired reading for the child with SEN is revealed in Ann’s response to questioning on her teaching approaches when working one-to-one:

... the two of us will sit there (*teacher’s table*) because everybody is working in pairs, so there’s actually no more space because I’ve got extra kids coming down from different classes. So the two of us just sit at this table and work away at whatever we’re doing and walk around the classroom if we have to because the others, the rest of the class are fine. They’re working away. I don’t have to worry about them at all there for half an hour of just reading. So it’s fine. We will walk around the classroom, do what we have to do, discuss it, ask her to give her feedback, or it could be ticking boxes or draw out grids you know of what, what ever it is that we are doing and ask her for her opinion. So basically it’s just the two of us sitting together isolated from the rest of the classroom. (CT1.51, p. 8)

Although peer tutoring was identified as a means of facilitating inclusion, paradoxically, as with the various forms of group work described by the teachers, the inclusive aspects of the practice are difficult to discern. However, observation of practice was critical to capturing the essence of collaborative learning experiences arising from peer tutoring and this is documented under the theme of coherence-fragmentation, presented in Chapter Eleven.

SUMMARY

A cumulative analysis of teachers' interpretations of the policy and ideology of inclusion, of their planning and of their pedagogical routines for inclusion as documented in this and the previous two chapters reveals paradoxes, ambiguities and dilemmas in teachers' intentions. Apparent is a dual track system with parallel and predominantly separate pathways of resource and mainstream class teaching, reflecting the psycho-medical model of SEN and governing teachers' intentions as they are translated into practice. Although echoing policy guidelines on the role of the resource teacher, such a system is difficult to reconcile with inclusive ideology. As collaborative opportunities for those furrowing separate pathways are ad hoc and so long as policy continues to subvert such collaborative possibilities, apart from the possible dilution of any cumulative benefits arising from the contribution of two teachers to the children's educational programme and their intentional learning, there is potential for fragmentation in the learning experiences encountered by those with SEN. Recourse to teachers' actions through prolonged observation facilitated analysis of the interface of resource and class teacher practices and particularly their impact on the learning experiences of the children; this is documented in detail under the theme of coherence-fragmentation in Chapter Eleven.

Although relevance more so than breadth and balance may dominate their curriculum focus, teachers' intentions reveal that the learning principles of the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999) facilitate their pedagogical routines for inclusion. In addressing individual difference, responsiveness is apparent in the individualisation of resource teachers' pedagogical intentions and the differentiation of class teachers' intentions. Responsiveness is a common thread running through their intended methods of teaching and is based on teachers' knowledge and thinking about learning, about the child's learning characteristics, the learning environment, and the nature of the learning activities and teaching styles within the dynamic of teacher-learner interactions. Furthermore, variations in teachers' knowledge may contribute to the differences in emphases evident in the pedagogical routines of resource and class teachers, differences that are not qualitative but are necessary if resource and class

teachers as the key constructors of pedagogy are collectively to support inclusion and sustain diversity. Again, it was only by prolonged observation and detailed analysis that the dynamics of teacher-learner interactions were analysed in terms of the teaching-learning episodes and the nature of communication through which learning occurs, in order to advance understanding of teachers' practice to include children with SEN. This gave rise to the three central themes of communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation which are the focus of Chapters Nine, Ten and Eleven respectively while the task of the upcoming chapter is to provide an instrumental version of one case study with a primary focus on these emerging themes.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ELM SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

From nine case studies crafted, the purpose of this chapter is to present an instrumental version of one. Documentation of teachers' intentions over the previous three chapters and based on the first phase of data generation, although comprehensive, provides only a partial account of practice to include children with SEN. As such and discussed in Chapter Four, recourse to teachers' actions through prolonged observation and dialogue as a second phase of data generation was necessary to gain understanding of how teachers' intentions transformed into actions which, in turn, influenced the particularities of the children's learning experiences. Details of practice contributed to focused and in-depth accounts of teaching to support inclusion in each of nine mainstream primary schools. Furthermore, such detail led to the establishment of patterns within and across these settings, indicating the persistence and pervasiveness of three central themes of teachers' inclusive practice as follows: communicative routines, emerging from the verbal interactions initiated by teachers to promote learning; attunement, relating to teachers' responsiveness giving rise to transactional teacher-learner action and interaction; and, coherence-fragmentation, associated with the structure and continuity of teaching-learning experiences.

Although the threads of these integral elements of inclusion were knotted to varying extents in teachers' intentions and their emergence is signalled in the previous three chapters, it was through teaching that their form, substance and prominence were revealed. Since "reliability of the findings to similar settings" (Opie, 2004, p. 74) determines the power of the case study, onus is on the researcher to provide adequate contextual information to enable the reader to assess the "transferability" of findings to other situations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 124). Given this purpose, the task of the case studies was to document the detail of practice in each setting while cumulatively increasing understanding of the pervasive elements of inclusion, elements that through analyses were centrally and intimately connected with teachers' intentions and actions. Mindful of the intrinsic-instrumental distinction regarding format and function of the

case study (Stake, 1995, 2005), intrinsic versions of eight case studies are presented in the Appendices (Appendix V). Linking descriptions of the detail of practice in one site to elements that contribute to the presence of the themes that emerged across the nine cases, with a primary focus on these emerging themes, the ninth, presented herewith, is instrumental in nature. As such, this chapter is transitional in so far as it serves the purpose of moving the enquiry from cases to themes. In order to execute this transition as succinctly as possible and with regard to length of thesis, I have elected not to include any literature but focus specifically on the particulars of case and links to key elements of the themes, to provide a condense account of how that transition from cases to themes was executed. Following an account of Elm SNS, its selection, setting and participants, the chapter is in three further sections as follows: inclusion and teachers' verbal interactions; inclusion and transactional teacher-learner action and interaction; and, inclusion and coherence of teaching-learning experiences.

ELM SNS: SELECTION, SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS

Elm SNS is the site of this instrumental case study while Jacqueline and Nicola as resource teacher and class teacher respectively, and Kathleen, the child with SEN, are the participants. The selection of Elm SNS was based on two reasons. Firstly, it was one of two schools in the enquiry that took most initiative in terms of restructuring practice for inclusion¹. To this end, apart from the more typical changes², resource and class teachers incorporated co-teaching as a response to managing the persistent dilemma for class teachers associated with the challenge of addressing individual needs in a classroom situation. Secondly, although the school interior represented a welcoming and comfortable learning environment, the building was located in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. In comparison to the second school, the environmental conditions surrounding Elm SNS left teachers and learners working in more challenging

¹ As it was necessary to report data relating to the second school, Oak NS, to some extent under the theme of coherence-fragmentation in Chapter Eleven, the selection of Elm SNS avoided repetition.

² Typical changes, constituting a pragmatic response to the GAM, included the following: movement beyond one-to-one teaching to include groups on a withdrawal basis; and, grouping children with learning support needs with children with SEN who heretofore had been grouped as two distinct categories and taught separately by either the learning support teacher or resource teacher.

if not somewhat adverse circumstances³. Such a context compounded the complexities of inclusion. Nonetheless, the three themes were present and pervasive in the intentions and pedagogical routines of the resource teacher and class teacher in Elm SNS, supporting the choice to present this school as the instrumental case study. The setting of Elm SNS is described briefly in the following subsection.

Elm SNS: setting

Elm SNS was co-educational, catering for children from third to sixth class and located in a suburban area of socio-economic disadvantage in one of Ireland's major cities. The surrounding environs were bleak with graffiti-covered walls, little vegetation in gardens, no play areas apart from a strip of neglected waste land between neighbouring housing estates, a number of boarded-up houses and on one occasion, a burned out car in the cul-de-sac not far from the school building. On the basis of certain factors⁴, the school was in receipt of additional supports to 'deliver equality of opportunity'⁵. With two hundred and fifty-one children enrolled, the school had an administrative principal and twelve class teachers. Additional support teaching was provided by a total of six teachers assigned to the school on the following basis: two learning support teachers, one resource teacher, one teacher for travellers and two special class teachers. The school also had four SNAs.

Given the rapidly changing policy context discussed in Chapter One and specifically, in response to modifications to the system of support allocation and

³ For security reasons, the original windows in the PE hall had been replaced with brick walls and security grids covered windows of the school principal's and secretary's offices and the computer room; key resources for music, maths and science and audio-visual equipment were locked in a store room and if not accessed on the morning of the day the resources were needed, they remained in the store room. Although appreciating that this was "very organised", the drawback for Nicola was "that when you have things in the room (*classroom*), you'll use them but when you have to go and look for them, it's not out of laziness, it's just a nuisance really" (CT6.51, p. 8).

⁴ Such factors include, for example, high unemployment rates among the parents, a high number of those employed in lowest paying employment, a high proportion of lone parent families and a high proportion of home rental rather than purchase.

⁵ Elm SNS was a 'Breaking the Cycle School' that became integrated under DEIS in 2005 and was designated as a Band One school. As explained in the key for abbreviations relating to table 5.2 in Chapter Five, Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools is an initiative designed to ensure that the most disadvantaged schools benefit from a comprehensive package of supports (DEIS – Band One) while ensuring that other schools get supports in line with the level of disadvantage among their pupils (DEIS – Band Two). This initiative has been promoted as "the Department's action plan for educational inclusion" (<http://www.des.ie>).

deployment of resources⁶, changes were instigated to practice in Elm SNS. Blurring distinctions between the categories of additional support teacher, all children requiring support were grouped on the basis of learning needs and assigned to particular teachers. Three teachers addressed language and literacy needs while two focused exclusively on maths and one taught language, literacy and maths. This arrangement, common in the larger schools, streamlined the organisation of additional support provision from the teacher's perspective. However, it invariably gave rise to a number of the same children receiving additional support from two different teachers in two different locations in their mainstream school, with consequent potential to contribute to fragmentation in their learning experiences.

Co-teaching for maths was introduced in Elm SNS at the start of the school year during which data were generated for this enquiry. Combined with the withdrawal arrangements outlined above, the maths lesson for third and fifth classes was timetabled for the same time and each of the six additional support teachers co-taught in one of six mainstream classes involved during this period. A similar arrangement was in place for the fourth and sixth classes, resulting in additional support teachers working in-class for approximately two hours each day while providing withdrawal support for the remainder. The following subsection accounts for the participants from Elm SNS.

Class teacher, resource teacher and child with SEN

Nicola, the class teacher, was qualified with a Bachelor of Education Degree, had completed two years teaching and was undertaking her third at the time of the enquiry. Her formal preparation for teaching children with SEN involved completing a twenty-seven hour module during the last semester of her final year in college, which she described as "too much theory and not enough practice" (CT6.110, p. 20). Among the twenty-three children⁷ in her fifth class comprising ten boys and thirteen girls and

⁶As indicated in Chapter One, this refers to a modified support system that combined general allocation of support for children with high incidence SEN with a specific allocation of support for children with low incidence SEN determined on an individual basis in relation to one of eleven categories of disability (Circular 09/04) (DES, 2004).

⁷ This more favourable pupil-teacher ratio is one of the supports provided by the DES to address disadvantage; typically, the pupil to teacher ratio varies from 27:1 to 29:1, depending on total number of children enrolled in the school.

ranging in age from ten to twelve years, there were four with Mild GLD, two with learning support needs and one was from the travelling community.

Jacqueline was an assistant principal and a senior staff member having completed thirty-one years teaching, three spent as a learning support teacher, two teaching a special class and the last five working as resource teacher. Jacqueline's initial teaching qualification was a National Teacher Diploma⁸ while she also acquired a Certificate in Learning Support and a Graduate Diploma in Special Education. Her teaching responsibilities related to fifteen children ranging in age from nine to thirteen years, of whom thirteen were assessed with SEN and two with learning support needs. The categories of special need represented among the thirteen children were as follows: ten with Mild GLD, one with EBD, one with specific language disorder, and one with ADHD.

Kathleen, the child with SEN had Mild GLD⁹. Originally assigned two and a half hours of resource teaching support per week, under the GAM, Kathleen's needs fall within the high incidence category for which additional support is provided by a teacher assigned to the school on the basis of gender and socio-economic status of the children enrolled. As such, her educational needs no longer qualified the school to employ a resource teacher to cover these hours. Nicola accounts for Kathleen's learning needs as follows:

Reading and writing skills would be very weak which is quite hard when you're doing most subjects like history and geography, it's grand when you're talking orally ... but orally (*she*) would be very, very quiet you know, it'd be a push, she just never seems to have anything to say, you know that kind of way, hard to get stuff out of her. When it comes to reading and it comes to writing, it's a block and as regards maths, it's a block ... extremely weak, you're talking about a third class level really you know. (CT6.9, p. 2)

Corroborating, the resource teacher adds that "Kathleen has oral language needs really. Her receptive language is quite good but her spoken vocabulary and her sentence

⁸ As indicated in Chapter Five, this refers to a diploma teaching qualification awarded to successful candidates on completion of a two year course; this qualification was replaced by the BEd Degree (Bachelor of Education), first awarded in 1977.

⁹ Of the four in her class with Mild GLD, Kathleen's learning needs were considered to be the most challenging. Furthermore, as the school year progressed, needs relating to adaptive functioning, particularly self-care emerged as significant for Kathleen.

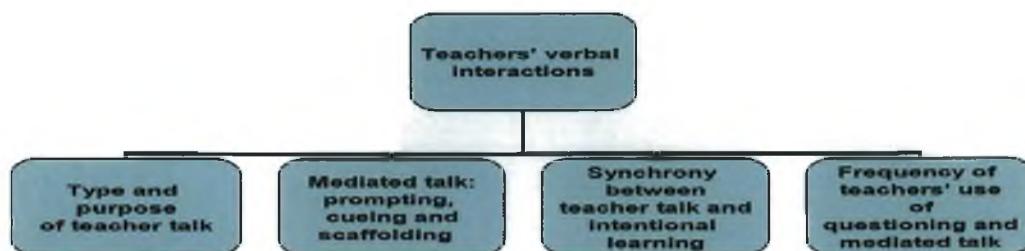
structure are quite weak, limited vocabulary really” (RT6.78, p. 16). Regarding additional support, Kathleen is withdrawn for a forty-five minute period of maths each morning and for one hour of English language and literacy four afternoons a week, and as a member of the lower ability group, is taught by either the class or resource teacher during co-teaching maths lessons. An SNA joined the class for part of the co-teaching period, although no child in the class qualified for such support.

Rather than presenting a chronology of teaching-learning activities, in the following section, detail is provided to contextualise Jacqueline’s and Nicola’s inclusive practices with a focus on the increasing importance of their verbal interactions and the adjustment of these interactions to address the diverse needs of learners throughout teaching-learning episodes.

INCLUSION AND TEACHERS’ VERBAL INTERACTIONS

As discussed in Chapter Seven, learning through language, specifically the use of talk and discussion as a key teaching and learning strategy to facilitate inclusion, was reflected in teachers’ intentions regarding their pedagogical routines. Specifically, Nicola claimed that inclusive teaching involved “do(*ing*) a lot of oral work, where kind of the special needs kids wouldn’t really be able for the written work” (CT6.5, p. 1). A language dimension to including children with SEN in the class maths programme was evident in her account of “spending time doing a lot of oral maths ... table games, countdown, a lot of different games like that where they’re kind of using their heads more, rather than just working through a book” (CT6.30, p. 5). However, it was through observation of practice that the contribution of the teacher’s use of language to children’s learning and inclusion became apparent. Particularly evident throughout Jacqueline’s and Nicola’s teaching was their use of language to direct and guide learning and to question. While methods varied depending on the curriculum area or conceptual content that formed the focus of learning and whether children worked as a whole class, individually, in pairs or in groups, teacher directions and questions were constant and pervasive across all teaching-learning opportunities. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of data revealed four key elements contributing to the presence of teachers’ verbal interactions in their inclusive practice, as indicated in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1: Elements contributing to teachers' verbal interactions in their inclusive practice



Details of practice supporting each of these key elements are presented and analysed in the four subsections which follow, with the first focusing on type and purpose of teacher talk.

Type and purpose of teacher talk

Qualitative analysis of Jacqueline's and Nicola's verbal interactions reveals that teacher directions took the form of instructing, explaining, making statements of fact, of idea or problem, and making statements about task completion or routine matters; their various forms of questioning were designed to enable the children revise and recall, to offer ideas or solutions, to understand, to cue and prompt them, to challenge their thinking and to assess learning. Selected from the interactive sequences cited in this chapter, examples of the verbal interactions initiated by Jacqueline and Nicola indicate the type, purpose and category of verbal interaction in their constructions of inclusive practice and they are detailed in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1: Examples of verbal interaction by type, purpose and category initiated by resource teacher and class teacher in their constructions of inclusive practice

Examples Selected from Jacqueline's and Nicola's Verbal Interactions	Type and Purpose of Verbal Interaction	Category of Verbal Interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colonies were part of the empire and when the countries in Europe took sides and started the war against each other, the colonies joined the war too (FNRR.CT6) Write that word sum in numbers on the board (FNRR.RT6) 	<p>By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> making statements of fact, idea or problem providing directions or instructions on task completion 	Teacher directs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What countries fought in the war? (FNRR.CT6) Who remembers what a colony is? (FNRR.CT6) Find as many ways as you can to make up forty-five euro fifty cent with the money? (FNRR.RT6) See the pictures ... which one shows the soldiers in the trench? (FNRR.CT6) So what's the rule when you've lots of zeros? (FNRR.RT6) 	<p>To elicit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recall of facts an idea or solution: closed (with only one correct answer) an idea or solution: open (alternative responses expected) <p>and to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> direct learning activity / task completion assess learning related specifically to lesson observed 	Teacher questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... that's not the time for that, sit down (FNRR.CT6) 	<p>By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> commenting to convey expectations of appropriate behaviour 	Teacher disciplines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> So go to the next number ... not just one (finger points across the one and two zeros) ... yes one hundred, so what do you cross out? (FNRR.RT6) Remember where it all started, assassinated he was, Archdu ... (FNRR.CT6) Now see the grass up there, that trench wasn't always there. How was that trench made? (FNRR.CT6) 	<p>To assist understanding by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> paraphrasing statements and questions prompting, cueing, scaffolding questioning in a tentative manner to probe thinking 	Teacher mediates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Kathleen for remembering the decimal point (FNRR.RT6) Great Martin (FNRR.CT6) 	<p>By praising and affirming children's contributions with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> informational feedback neutral feedback 	Teacher encourages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When I give out the books, leave them down. Just look at the cover (FNRR.CT6) ...when I told you how much my haircut and colour cost, that I nearly had a heart attack when the girl rang the numbers into the till ... (FNRR.RT6) 	<p>By</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing directions on organisational and routine matters engaging in chit-chat 	Teacher maintains - learning and relationships

Types of teacher talk are evident in the following interactive sequence relating to Nicola's introduction of an English lesson on the class novel *War Games*¹⁰; the theme on which Nicola had based her scheme of work was 'war and rebellion' and the children were familiar with World War One, while theme-related photographs, a time line recording significant war, battle and rebellion dates and children's writing and art work were displayed on class notice boards¹¹.

Nicola: We're going to do *War Games* now. When I give out the books, leave them down¹². Just look at the cover. Can somebody tell me when World War One started?

Child 1: It started in 1914.

Nicola: and when did it end?

Child 2: 1918.

Nicola: Yeah, so World War One lasted how many years?

Child 3: Four years.

Nicola: Yeah, a long time. Much longer than the Easter Rising that only lasted a few days and was over before some people knew it had even started, isn't that right? And what countries fought in the war? Martin, get me the globe. Right, who can name the countries that fought?

Child 4: Germany, France, Italy, Britain ...

Nicola: (*Interrupts*) Okay, who's going to show us on the globe? Sharon, but first, were Germany and France on the same side?

Sharon: No teacher, opposite sides (*walks towards globe on desk at top of classroom*).

Nicola: Yeah, find France. What countries fought on the same side as France (*asked in a raised voice inducing a chorus response*)?

Class: Britain ... Russia

Martin: and the colonies, that's how it spread.

Nicola: Great Martin. Remember the colonies everybody (*in the meantime, Kathleen, the child with SEN being tracked has made her way over to the sink and is rinsing a beaker from which she was drinking since the start of the lesson; this lesson followed an active PE lesson after which the children were directed by the teacher to take a drink if thirsty*). Sharon, show us Britain. Good, is everybody looking? Now show us Russia.

Child 5: It's giant.

¹⁰ A children's novel by Michael Foreman, the story describes a group of four young men who are eager for adventure, enlist in the English army and are about to embark on fighting in World War One. The story progresses from their training in England to their arrival in France, their experience of the Christmas Truce and their participation in the Battle of the Somme.

¹¹ In connection with this theme, the class had worked on the Easter Rising of 1916 and had visited the General Post Office and Kilmainham Gaol, two associated landmarks.

¹² During our dialogue and in response to questioning on why the children did not hold onto the novels for reading in their own time, Nicola revealed that it was practice within the school to send as few books as possible home with the children as the likelihood of their return was slim, one of the realities of a DEIS school.

Nicola: Yeah, thanks Sharon. Now back to colonies. Who remembers what a colony is? No not you Martin. Someone else (*scans the room and spots Kathleen at the sink*). Kathleen, no, that's not the time for that, sit down (*Kathleen returns slowly to seat*). Robert, you've been good with putting up your hand today. Will you tell us what the colonies are?

Robert: Countries like *the* Africa that got invaded and weren't allowed rule *their* self. The empire ruled. The empires and the empires made agreements with the colonies to save each other's country so when the war started, the colonies that were friendly with the sides *fighted* as well.

Nicola: Good Robert. Colonies were part of the empire and when the countries in Europe took sides and started war against each other, the colonies joined the war too. We've done Britain, France and Russia. What countries were on the other side?

Class: Germany

Nicola: Sharon, show us Germany. And what other country? (*Pauses for response and when none is forthcoming, prompts*) Remember, where it all started, assassinated, he was, (*in an exaggerated and deliberate voice*) Archdu ... (*a number of hands wave eagerly and Nicola calls on one*)

Child 6: Austria, teacher.

Nicola: Austria (*looking in Sharon's direction*), show us Austria. See that small colour there everybody. Now show us Africa. Good, see how much space Africa takes up, now India, another big space. That's a lot of the world at war, isn't it? (FNRR.CT6)

Regarding type and purpose of teacher talk, the interactive sequence reveals a high proportion of factual and closed questions to elicit a predetermined answer and supports the dominance of teacher-led interaction. Furthermore, such questions typically induced incomplete sentence structures and monosyllabic responses from the children.

Jacqueline and Nicola used mediated talk to prompt, cue or scaffold learning and this was particularly evident in their interactions with learners with SEN. Details of practice relating to mediated talk are described in the following subsection.

Mediated talk: prompting, cueing and scaffolding

Working with the higher ability group during a co-taught maths lesson, Nicola set the following mental maths activity: "reduce two hundred thousand by ten thousand". When a response was not forthcoming, Nicola prompted the children to "drop the thousand for the moment and reduce two hundred by ten" which immediately resulted in many raised hands. To the correct response of "one hundred and ninety", Nicola cued the children to add on the thousand and repeated the question which they

answered automatically. Furthermore, in response to a number of similar questions, the children demonstrated the ability to apply the strategy correctly, substantiating the role of teacher's mediated talk in promoting intentional learning.

Revisiting Nicola's introduction to the class novel, reminding the children of 'the letters they had written from the trenches' and referring them to photographs downloaded from the internet, they were questioned to elicit descriptions of the trenches and no-man's land, an explanation of trench foot and a list of weapons used by the soldiers. The following series of questions involves the child with SEN, occurs at the end of the introductory questioning sequence and illustrates the teacher's use of prompts and cues to assist understanding and probe thinking:

Nicola: ... Kathleen, so what did Alison say trench foot was?

Kathleen: It's where your feet all rot.

Nicola: Yeah, and what were the trenches?

Kathleen: Full a water.

Nicola: Come over here Kathleen (*walks in directions of photographs on display board*). See the pictures we got from the internet. Which one shows the soldiers in the trench?

Kathleen: (*Points correctly to one of three photographs beside where the teacher is standing*)

Nicola: Good. Now see the grass up here, that trench wasn't always there. How was that trench made?

Kathleen: They *digged* it.

Nicola: Who dug it (*pointing to a soldier in the photograph and emphasising 'dug'*)?

Kathleen: Soldiers *digged* it.

Nicola: Soldiers dug the trenches. Say that.

Kathleen: (*Echoing as Nicola repeats the sentence with her*) Soldiers dug the trenches.

Nicola: And what do you see in that trench (*proceeds to point to certain key items and waits for Kathleen to identify*)?

Kathleen: Soldiers, guns, climbing up.

Nicola: Great, looks like they're getting ready to fight and what else?

Kathleen: Boxes.

Nicola: Yeah, looks like boxes with the cans of food maybe.

Kathleen: Bags, has them their clothes?

Nicola: That's right, bags with their clothes and remember we said about their socks, so they'd have dry socks and letters, maybe they've letters from home in the bags too (*calls loudly to the class, as murmuring levels rise*), I don't want to have to give out yellow cards.

Kathleen: Somebody lying down, upside down, is he dead?

Nicola: That or he's having a sleep. Now why did the soldiers dig the trenches? (*As no response is forthcoming, Nicola calls to the class generally*) Why did the soldiers dig the trenches? Don't shout. Shane you say.

Shane: To stop the enemy

Nicola: To stop the enemy. Soldiers dug trenches to stop the enemy. Say that.

Kathleen: (*Echoing as Nicola repeats the sentence with her*) Soldiers dug trenches to stop the enemy.

Nicola: Good, you know about the trenches. (*Smiles and directs Kathleen back to her seat and calling loudly to the class*) Open the books on page five. What's the name of the chapter?

Class: The kick off

Nicola: Put your finger on the first word and follow (*lesson continues as Nicola proceeds to read and then calls on various children to read*). (FFRR.CT6)

While the lesson introduction involved predominantly repetition and recall with very little intentional learning, the above interactive sequence illustrates the extent to which teacher prompting, cueing and tentative questioning is necessary to scaffold this child's understanding. Evidencing involvement at the closure rather than various stages throughout the introductory interlude, it is typical of how children with SEN were included within the context of teaching the class. Furthermore, in terms of the frequency of verbal exchanges and duration of interaction, it is representative of the intensity of input required to maintain focus and promote the intentional learning of children with SEN. Although identified as the most challenging, Kathleen was one of four children in this class with Mild GLD, and if the class teacher were to devote similar amounts of time to each of the other three, time for reading the novel would be severely restricted. As discussed in Chapter Seven, adapting their teaching to accommodate diversity of pace emerged as a challenge in teachers' pedagogical intentions. In practice, diversity of pace accommodated by intensity of teaching and frequently dependent on securing dedicated time for one-to-one interaction, is difficult for one class teacher to sustain within the context of teaching all children in the class. To this end, the issuing of the yellow card warning was symptomatic of the recurrent dilemma faced by the class teacher in terms of pacing appropriately for the child with SEN without disrupting the pace for or losing the attention of the majority of learners in the class.

Specifically evident in teachers' use of mediated talk, there was synchrony between type and purpose of teacher talk and the deliberate promotion of learning.

Details regarding synchrony between type of teacher talk and intentional learning experienced by the children are presented in the following subsection.

Synchrony between teacher talk and intentional learning

Throughout teaching-learning episodes, there was synchrony between type of teacher talk and the form and extent of intentional learning experienced by the children. This is evident in the following interactive sequence relating to a series of maths lessons¹³ which Jacqueline taught on a withdrawal basis to the four children with Mild GLD from Nicola's fifth class. The lesson opened with mental exercises which involved counting and although routine, at times, Jacqueline had to point to cues on the number line or hundred-square. Then the children were directed to look at a chart displaying euro currency, asked to identify certain notes and coins and encouraged to select two notes and two or three coins and call on a friend to find their sum. Again, arising from minor errors in calculation, they needed prompting. After each had a turn calling on a friend, Jacqueline reminded them of their previous work "on money ... calculating bus fares for the week, finding the cost of cinema tickets, reading the price list for 'Curls' and finding the cost of a hair cut and calculating the change" (FNRR.CT6). In response to her question as to why it is important to know about money, the children proffered the following: "so you'll know if you have enough money to get things; you can see you're not after paying too much; and, that you don't get scammed." Affirming these responses, Jacqueline explained that they were moving on to something a "little trickier" and she distributed a 'Four Star Pizza' price list to each pair. Following dispute as to which take away pizzas were best, Jacqueline refocused the children explaining that they were each to pick one regular pizza with up to two toppings and one mineral. There was a sense of excitement as the children checked out the price list. As each selected, Jacqueline asked that child to record relevant prices on a mini-board. When the selection process was complete, each was asked to calculate the total and switch mini-boards with

¹³ The focus of Jacqueline's programme for the maths lessons taught on a withdrawal basis was 'maths for independent living' with an emphasis on understanding and management of money and time 'in the real world'. To an extent, this built on the in-class maths programme for these same children which focused on topics from the fifth class maths curriculum but pitched at a lower level, for example, long multiplication and division, fractions, decimals and percentages, measurement, and shapes and space; this programme was co-taught by Jacqueline and Nicola.

partner to check totals. Following her scanning, Jacqueline directed the children to find the overall cost of the four totals. This came to fifty-four euro and fifty cent and given fake money, in pairs, the children made up this total. Following comparison and discussion on the various ways of making this sum, the children were asked to calculate change from sixty euro, which brought a quick response from one. However, when asked to calculate change from one hundred euro, there was random guessing before one child thought of counting in tens from sixty and adding this to the first answer. Having invited him to explain how he figured it out and praised his “good thinking”, for practice, Jacqueline directed the children to record the number problem as a word sum on the mini-boards and calculate. Arising from her careful monitoring of their learning, the interactive sequence picks up on Jacqueline’s questioning of Kathleen during this activity:

Jacqueline: (*Having observed Kathleen record 100 and 54.50 underneath, cross this out, reverse the order and proceed to calculate*)¹⁴ ... Kathleen, what do you have to find out?

Kathleen: It’s a take away.

Craig: (*Laughs*) Do you get it teacher? We’re doing take aways for the take away! (*Draws a laugh from the group*).

Jacqueline: Yes, it’s take away but what are you taking away from what?

Kathleen: (*Points to the upper and then lower set of incorrectly recorded digits on the mini-board*)

Jacqueline: (*Finger moves five one cent coins in sequence in front of Kathleen*) How much have I given you?

Kathleen: Five cents teacher.

Jacqueline: Yes you have five cents, now can you give me ten cents? (*Kathleen attempts to take additional coins from the container*) No, no, with the five cents you have there, can you give me ten?

Kathleen: No teacher.

Jacqueline: Why not?

Kathleen: Five cents isn’t enough, not as much as ten.

Jacqueline: (*Finger moves another five one cent coins in sequence in front of Kathleen*) Now how much have you?

Kathleen: Ten cents teacher.

Jacqueline: Can you give me five cents?

Kathleen: Yeah teacher, there’s five left.

Jacqueline: Good, now write that word sum in numbers on the board.

Kathleen: (*Records the numbers and answer correctly*)

¹⁴ By way of illustration, Kathleen first recorded $\begin{array}{r} 1\ 00 \\ - 54.50 \end{array}$ but re-recorded as $\begin{array}{r} 54.50 \\ - 1\ 00 \end{array}$ for calculation.

Jacqueline: (*Pointing to each numeral as relevant*) Fantastic, so ten is bigger (*emphasises bigger*) than five. For doing take aways, which number always goes first?

Kathleen: The big number.

Jacqueline: The bigger number. Now which is bigger, one hundred euro or fifty-four euro and fifty cents?

Kathleen: Hundred euro teacher.

Jacqueline: So which number goes first? Write it there.

Kathleen: (*records 100*) That's what I *done afore*.

Jacqueline: Yes but cause the other number is fifty-four euro and fifty cent (*emphasises cent*) what else do you need to write beside the hundred euro? (*Pauses for response*) Do you remember we needed to write this to calculate the haircuts cause they had euros and cents? (*Pauses again for a response*) Remember I told you how much my haircut and colour cost, that I nearly had a heart attack when the girl rang the numbers into the till and Craig wrote how much it cost on the board and he wrote something with the numbers that has to do with euros on one side and cents on the other?

Kathleen: Yeah but they done it good teacher.

Jacqueline: Ah do you like it? Grand, now look at the way Gareth has written his hundred and see if that helps you remember.

Kathleen: Oh, the point teacher (*adds the decimal point and two zeros and proceeds to record the fifty-four fifty correctly with the minus sign*).

Jacqueline: (*Notices the other children have completed the calculation correctly*) You three work together now, take the money box and working together, find as many ways as you can to make up forty-five euro fifty cent with the money. Yes, good Kathleen for remembering the decimal point.

Kathleen: (*Proceeding with the calculations, correctly subtracts zero from zero, but is unsure of how to regroup for the remainder*) ... stuck. Too many zeros, can do it if it's one zero teacher ... can't do this.

Jacqueline: What do you do if it's one zero?

Kathleen: Regroup teacher.

Jacqueline: And this is the same. You regroup. Show me how you regroup? Say it for me, let me hear what you're doing?

Kathleen: Zero take away five I can not do so regroup (*crosses out one zero and looks at Jacqueline*) but there's nothing to take.

Jacqueline: You're right, so go to the next number.

Kathleen: Zero, there's nothing.

Jacqueline: So go to the next number.

Kathleen: One?

Jacqueline: Not just one (*finger points across the one and two zeros*)

Kathleen: One hundred?

Jacqueline: Yes, one hundred, so what do you cross out?

Kathleen: One hundred (*proceeds to cross this out, inserts 99 above and adds 1 to the appropriate zero and completes the calculation*).

Jacqueline: So what's the rule when you've lots of zeros?

Kathleen: Go to the next and the next till you get to one that's proper, that isn't zero, and it makes a big number and cross it out, the big number with the zeros ... it'll have nines.

When the lesson was over, before releasing the group to return to the mainstream class, Jacqueline asked each child to share something they had learned but specifically asked Kathleen to share the regrouping rule for lots of zeros; Kathleen's recall of the rule made sense. (FNRR.CT6)

Apart from illustrating the extent of teacher mediated talk, in the form of prompts, cues, paraphrasing and tentative questioning, to promote the intentional learning of the child with SEN, the interactive sequence presented above further indicates the pacing of teaching required to consolidate and maintain learning. Such teaching to accommodate diversity of pace is no doubt facilitated by the teaching-learning context of the small group. However, again as discussed in Chapter Seven, although all teachers identified pacing to consolidate and maintain learning of those with SEN as challenging, this constituted a dilemma for the class teacher who confronted greater levels of diversity and heterogeneity in the mainstream class in contrast to the resource teacher who practised one-to-one and small group teaching.

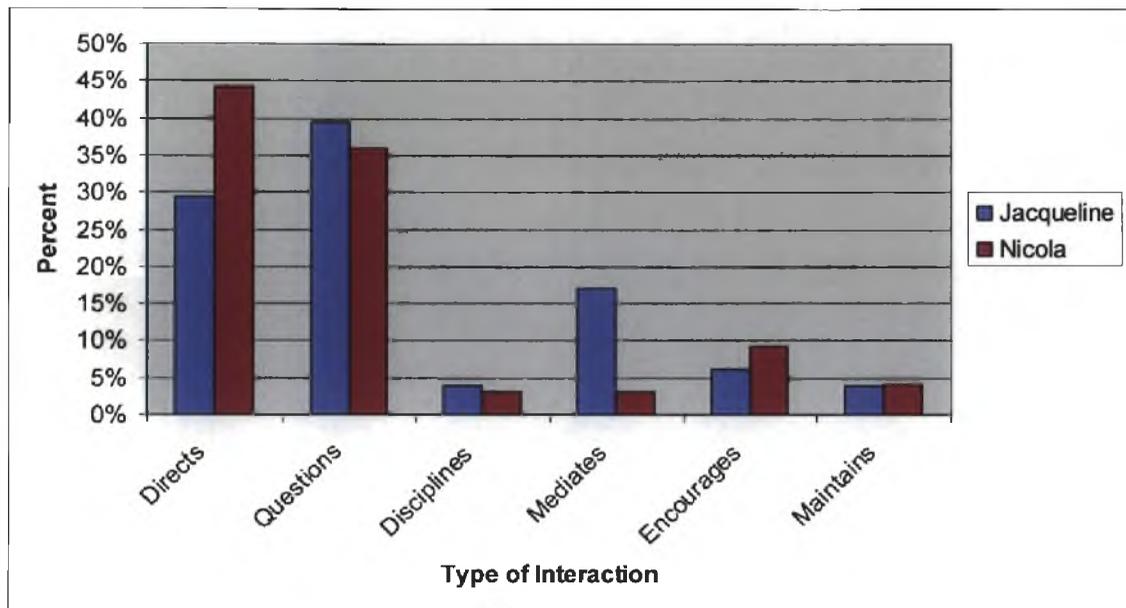
Analysis of quantitative data relating to frequency of types of talk initiated by Jacqueline and Nicola highlighted their questioning and use of mediated talk as key elements of verbal interactions. Data on the frequency of their use of questioning and mediated talk are analysed in the following subsection.

Frequency of teachers' use of questioning and mediated talk

As indicated in Chapter Four, informed by previous research and by 'teacher talk' recorded in the field notes, a systematic observation schedule was developed for the purpose of determining the persistence and pervasiveness of teachers' verbal interactions in their constructions of inclusive practice. Jacqueline's and Nicola's verbal interactions were coded according to frequency across each of five lessons observed and represent 100% of teacher talk during those lessons, which totalled approximately two hours per teacher. Figure 8.2 overleaf presents the percentages of teachers' verbal interactions by category, recorded for both Jacqueline and Nicola respectively. As Jacqueline and Nicola were also involved in co-teaching, verbal interactions of the teacher working with the group including the child with SEN being tracked were

recorded over approximately two hours of co-teaching and quantitative data is reported as relevant in a following section of this chapter titled ‘Inclusion and coherence of teaching-learning experiences’.

Figure 8.2: Percentage of Jacqueline’s and Nicola’s verbal interactions by category



In this instance, the high frequency of class teacher directions can be accounted for by the fact that PE was one of the class lessons for which the systematic observation schedule was used. Nonetheless, the overall highest frequency of teacher questions indicates that questioning is a key feature of verbal interactions contributing to Jacqueline’s and Nicola’s inclusive practice. Furthermore, a higher prevalence of mediated talk is evident in Jacqueline’s verbal interactions. This is significant in the context of links between each teacher’s use of mediated talk and the intentional learning of the child with SEN, substantiated by the qualitative data relating to the interactive sequences cited.

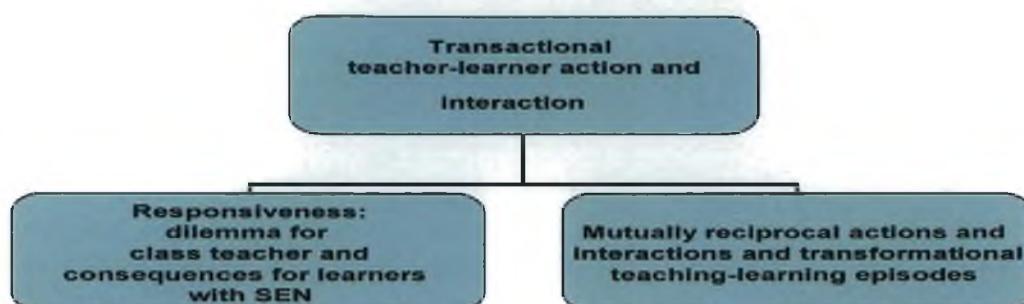
Arising from descriptions of the detail of practice, the importance of Jacqueline’s and Nicola’s verbal interactions in promoting learning and enabling learners’ cognitive development becomes increasingly evident. Specifically, teacher questioning is most persistent and prevalent in verbal interactions for inclusion while mediated talk

facilitates the intentional learning of the child with SEN. As such, these elements contribute to the presence of communicative routines in teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice. Emerging as a theme across the nine cases, communicative routines are defined and documented in Chapter Nine. Jacqueline's and Nicola's inclusive practices are further contextualised in the following section which presents detail relating to teachers' responsiveness to learners giving rise to the increasing significance of transactional teacher-learner action and interaction in teaching-learning episodes.

INCLUSION AND TRANSACTIONAL TEACHER-LEARNER ACTIONS AND INTERACTIONS

Responsiveness to individual needs emerged as one of a number of key teaching approaches to facilitate inclusion in teachers' intentions regarding their pedagogical routines. As discussed in Chapter Seven, responsiveness manifested as individualisation in resource teachers' intentions and differentiation in class teachers' intentions. Observation and analysis of practice in Elm SNS revealed that responsiveness in teaching-learning encounters led to transactional teacher-learner actions and interactions. As detailed in Figure 8.3, two elements emerged contributing to the presence of transactional teacher-learner actions and interactions in Jacqueline's and Nicola's inclusive practice.

Figure 8.3: Elements that contribute to the presence of transactional teacher-learner action and interaction in inclusive practice



Details relating to each of these elements are documented in the two subsections which follow, focusing firstly on responsiveness, the dilemma for the class teacher and consequences for learners with SEN.

Responsiveness: dilemma for class teacher and consequences for learners with SEN

Observation of responsiveness in practice revealed that Jacqueline and Nicola selected, sequenced and structured learning activities in terms of conceptual levels, teaching methods and resources to connect with the developmental levels, learning styles and learning needs of each learner. As previously reported in this chapter in relation to pacing and teacher's use of questioning and mediated talk, observation and analysis revealed that the teaching-learning context of the small group facilitated responsiveness in Jacqueline's practices. However, given the extent of heterogeneity in developmental levels and learning processes among the children in her mainstream class, pitching and pacing of learning activities to connect with all learners was complex and dilemmatic for Nicola. The following extract from the field notes, documenting part of a geography lesson, is representative of Nicola's practice of selecting and connecting learning activities to promote the intentional learning of all. Revisiting her theme of

'war and rebellion', based on the geography of countries currently in the EU but that were also involved in the war, this lesson is one of a number on Germany.

Opening rather abruptly, there was a direction from Nicola for two members of each group to hang their work on the notice board round Germany on the map of Europe. This resulted in a little disturbance but having re-settled the children and emphasising the need to "get a move on", the first stage of the lesson involved presentation of their group-project work prepared over previous lessons. Groups were mixed ability and each had been given a topic to research, illustrate and write about for display and then present to the class. There were five topics as follows: Germany: the fact file; industry in the Ruhr region; the Rhineland; Bayern Munich and famous sports people; and, a divided country now united. Each group had a spokesperson and some had an assistant who read certain extracts and pointed to illustrations as relevant. Identifying their sources at the start of each presentation, the children had downloaded information and pictures from the internet in the computer room, used geography and history books from the class and school library and one group interviewed a relative who had lived for some time in Germany. The presentations were interesting, informative and impressive, evidencing much research and learning. Also of interest were the questions asked and affirming comments made by other children at the end of each presentation (supporting the potential of this teaching-learning approach to facilitate a multi-directional sequence of dialogic exchanges in place of teacher-led interactions, this was recurrent across the nine cases). Although one asked a question, none of the children with SEN presented or assisted in the group's presentation. Following presentations, Nicola praised the groups for good research, neat writing, helpful illustrations, clear speaking voice, clear presentation of ideas and for working well together. For the final stage of the lesson, the children were directed to complete activities on pages forty-eight and -nine of a geography workbook. These involved naming key geographical features on a map of Germany, completing a nine 'cities' word search, answering ten factual questions, completing true or false for five statements and a set of multiple choice statements. At this point, Nicola called on five children (four with SEN and one from travelling community) to group at a table beside the class library. The same workbooks were distributed to these children. However, Nicola also gave each a number of colourful post-its to stick on page forty-seven (which displayed the same map but with all the relevant geographical features identified and a concise but detailed fact file), a small cardboard frame and a teacher-designed A4 sheet displaying five factual statements with one word missing in each along with a word search to find five cities, the font size being slightly larger than that of the workbook. While the rest of the class worked independently, Nicola concentrated on this group. With post-its in place, Nicola asked each child to read one. Information on the post-its was an abbreviated and simplified version of the fact file. Nonetheless, the children struggled with pronouncing place names such as Ruhr and Rhine, had difficulty identifying words like factories, autobahns and Oktoberfest and had difficulty understanding terms such as region, transporting, exports and imports. As each place was

named on the post-it, for example, 'There are lots of factories in the Ruhr region', Nicola directed the children to locate the river Ruhr on the map. Whether it was that the map was black and white and included a lot of small printed detail, the children were put off by it and lost no time in vocalising their disinterest. In response, Nicola lifted one cardboard frame, assured "this always works like magic", positioned the frame to the mid left of the map for Kathleen and directed the others to do the same with theirs and see if that helped them find it. As this worked, Nicola directed them "to pick a marker and colour on the line of the river". Use of the frame was successful in motivating and assisting them to locate and circle or colour key places. Apart from guiding their map-work, Nicola questioned to clarify the children's understanding of terms and as explanations were settled upon, she directed them to draw a picture as reminder. By way of illustration, arising from a post-it stating the following: 'Every day, lots of ships sail on the Rhine. They transport Germany's exports and imports', initially confused by naming different types of transport, the children eventually decided that 'transport' in this context meant "carrying" items like "food, cars, fridge-freezers, cookers ..." and they drew a little icon of a boat with 'goods' on board to explain transport. There were seven such factual statements on the post-its and following the same procedure for each, the group was working through the fourth, just in the process of clarifying understanding of the difference between export and import when rising sound level round the room alerted Nicola to the fact that the time assigned to the remainder of the class for completing their activity was well and truly up. Drawing their work to a halt, Nicola praised the group for "trying hard", told them they had done "enough post-its" to "do three of the cloze sentences on the worksheet", said they could do these later and directed them back to their places. She then called on those whose job it was to collect the workbooks and moved on to English. (FFRR.CT6)

The peripheral role of learners with SEN in group-project presentations, evident in the first half of the vignette, is typical of their marginality in group activity (this is elaborated in the final section of this chapter). Furthermore, that these learners had difficulty pronouncing and understanding terms that were used with ease by group spokespersons and that they had difficulty locating key places which had been highlighted on the class map during presentations indicates that while group activity may have contributed to the intentional learning of the majority in the class, it did little by way of promoting such learning for those with SEN. Regarding Nicola's constructions of inclusive practice, the account of the geography lesson is characteristic of many lessons observed, in so far as it indicates the valid and worthwhile attempts of the class teacher to promote intentional learning while including learners with SEN. It

indicates that to connect with and advance the developmental levels of the learners with SEN, Nicola had planned and taught a programme which was of individual relevance to them but remained somewhat separate from the context of class teaching. However, at a critical stage in learning, Nicola had to withdraw from the teaching-learning episode to return to the remainder of the class, interrupting the pace of learning for Kathleen and the others with SEN. In confronting the persistent dilemma of balancing common and individual needs, as illustrated in the vignette, Nicola prioritises the needs of the majority. Based on observation, this resolution which may be the most legitimate given the circumstances has a fragmented impact on the pace of learning experienced by learners with SEN. While activities planned for them may be appropriately pitched, the intermittent nature of class teacher communications with Kathleen and the others with SEN within the context of class teaching render the pace of learning experienced by these children as fragmented. As such, it appears that learners with SEN are accommodated only to the extent that they can be 'included' within the needs of mainstream, indicating limited inclusion.

Observation of practice revealed that teacher responsiveness was reciprocated by learner responsiveness and that this mutual, reciprocal action and interaction contributed to transformative teaching-learning episodes. Details indicating the presence of transactional teacher-learner dynamics and links with transformational teaching-learning episodes in teachers' inclusive practice are presented in the following subsection.

Mutually reciprocal actions and interactions and transformative teaching-learning episodes

Among the many examples of mutually reciprocal action and interaction characterising the nature of teacher-learner dynamics, an account of an English lesson taught by Jacqueline has been selected. Relating to the language component of this lesson, the focus is self-care, the relevance of which was explained by Jacqueline prior to the group's arrival to the resource room: "children with special needs, with Mild GLD, can be socially very vulnerable ... and in fifth class ... need to be taught how to recognise and handle awkward or risky social situations" (FNRR.RT6). Further explanation reveals that Kathleen has recently had to relocate to temporary

accommodation nearer the city¹⁵. The move requires her to use public transport and she travels to and from school alone. Following an incident on her travels which led to a community guard contacting the school, development of Kathleen's self-care skills was earmarked as a teaching-learning priority.

The children have been given an A4 sheet depicting three unrelated scenarios. Directed to look at the first, Jacqueline asks them to figure out what is happening and put up their hands. The first scenario is located in a shopping centre and depicts a male wearing a hooded top holding out a bag to a girl. A speech bubble from the male says "Give that bag to the man standing outside the post office" and a thinking bubble from the girl reads "Who's this? I've never seen him before." In their initial responses, the children describe the scene and it becomes evident that they have neither attended to nor processed the printed information. By way of illustration, Craig says: "he's *hoiden* his face with a *hoodie*. He's *givin* the girl a bag. Can't see what's in the bag. Like a gym bag. Is *her* his *sista* (sister) teacher?" Jacqueline asks: "did anyone read the speech bubble?" and continues "haven't I said it before. Use all (*accentuates 'all'*) the information, you can't figure out what's going on if you don't use all the information in the picture." She directs the children to read the speech bubble out loud. However, there's disharmony as some read the content of the speech bubble and others start on the thinking bubble. To address their confusion, Jacqueline stands up, heads for the class board, draws a very large shape of a speech bubble, draws a set of lips beside the arrow end of the bubble and asks the children to identify it. Having done so correctly, she directs the children to take a good look at it, frame the shape of it in their minds and not forget it. Beside this, she then draws an equally large thinking bubble, draws a head, locating the top of the head beside the circles coming from the thinking bubble and asks the children to identify this. Again, following their correct response, she directs them to frame and not forget it and she calls on them to air-draw a thinking bubble and then a speech bubble. Returning to their desk, Jacqueline directs them to point to the thinking bubble and then the speech bubble, and then to scan down the page and point to other speech and thinking bubbles, and satisfied that they now know the difference, she reiterates her direction to read the speech bubble. Collectively, they read the text slowly but correctly, following which they locate the man standing outside the post office and Kathleen pipes up: "she's to give him the bag teacher." In response, Jacqueline points out "that's what he wants her to do" and she then directs the children: "now altogether read the (*accentuating 'thinking'*) thinking bubble." Again, they read the text slowly and correctly. This time, Craig pipes up that "she's not a *sista*" and Suzie adds that "she doesn't know him." Affirming, Jacqueline recaps that the girl has never seen the boy in the hoodie before and that she does not know him and prompts: "to the girl he is a (*raising her intonation*) ...?" Craig answers "not a brother" while Suzie and Gareth answer "stranger" which Kathleen then repeats. Emphasising the word

¹⁵ Among the realities of living in an area of socio-economic disadvantage, the family's safety in their home came under serious threat arising from a particular incident within the locality.

“stranger” Jacqueline asks: “now, who can explain what is happening in this picture?” Again, Kathleen pipes up with “where’s her ma?” and, pointing to a nearby group, Suzie asks “is she with *them* girls?” Jacqueline proffers that the girl’s mother might be in one of the shops, that the girl could be with the others and she then asks the children what age they think the girl might be. Following discussion about her attire and handbag, they guess she is about the same age as them or maybe thirteen. Accepting this, Jacqueline asks that “at twelve or thirteen, is she old enough to be walking round the shopping centre on her own?” All are in agreement that she is and spontaneously, they share the age at which they were first allowed to the shops on their own and to their local shopping centre with friends and they give examples of when allowed go somewhere in the shopping centre on their own. Jacqueline then asks: “how come twelve year olds would be allowed walk round the shopping centre on their own and six year olds would not?” Reasoning that the six year old is too young and small, so mightn’t know her way round and could get lost and that the twelve year old would know all the shops, know her way and not get lost, when Gareth adds that the twelve year old knows not to talk to strangers, Suzie pipes up that so too would the six year old. This leads to another spontaneous sharing of how young they were when they knew not to talk to strangers. After all have contributed, Jacqueline states that most strangers are nice people but there is a rule they learn every year in school and asks “who can they say the rule?” Having paused for a response, as a prompt, Jacqueline writes the word ‘never’ on the class board and when some shout “never talk ...” she writes the word ‘go’ to which they respond “never go away with a ...” and Jacqueline adds ‘anywhere’. To this, the children chorus, “never go anywhere with a stranger” and they stop. Jacqueline proceeds to add ‘with a stranger or’ to which Craig says “there’s more” and Suzie adds “it’s two rules” and Jacqueline refocuses by repeating the rule up to “or” and adds the word ‘take’. Again, there is a chorus of “take things from ...” and Jacqueline writes the word ‘anything’ and then completes writing the rule as the children repeat it correctly. Directing the children to read the rule and say it with their eyes closed, Jacqueline then redirects them to the first picture and asks: “now, who’s going to tell us what’s happening in the first picture?” This time Suzie explains that “the boy in the hoodie is *tellen* the girl to give the bag to the man *standen* outside the post office but the girl is *looken arem* (at him) cause he’s a stranger and she’s *ignoren em*”. Affirming, Jacqueline asks Kathleen why the girl should not take the bag, to which Kathleen correctly repeats the rule. The children are then asked to get up out of their seats, take things from ‘the props box’ and role-play the scenario, which they do twice with great enthusiasm with Kathleen and Suzie taking turns of being the girl and the friend and Craig and Gareth taking turns of being the youth with the hoodie and the man outside the post office. When they return to explain the second scenario, on this occasion they automatically read the content of the speech and thinking bubbles aloud. (FNRR.RT6)

Evident in the above vignette is Jacqueline's use of her monitoring of each learner's progress to inform and modify her teaching approaches. To this end, in contextualising the learning as teaching moments emerge, Jacqueline internalises the children's misunderstandings and this has a transformative influence on her practice, evidenced in the flexible manner in which she adjusts and modifies the nature of the teaching-learning activities as they unfold. Through reciprocal participation, as the learners internalise the concept and learning occurs, their learning processes are also transformed. Details supporting the transformative teaching-learning activity arising from transactional teacher-learner dynamics relating to the vignette are presented in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: Transformative teaching-learning activity arising from transactional teacher-learner dynamics

Children's misunderstanding	Internalised by teacher with transforming influence leading to new action	Transformative influence of new action on learning processes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete interpretation of scenario • Confusion over speech and thinking bubbles • Unclear of relationship between youth and girl • Unclear of the girl's status • Unable to recall rule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminder to use all available information and prompt to read speech and thinking bubbles • Draws illustrations as cues • Restates relevant facts and provides partial sentence as prompt • Questions to elicit prediction about the girl's age and articulation of differences between older and younger person in terms of independence • Records series of word cues on board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can focus on and attend to content of the bubbles • Children can identify and differentiate speech and thinking bubbles • Children figure out youth is a stranger to the girl • Children's reasoning demonstrates understanding that independence increases with age • Children correctly state the rule, culminating with an overall accurate interpretation of scenario, understanding of its implications and portrayal of rule in action

Connecting teaching-learning activities with learners' developmental levels, continual monitoring of children's learning and the transformative influence of this on subsequent teaching-learning activity supports Jacqueline's explicit and reflexive

thinking about learning. Furthermore, such thinking about learning has to be informed by knowledge of the learner, human development, curriculum and pedagogical principles.

Details of practice support the increasing significance of transactional teacher-learner action and interaction in Jacqueline's and Nicola's inclusive practice. Responsiveness, connecting pedagogy, curriculum, methods and resources with the developmental levels, interests and abilities of learners and the transformative influence of transactional teacher-learner action and interaction are key elements that contribute to the presence of attunement in teachers' inclusive practice. Emerging as the second central theme of this enquiry, attunement is defined and documented in Chapter Ten.

Contextualisation of Jacqueline's and Nicola's inclusive practices is completed in the following section which presents detail relating to the structure, continuity and coherence of teaching-learning experiences.

INCLUSION AND COHERENCE OF TEACHING-LEARNING EXPERIENCES

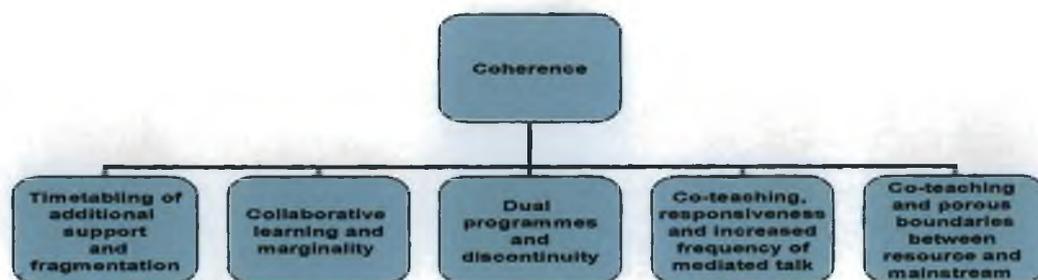
As reported in the previous three chapters, a number of ambiguities emerged in teachers' understanding of inclusive ideology and policy and in their planning and pedagogical routines for inclusion. All teachers endorsed the practice of withdrawal from the mainstream class to provide additional support for the children with SEN. While all considered that responsibility for teaching learners with SEN was joint, their interpretations of teachers' roles revealed a clear demarcation of labour between resource and class teacher leading to division of teaching duties. Although all favoured the concept of individually relevant learning and supported the preparation of an individual educational programme for the child with SEN, in practice, there was little reference to this programme in planning for inclusion. Specifically, in Elm SNS, Jacqueline acknowledged "there should be a huge consultative process in these ... the ideal for the IEP is input from the teacher" but "it's hugely time consuming" (RT6.39, pp. 9-10). For the first time in Elm SNS, substitute cover was provided for class teachers "who expressed an interest", freeing them to read IEPs that had been prepared by the resource teachers. Although initially consulted regarding content, as reading the IEPs

was optional, for reasons of trust and preoccupation with the learning needs of the majority, Nicola was one class teacher who gave it a miss as she explains:

They're (*the IEPs*) there to be seen but personally and I'd say I speak for all teachers, I don't really know if that many teachers go down and read them, because you've so much trust in that teacher that you're just, "that's grand". Now really I should be going down and taking them out but at the end of the day, you're going through your day, you've the whole class and you kinda forget about that, just being honest like. (CT6.84, p. 15)

Observation in Elm SNS revealed that how these ambiguities were played out in practice contributed to varying degrees of structure and continuity, determining levels of coherence in the experiences of teaching and learning. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data analysis, five elements emerged contributing to the presence of coherence in Jacqueline's and Nicola's inclusive practices and are detailed in Figure 8.4.

Figure 8.4: Elements contributing to the presence of coherence in teachers' inclusive practice



Focusing firstly on timetabling of additional support and fragmentation, details of practice substantiating these five elements are documented in the following subsections.

Timetabling of additional support and fragmentation

As indicated in Chapters Five and Six, in their understanding of inclusive ideology and planning for inclusion, all resource teachers withdrew children to provide additional support. However, Jacqueline was one of two resource teachers in the enquiry who also practised co-teaching in the mainstream class. As such, additional support was provided for Kathleen and three others with SEN on an in-class and withdrawal basis. Table 8.3 details the timetabling of this support juxtaposed with the learning experiences from which the children with SEN were withdrawn. It should also be noted that the two children in this class with learning support needs withdrew for the first morning session to another support teacher while the child from the travelling community withdrew at the same times but to a third teacher. Consequently, to pursue any form of meaningful consultation regarding their educational well being, this arrangement would have required Nicola to collaborate with three additional support teachers.

Table 8.3: Timetabling of additional support in the context of the mainstream class timetable

Time	Mainstream class	Kathleen and three with SEN
9.00 – 9.45	Check homework; roll call; Irish	
9.45 – 10.30	SESE	Maths (withdrawn to the resource room)
10.30 – 10.40	Break	
10.40 – 11.40	Maths (resource teacher and class teacher co-teaching in the mainstream class, joined by SNA for final twenty minutes)	
11.40 – 12.00	Religion	
12.00 – 12.30	Recess	
12.30 – 13.00	Computers / PE / French / SESE / SPHE	
13.00 – 13.30	English	
13.30 – 13.35	Break	
13.35 – 14.00	English	English
14.00 – 14.35	Drama / SPHE / Art / Music / SESE	English

Key for abbreviation of curriculum areas: SESE refers to social, environmental and scientific education and covers history, geography and science; SPHE refers to social, personal and health education; PE refers to physical education; although not officially recognised as a curriculum subject, French was taught on a pilot basis.

As evident, by being withdrawn from the mainstream class during particular lessons, the timetabling of additional support invariably led to fragmentation for the learners with SEN who have least resources to cope with this, while coherence was maintained for their mainstream peers and the class teacher. Furthermore, their

opportunity to experience curriculum breadth and balance was severely diminished by concentration on the 'core curriculum' of English and maths.

As the second element of coherence of teaching-learning experiences for inclusion, details of practice relating to collaborative learning opportunities and the marginality of learners with SEN are presented in the following subsection.

Collaborative learning and marginality of learners with SEN

As reported in Chapter Seven, regarding pedagogical intentions, teachers identified collaborative learning as a means of facilitating inclusion. However, observation of practice revealed that while collaborative learning afforded children with SEN opportunities for reinforcement and some form of social interaction with peers, their role within the context of the mainstream class was peripheral. Representative of the levels of participation of children with SEN in collaborative learning activities is the experience of Kathleen and the other learners with SEN illustrated in the following extract which relates to a PE lesson.

The first part of the lesson focused on soccer drills of skills of dribbling, kicking and passing where the children had been assigned to one of four groups by the class teacher. The second part of the lesson focused on practising these skills and involved two five-minute matches of five-aside. On this occasion, the children were allowed to voluntarily form their teams. As children regrouped quickly, it turned out that those left to form one team were the four children with Mild GLD and the child from the traveling community. As it took them so long to select a goalie, they had to wait for the second match (which was cut short as time for the lesson ran out and another class arrived to the school hall). Having observed the first match and then both teams during the second match, it became increasingly apparent that the levels of skill among this team were not as developed as that of the other teams: passes failed to connect and were easily intercepted by the opposition; generally, kicks were misjudged and thus way too long for the space in the hall; and, team players lost time by not throwing in the ball from the side with speed. At one point, under the pressure of mounting goals by the opposition, a dispute arose between the goalie and other members of the team, resulting in the goalie opting out into the pitch and leaving the goal unmanned. Nicola intervened and a new goal keeper (Kathleen) was selected reluctantly. However, her experience in goal was short lived as it was time to tidy away the equipment and return to class. (FNRR.CT6)

The peripheral role played by the children with SEN in terms of group composition was evident on occasions when children had the freedom to choose group

members and partners and during recess time when they broke into groups for play. Even when groups were teacher selected and based on mixed ability, children with SEN were peripheral in terms of their involvement. The following extract from the field notes relates to a science lesson on electricity and is representative of the peripheral role of learners with SEN.

...the class was directed to "get into their science groups" and as the equipment was distributed, the children relocated, forming four groups. Each group was given a battery, two wires and a bulb and set the task of joining these together to make the bulb light up. Nicola also directed the groups to appoint one member to draw a diagram on a flip chart page provided and one spokesperson who was to report to the class the steps the group had taken to get the bulb to light. There were five in Kathleen's group. As soon as the equipment was set on the table, the other four grabbed an item each, leaving Kathleen with nothing. The boy with the battery then proceeded to negotiate a swap with a second boy for the bulb and to secure negotiations, agreed to draw the diagram. Meanwhile, the two girls holding the wires refused to let go of these and following further negotiations, the four agreed that starting with the battery, each would put down an item in sequence and the first person would help the second person attach, the second would help the third and the third would help the fourth. Excluded from these negotiations and the attempt to make the circuit which followed, Kathleen remained silent, alternated her gaze between the activity of her group members, other groups and the teacher and clicked a biro intermittently. Switching direction of one of the wires, the group was successful in getting the bulb to light on the second attempt. Kathleen smiled and named people from other groups whose bulbs were also lit while the four responsible for the circuit shared the cheerful banter of achievement. The four then proceeded to play with the circuit, and edged on by one another, checked the consequences of removing the wire from the bulb and from the metal part of the battery, of putting the bulb directly on the battery and of switching direction of the wires, allowing each ample opportunity to hold the equipment. Following a reminder from Nicola that the groups had two minutes to finish the diagram and prepare what they were going to say, the boy who initially agreed to draw, started, but was overtaken by one of the girls on the admission of herself and the second girl that she was better at drawing. It was at this point that this second girl turned and asked Kathleen to remake the circuit with her. This was Kathleen's first opportunity to touch the equipment, but as the process of making the circuit had been well and truly figured out, her input was to follow the directions of the second girl. At a later stage in this lesson, groups were directed to make a gap in the circuit, predict whether or not the electric current would flow through certain materials (*paper clip, crayon, thumb-tack, unifix cube, paper, euro*) and then test and record the result. Nicola specifically requested that each person in the group record her or his prediction in relation to one of the materials being tested. The boy who had wanted the bulb at the outset reasoned with the others that the electricity would flow through materials that had metal like the top of the battery and the bottom

of the bulb and they took turns to record one prediction for the items listed on the worksheet. It was Kathleen's turn to make the prediction about paper and when she recorded a tick for this, as in electricity would flow through paper, this boy challenged her saying "that's wrong, paper isn't made a metal ...". In response, one of the other girls said: "leave her alone, it's her turn to guess not yours." This was the only prediction of the group that proved incorrect and as the group called upon to share their results with the class, the spokesperson let it be known that this was Kathleen's prediction while none of the others was named. (FNRR.CT6)

During this lesson and in response to questioning from Nicola as she circulated among the groups, Kathleen correctly recalled how the circuit was made. Nonetheless, her experience of participation in group activity reinforced her peripheral status. As such, opportunities for collaborative learning, even in mixed ability groups, may well create their own hierarchies based on perceptions of ability and performance. In such circumstances, those who are 'targeted' for additional support have little possibility of gaining the respect of other group members and are left to feel marginalised in the 'mainstream' milieu. Revisiting Jacqueline's maths lesson on calculating the cost of pizzas, the following interactive sequence has been selected to illustrate the contrast between Kathleen's participation in collaborative activity in the settings of mainstream class and resource room; although guided by the resource teacher, Kathleen is as involved and included in the banter and learning activity as the other group members.

Jacqueline: So Gareth, you're going for the Hawaiian. How much is that?

Gareth: The regular's eleven.

Jacqueline: And what about a mineral?

Suzie: Are you *getten toppens* Gareth?

Jacqueline: Oh yes, forgot about that, good thinking Suzie.

Gareth: No, the ham and pineapple on its own.

Jacqueline: (*Handing Gareth a mini-board and pen*) OK, Gareth will you write the cost of your pizza at the top? Are you ordering a mineral?

Gareth: 7up, that's one euro (*records this amount under the eleven euro*).

Craig: Same. Same. Can we get the chicken wings teacher?

Jacqueline: Let's just stick with pizzas for the moment. So do you want to write yours next? (*Craig records relevant prices on his mini-board*) OK, Kathleen, looks like you're next.

Kathleen: I'm goin for a *Medaranean*

Suzie: Where are *ye goin* with *yer Medaranean*? It has *sybalils ye* know. (*In an accentuated and robotic tone, attempting to emphasise each syllable*) Med dit a rain nean.

Kathleen: (*Laughs*) Are you teacher?

Jacqueline: (*Also laughing*) OK, Kathleen, so what does the Mediterranean pizza cost?

Kathleen: Mine doesn't have a price teacher. Mine's free (*laughs again*).

Suzie: No it isn't. Look, there (*points to the column heading*), it's the same price as the mega meaty.

Kathleen: Oh (*imitating Suzie and pointing to the same column*) all the regulars are all twelve euro. Mine's twelve euro teacher (*records price on her mini-board*). Wait *me toppens*, sweetcorn and pineapple that's one euro and *dia* pepsi one euro (*adds these prices to the board*). (FNRR.RT6)

Apart from higher levels of participation and more central and meaningful involvement of learners with SEN in group activity, Jacqueline's sequencing and steering of the maths activity illustrated above indicates the intensity of support required by some learners to make progress. This highlights both the requirement of those with SEN for additional academic support and the significance of the withdrawal context in securing this.

Despite the benefits of the withdrawal context, the practice of teaching learners with SEN in a number of different locations across the mainstream setting of Elm SNS had potential to contribute to fragmentation in teaching-learning experiences, specifically in relation to the curriculum. Details of practice relating to dual programmes and discontinuity as a third element of coherence and inclusion are presented in the following subsection.

Dual programmes and discontinuity

An aspect of practice that contributed to fragmentation in learning experienced by those with SEN related to the discontinuity of curriculum between class and resource teacher. This was particularly evident in the separate programmes for English taught by Jacqueline and Nicola. Revisiting her lesson on the novel *War Games*, Nicola's English lessons took the form of recapping on previously read material through teacher questioning, scanning text for difficult words, identification and explanation of new words, a combination of oral and silent reading of text, and teacher and pupil questioning to summarise, clarify and explore the material read. Lessons concluded with some form of role play, drama or written activity arising from the text. Kathleen was included in questioning activities but as she had difficulties with expressive language,

generally, the questions she was asked were closed and involved recall and repetition. Written activities varied from group based, for example, determining and listing the personality traits of characters supported with evidence from the story, to pair work involving the composition of a dialogue between two story characters, to individual work, for example, being one of the story characters and writing a letter to another. Arising from the timetabling of withdrawal support, Kathleen missed the second half of each English lesson; if present when assigned, she was involved in these activities. However, writing activities were differentiated to the extent that Kathleen was required to write less. Observation revealed that Kathleen could answer questions at a literal level with the help of teacher prompts and picture cues, and could repeat the explanation of some new words. However, she was unable to follow the reading of text, would not have been called upon to read and spent much of the 'reading time' looking at others, gazing round the room or over at the sink.

Acknowledging the challenge to their reading abilities, Nicola accepted that "it's a tough book (*class novel*), they would not be able to read it themselves but when I'm reading, they love it like" (CT6.13, p. 3) and reasoned that "once they have a sense of what's going on ... the aim for them is to explain it in their own words" (FNRR.CT6). Furthermore, consistent with the notion of separate roles and the division of labour between resource and class teacher evident in teachers' intentions, Nicola explained that "they are taken out by the teacher, by the various teachers (*resource teachers*) and it's really that teacher will do all their spellings with them, their grammar, their reading, their comprehension you know" (CT6.22, p. 4). Although 'included' in the literacy activities engaged in by her peers, it is difficult to envisage the impact of this programme on the development of Kathleen's literacy abilities.

Further observation revealed that this mainstream class programme had no bearing on the programme Kathleen followed in the resource room. Evident in the following extract, representative of the English lessons taught by Jacqueline is the pitching of instructional level and the structure, sequencing and pacing of teaching-learning activities to target a number of literacy aspects while connecting with the developmental levels and interests of the learners with SEN.

The lesson opened with the children reading five passwords each ('tricky words' of the week displayed on the resource room door), reciting a number of tongue twisters, rapidly listing words ending with /ump/ and /ought/ from memory and checking against flip chart list displayed on notice board. Jacqueline then introduced /amp/ as the new sound for the day and the children rhymed off /amp/ words, decided which were real or nonsense, recorded their lists in writing, read the list, explained the words and then selected one word to put in a sentence. To reinforce and help generalise learning, Jacqueline dictated sentences for the children to write, where "the spellings (*had*) endings just done", for example, "The man had cramp in his leg" and "The tramp sat on the damp sand". Reminding the children to "check for capitals and full stops", Jacqueline scanned the work, pointed to an error for self-correction in one and praised the children for their good spelling and clear writing. Following questions about their favourite sports person, Jacqueline showed the children a calendar of sports people and stopped on a page showing Sonia O'Sullivan¹⁶. They recognised Sonia and could answer that she was "famous for running". Jacqueline wrote 'Sonia O'Sullivan' on the board and called on the children to repeat the name. The children were asked to work in pairs and to think about and write some questions about Sonia that they wanted to find answers to in the story. Each pair took turns reading out their questions and examples included: Where was she from? What races did she win? When did she start running? What training did she do? Was it easy or hard? Did she ever want to give up? Giving out green and red circles to each pair, Jacqueline explained that she was going to read two pages of the story and that whenever they heard information that answered one of their questions, they were to hold up a green circle. Although the children were accustomed to this routine, on some occasions Jacqueline had to pause or reread a sentence before a green circle was raised. When this reading finished, the children reread their questions and provided oral answers. They were then directed to a laptop on the table which displayed new or difficult words from the two pages of text and were asked to find and read the words they could recognise. Then, Jacqueline called on one to delete the words they could all recognise which left four: education, neglected, determination and published. Jacqueline questioned about beginnings and endings and taking each word in turn, got the children to segment into syllables using the space bar, sound the syllables, blend the sounds, read the words and put into a sentence. Using letter cubes, the children tried to make the words from memory/sound, checking against the laptop. Then, using magnetic letters on the class board, each child picked and checking with the laptop, spelt that word. Each took turns to read the four words. Once familiar with the words, Jacqueline directed them to open their books on page ninety-four and they took it in turns to read. Although there was some hesitancy at times, at instructional level, this text afforded the children opportunity to acquire and practise literacy skills. Following the reading activity, Jacqueline explained that working in pairs and drawing on information in the two pages they had read, one was to pretend to be Sonia and the other was to be

¹⁶ An Irish athlete, Sonia O'Sullivan was the first Irish woman ever to win an Olympic medal for running and was in the news at the time this lesson was observed.

a TV reporter who had to interview Sonia by asking at least four questions about her win in the European Championships and her training. They were directed to move to different parts of the room to practise their questions and answers and in response to a question from Craig, Jacqueline confirmed that when they felt they were ready, they could use the Dictaphone to record their interviews. (FNRR.RT6)

Arising from the division of labour between Jacqueline and Nicola, there is a discontinuity of curriculum between resource and class teacher, resulting in Kathleen following dual programmes with separate foci. While participation in the activities taught by Jacqueline in the resource room was more likely to lead to intentional learning, Nicola's emphasis on the children with SEN being able to explain the class novel and her understanding that spelling, grammar, reading of text and comprehension were the remit of the resource teacher contributed to distortion of the coherence of curriculum experienced by Kathleen. It becomes increasingly evident therefore that Jacqueline and Nicola need to work more closely, by co-planning to ensure continuity of programme and coherence of learning experiences. However, such collaboration presents challenges, as elaborated in the final subsection of this chapter.

As previously stated, resource and class teachers in Elm SNS practised co-teaching. Details relating to co-teaching, substantiating the presence of coherence in teachers' inclusive practices, are documented in the following subsection.

Co-teaching, responsiveness and increased frequency of mediated talk

Although cited as a practice that facilitated inclusion, teaching the same topic to all but at differentiated conceptual levels was indicated by class teachers as complex and problematic, as reported in Chapter Seven. Observation of differentiation by conceptual levels indicated that this practice contributed to further fragmentation of learning experienced by children with SEN, as in balancing diverse needs, class teachers continually prioritised the learning needs of the majority. Such prioritisation is evident in Nicola's justification for the introduction of co-teaching in her school. Referring to the children with SEN and their involvement in maths, Nicola argues that "the gap is just too big ... and it wouldn't be fair on the rest of the class if (*she*) had to actually teach them. They need another teacher there for definite" (CT6.140, p. 25). As

previously stated, co-teaching was introduced by Jacqueline and Nicola as a response to managing the persistent dilemma for class teachers associated with the challenge of addressing individual needs within the context of needs common to all. Nicola explains that initially, Jacqueline “took the stronger group because she usually works with the weaker kids and (*they*) didn’t want them (*children in the class*) thinking that she’s just going to work with weak kids” (CT6.28, p. 5). The advantages of this arrangement to the children’s learning and Nicola’s teaching are acknowledged in the following comment:

I had the weaker group and it just, it was brilliant for the weaker kids because I could actually really see what they couldn’t do whereas if you had all twenty three of them in the whole class, I know a lot of them would slip through the net because you don’t have enough time. (CT6.28, p. 5)

Regarding “the gap”, the extent of variation in the cognitive levels of learning activities observed during in-class maths lessons was striking. Divided into two ability groups, examples of the types of activities engaged in by each group are detailed for comparative purposes in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3: Maths activities undertaken by two ability groups during co-teaching lesson

Lower ability group (includes all children with SEN)	Higher ability group
<p>Counting up in eights, tens, twos and sevens;</p> <p>Problems based on single digit numbers as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lollipop cost me eight cent. What would three lollipops cost? • What fraction of an hour is fifteen minutes? • How many cents in five euro? • There are eight decorations in a box. I have six boxes. How many decorations have I altogether? • Crisps are reduced to ten cent after Christmas. I bought eight packets. How much did I spend? (FNRR.Co-t.RT6) 	<p>With one child leafing through and displaying a series of number fact cards, the higher ability group provided rapid responses to a range of multiplication and division facts involving single by two and three digits;</p> <p>Problems to solve as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many years was it from 1881 to 1990? • If half a kilogramme costs six euro forty cent, how much does two hundred and fifty grammes cost? • Your favourite runners were priced at fifty euro. There’s a thirty percent reduction in the sales. How much do they now cost? • If four tenths if four percent, what is forty percent? (FNRR.Co-t.CT6)

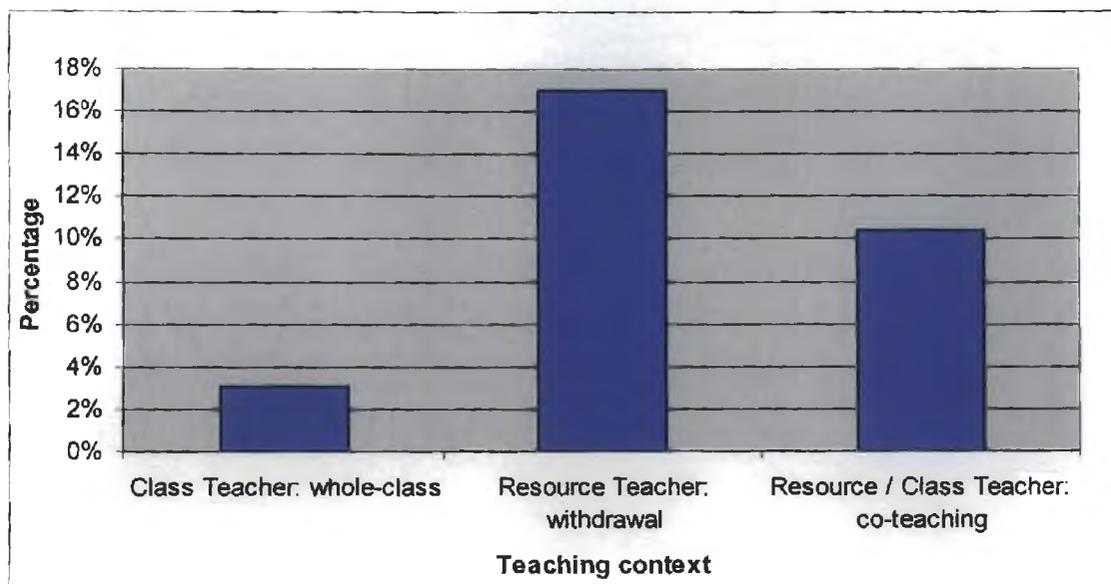
Given the contrast of conceptual levels represented within the class, it is difficult to envisage how one class teacher alone could have pitched and paced the learning activities to secure the intentional learning of all learners within the timeframe of the

maths lesson. To this end, the practice of co-teaching was effective in advancing each learner while accommodating the extent of variation in developmental levels and sustaining coherence in the learning experienced by all, particularly those with SEN. As such, regardless of which teacher worked with which group, the presence of both teachers facilitated the responsiveness to learners' needs central to promoting children's learning.

Furthermore, in the context of links between teachers' use of mediated talk and the intentional learning of children with SEN, quantitative data reveals a higher frequency of teachers' mediated talk in withdrawal (seventeen percent of the total of resource teacher interactions) and co-teaching contexts (ten percent of the total of resource/class teacher interactions¹⁷), in comparison with whole-class teaching (three percent of the total of class teacher interactions), as indicated in Figure 8.2 overleaf.

¹⁷ As reported in Chapter Four, in the two schools where co-teaching was practised, a number of co-teaching lessons were observed in addition to mainstream class teaching and support teaching on withdrawal basis. As class and resource teacher in Elm SNS alternated their teaching between higher and lower ability groups by topic, one co-teaching session involved the class teacher while the second involved the resource teacher. Overall, approximately two hours of teaching was observed in each context in this school.

Figure 8.2: Mediated talk as a percentage of all verbal interactions engaged in by the class teacher in whole-class teaching context, by the resource teacher in withdrawal context and by both teachers in co-teaching context



This supports the significance of the smaller group for facilitating teachers' use of mediated talk central to intentional learning of those with SEN. It also indicates that two teachers working with smaller groups within the mainstream class have potential to create the conditions necessary to facilitate mediated talk.

Apart from facilitating responsiveness to diversity and individual needs, co-teaching enabled Jacqueline and Nicola to work more intimately, creating porous boundaries between teaching and learning experiences in mainstream and withdrawal contexts. Details relating to co-teaching and porous boundaries between resource and mainstream, supporting the presence of coherence in teachers' inclusive practice, are documented in the final subsection below.

Co-teaching and porous boundaries between resource and mainstream

As reported in Chapters Five and Six, analysis of teachers' interpretations of and planning for inclusion revealed that teaching to achieve the learning targets specified on the IEP was almost exclusively the responsibility of the resource teacher. Elm SNS was one of three exceptions, to the extent that Jacqueline and Nicola planned collaboratively

and co-taught the maths programme in the mainstream class. As such, maths-related learning targets for the children with SEN generated a number of learning outcomes which were addressed in the maths curriculum taught in mainstream and developed in the programme of 'maths for independent living' taught in the resource room. Links between mainstream and resource programmes in relation to conceptual focus and level are evident in the examples cited in this chapter of the maths activities set for the lower ability group in the mainstream class and the sequence of activities pursued by Jacqueline and her resource-group on pizza pricing. By way of illustration, both programmes worked towards achievement of a learning target relating to 'correct use of money for purchasing' by addressing multiple learning outcomes such as: counting skills, identification of notes and coins, representing given values with notes and coins, representing money values in symbolic form, calculation of cost and change involving addition, multiplication and subtraction and problem-solving based on money transactions. By reinforcing the concepts being taught in the mainstream class and extending their relevance to the daily experiences of the children, Jacqueline and Nicola avoided the fragmentation associated with dual programmes evident in their teaching of English.

While co-teaching for maths facilitated the creation of porous boundaries between resource and mainstream teaching-learning experiences, collaboration to sustain this practice presented challenges for Jacqueline and Nicola. Thanks to imaginative solutions for securing dedicated time for collaborative planning in Elm SNS, some grade-level class teachers had shared planning time and members of the 'special needs' team also had shared planning time. However, apart from one formal meeting at the start of the school year to discuss content of the IEP and substitute cover over one school day for those class teachers interested in 'reading the IEPs', there was no dedicated time for class teachers to meet with resource teachers. Consequently, collaborative planning for co-teaching the maths programme in the mainstream class was dependent on Jacqueline and Nicola meeting after school hours once a week. Along with this regular formal communication, observation of practice also revealed that both teachers shared reflections on aspects of teaching and on the children's progress following each co-taught lesson. Acknowledging that "there are only so many hours like

in the month to meet”, Nicola is critical of the lack of dedicated time within the school day for resource and class teacher collaboration: “when the time’s not made for you, you’re doing your own thing, you don’t really make that much time for it, you know” (CT6.84, p. 15). Regarding collaboration and the process of co-planning and co-reviewing, Jacqueline admits “it’s a huge time issue” (RT6.39, p. 9). Although policy directives advocate collaboration and in-class support, in the absence of formalised dedicated time, the communicative practices necessary to secure appropriate levels of planning, monitoring and reviewing among the relevant parties are left to chance and goodwill. Policy dependent on chance and goodwill is unlikely to impact greatly on restructuring of practice.

Descriptions of the detail of practice indicate the increasing importance of coherence in teaching-learning experiences in terms of promoting learning and inclusion. Levels of coherence in Jacqueline’s and Nicola’s inclusive practices are linked with the timetabling of additional support, the role of learners with SEN in collaborative activity, co-teaching to secure responsiveness to increasing diversity in the mainstream class and the extent to which boundaries between mainstream and resource remain porous. As such, these elements contribute to the presence of coherence-fragmentation in teachers’ interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice. Emerging as a theme across the nine cases, coherence-fragmentation is defined and documented in Chapter Eleven.

SUMMARY

The documentation and structuring of the particulars in the case of Elm SNS illustrate the process of progressive focusing from the breadth and depth of data generated to lead to the establishment of the three central themes of the enquiry. Contextualising Jacqueline’s and Nicola’s inclusive practices has served to connect the detail of their intentions and actions to the key elements that contribute to the presence of communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation in their interpretations and constructions of inclusion. Having illustrated how the transition from cases to themes was executed, the task of the remaining three chapters is to present each theme in turn while providing a theoretically convincing base to support the enquiry’s

insights in terms of contributing to understanding of inclusion. As the first of the three central themes, communicative routines are defined and documented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

COMMUNICATIVE ROUTINES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the communicative routines in resource and class teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice. Resonating with a Vygotskian perspective that emphasises the importance of verbal interactions as a catalyst for promoting thinking (1978), communicative routines refer to the dialogic exchanges that facilitate learning and enable learners' cognitive development. Communicative routines constitute the substance of "talk" which Mercer (1996) argues "is now recognised as more than a means of sharing thoughts: it is a social mode of thinking, a tool for the joint construction of knowledge by teachers and learners" (p. 374).

As discussed in Chapter Seven, learning through language, specifically the use of talk and discussion emerged as a key teaching and learning approach to facilitate inclusion in teachers' intentions regarding their pedagogical routines. As revealed in the case studies (Appendix V), prolonged observation and detailed analysis of practice led to the prominence of communicative routines as one of three central themes of teachers' constructions of inclusive practice, supporting the methodological significance of the sequence of data collection measures in this enquiry for increasing understanding of inclusive practices from resource and class teachers' perspectives. In the outline of methodology in Chapter Four, it was indicated that as analysis of data led to progressive focusing of the substantive issue on teachers' communicative routines, structured observations of the verbal interactions enabling learners' cognitive development and promoting their thinking were conducted. These involved the combined use of systematic observation schedule followed by a running record of the content and sequence of teacher-learner interactions relating to particular teaching-learning episodes across all curricular areas. Drawing on this quantitative and qualitative data to present analysis and discussion of teachers' communicative routines, the chapter is in three sections as follows: verbal interactions initiated by teachers, teacher mediation and the

intentional learning of children with SEN, and mediated talk and the teaching-learning context.

VERBAL INTERACTIONS INITIATED BY TEACHERS

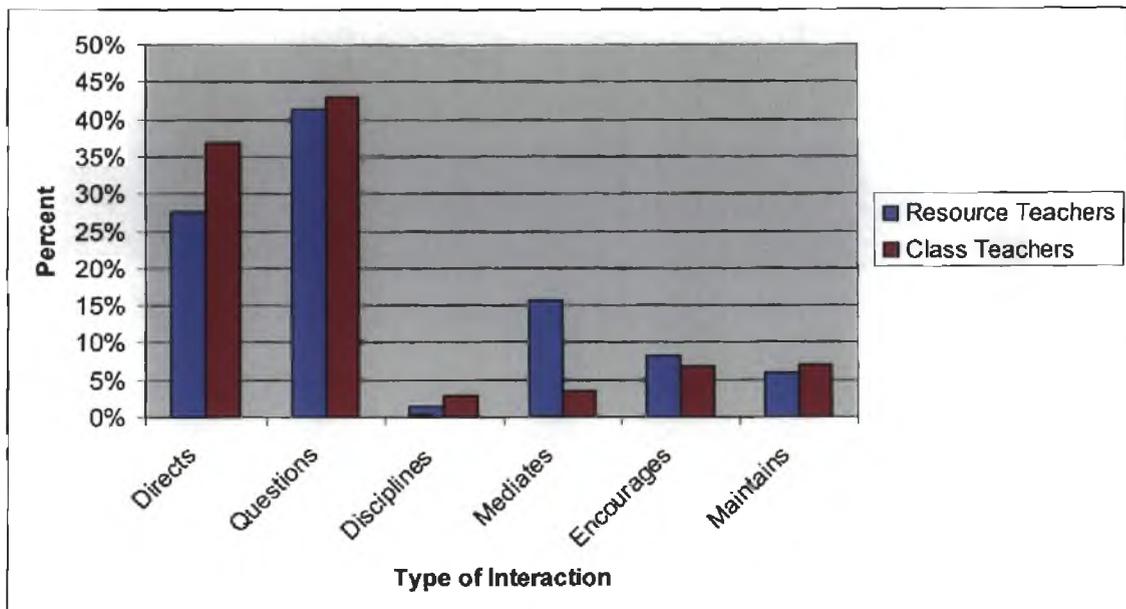
As indicated in Chapter Four and reported in Chapter Eight, a systematic observation schedule was developed for the first phase of data collection on teachers' communicative routines. The purpose of the schedule was to provide an indication of the persistence and pervasiveness of teachers' verbal interactions in their constructions of inclusive practice. Informed by 'teacher talk' recorded in the field notes pertaining to the initial round of unstructured observations along with previous research on patterns of teacher discourse (Hertz-Lazarowitz and Shachar, 1990; Galton et al., 1999), the schedule comprised six categories of teachers' verbal interactions. Category, type and purpose of the verbal interactions initiated by resource and class teachers in their constructions of inclusive practice, with supporting examples drawn from qualitative data are detailed in Table 9.1 overleaf.

Table 9.1: Category, type, purpose and examples of verbal interaction initiated by resource and class teachers in their constructions of inclusive practices

Category of Verbal Interaction	Type and Purpose of Verbal Interaction	Examples Selected from Teachers' Verbal Interactions
Teacher directs	By <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making statements of fact, idea or problem • providing directions or instructions on task completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If there's an L before it, it's a loch. If there's an R before it, it's a river (FNRR.CT2)</i> • <i>Point where you think Mayo is (FNRR.CT2)</i>
Teacher questions	To elicit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recall of facts • an idea or solution: closed (with only one correct answer) • an idea or solution: open (alternative responses expected) and to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct learning activity / task completion • assess learning related specifically to lesson observed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is the fourth month? (FNRR.RT5)</i> • <i>How many syllables in secret? (FNRR.RT6)</i> • <i>I want you to tell me how you would split that square into two triangles with one line? (FNRR.RT2)</i> • <i>Can you put your finger on the first word 'Lenny's'? (FNRR.CT6)</i> • <i>What did we learn about what increase meant? (FNRR.CT6)</i>
Teacher disciplines	By <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commenting to convey expectations of appropriate behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Don't answer out of turn (FNRR.CT3)</i>
Teacher mediates	To assist understanding by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paraphrasing statements and questions • prompting, cueing, scaffolding • questioning in a tentative manner to probe thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What colour do you think 'Snowy' is? What colour is snow?(FNRR.RT5)</i> • <i>You have to draw a line from one corner to the opposite corner. It's like a sandwich (FNRR.RT2)</i> • <i>Look at the word. You have the first and second letter right. What sound comes after that? What sound does /am/ make? (FNRR.RT7)</i>
Teacher encourages	By praising and affirming children's contributions with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • informational feedback • neutral feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I like the way you numbered your questions (FNRR.RT5)</i> • <i>Good job, well done (FNRR.CT7)</i>
Teacher maintains - learning and relationships	By <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing directions on organisational and routine matters • engaging in chit-chat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Copy that down in your homework journal and guys, remember to get them signed (FNRR.CT7)</i> • <i>I saw your Granny's flower boxes yesterday, up on the window sills, all the splash of colour, they're beautiful (FNRR.RT9)</i>

As reported in Chapter Four, teachers' verbal interactions were coded according to frequency across each of the lessons observed and represent one hundred percent of teacher talk during those lessons, which totalled approximately thirty-six hours. Figure 9.1 below presents the percentages of teachers' verbal interactions by category, recorded for resource and class teachers respectively.

Figure 9.1: Percentage of resource and class teachers' verbal interactions by category

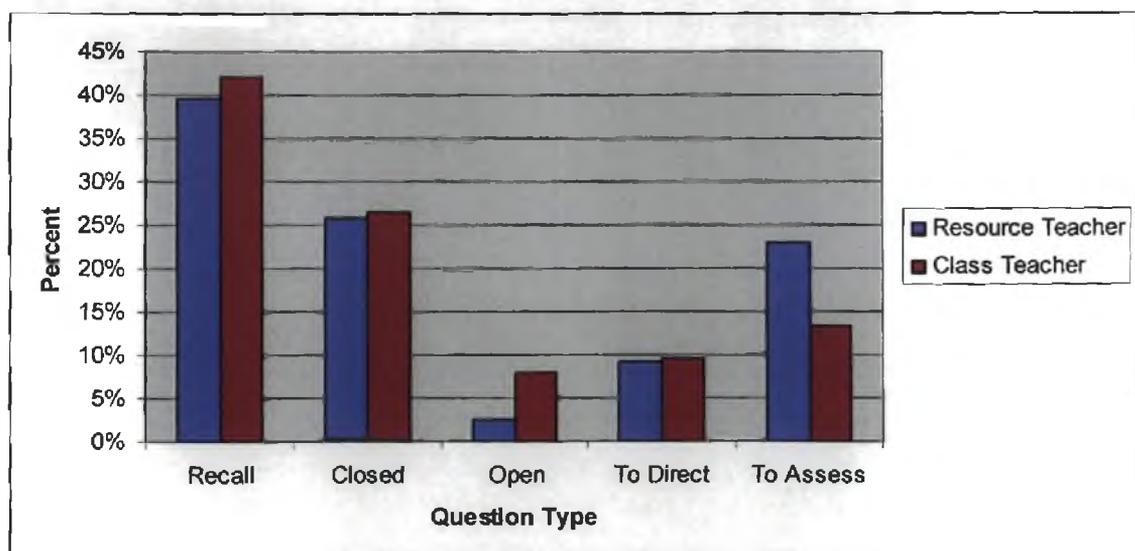


Overall, the high frequency of teacher directions and questions (sixty-nine percent of the total of all resource teachers' talk and eighty percent of the total of all class teachers' talk) is consistent with research conducted in the UK on teachers' verbal interactions in whole class teaching episodes (Galton et al., 1999; Hargreaves, Moyles, Merry, Paterson, Pell and Esarte-Sarries, 2003). Although focusing exclusively on discourse in relation to teaching literacy, the ORACLE project conducted in 1996 reported that directions and questions comprised seventy percent of teachers' interactions (Galton et al., 1999), while the SPRINT project conducted in 2000 revealed that eighty-five percent of teachers' interactions were accounted for by direction and question (Hargreaves et al., 2003). Furthermore, the SPRINT project reported significant

increases in the frequency of teacher questions and the ratio of question to direction, in comparison with previous ORACLE studies conducted in 1976 and 1996¹. As increased questioning inevitably provided a corresponding increase in opportunities for children to contribute, this practice was interpreted as promoting “interactive teaching” and “construed as (a) positive development(s) in pedagogy (OFSTED, 2002)” (Hargreaves et al., 2003, p. 233). Despite increased frequency of questions, directions remained the dominant form of teacher interaction accounting for over fifty percent of all observed teacher talk in the more recent SPRINT project. In contrast, an examination of Figure 9.1 indicates that questioning is the most frequent type of interaction practised by resource and class teachers in this enquiry accounting for forty-one percent and forty-three percent of all interactions respectively while resource and class teachers’ directions account for twenty-eight percent and thirty-seven percent respectively. Whether quantity of questions is indicative of interactive teaching, questioning is a key feature of teachers’ communicative routines contributing to their inclusive practices.

As indicated in Table 9.1, teachers’ questions were categorised on the basis of learning purpose. Figure 9.2 presents the percentages of teachers’ questions by category, recorded for resource and class teachers respectively.

Figure 9.2: Percentage of resource and class teachers’ questions by category



¹ Questioning increased from 12% of all observations in 1976 to 15.4% in 1996 and to 28.6% in 2000 (Hargreaves et al., 2003, p. 229).

Examination of Figure 9.2 reveals that approximately two thirds of questions in the lessons for which the systematic observation schedule was used are asked in closed form, inviting one predetermined answer. Specifically, learning associated with these questions involves recall of factual information, deductive inference, explanation of words, phrases, procedures or number operations, and description. Comparisons with research that focuses on teacher questioning exclusively in relation to teaching one curriculum area such as English or mathematics have limitations. Nonetheless, the predominance of recall and closed questions asked by resource and class teachers in this enquiry is consistent with findings reported by Myhill (2006) claiming that “over 60% of all questions asked are factual” (p. 27) and by Parker and Hurry (2007) who state that “two thirds of the questions ... are asked in closed form” (p. 306). It also mirrors findings reported by Wragg and Brown (2001). Based on qualitative data, the interactive sequence below relating to Catherine’s introduction of a science lesson on the topic of air with second class is representative of teachers’ use of factual and closed questions to elicit a predetermined answer:

Catherine: What is air?

Child 1: Oxygen. It’s a gas.

Catherine: Can you see air?

Child 2: Not really.

Catherine: Where is air?

Frank (child with SEN): Air is in towns and cities and mountains because you need airshafts in mines ...

Child 4: (Interrupts) It’s all a round us, air is everywhere.

Catherine: Let him say, let him tell us about the airshafts. Frank.

Frank: Airshafts in mines underground so the miners can breathe air.

Catherine: Good. Paul, your hand is up.

Paul: If you go outside you can feel wind.

Catherine: And has the wind something to do with air? Lia.

Lia: Yeah, if you get a fan and you wave it, wave it really fast, you’ll feel air.

Catherine: Good, so we’re agreed air is all round us, we can’t see it but we can feel it when it’s moving. What can you blow into?

Child 7: Bag a crisps.

Catherine: What else can you blow into and fill with air? *(takes a balloon from a packet and holds it high)*

Children: (Chorus response) A balloon.

Catherine: A balloon *(puts up a chart of the upper body with respiratory tract and circles the two lungs with her finger)*. What are these?

Children: (Chorus response) Lungs.

Catherine: What do we need our lungs for? Hands up (*proceeds to blow into the balloon, emphasizing her breathing*)
Child 8: To breathe. (FNRR.CT4)

Contrasting with the frequency of factual and closed questions, analysis reveals a relatively low proportion of open questions being asked by resource and class teachers. Learning facilitated by such questions involves predicting, speculating, expressing opinion, imagining, evaluating, providing open-ended inferences, and articulating understanding of processes in terms of why. The following series of open questions based on the poem 'Small Dragon' and raised by Lucy during an English lesson with her fourth class children, is representative of those asked by class teachers: "If you had a dragon, how would you make him feel at home? What do you think he might eat? Do you think he would cook his food? Do you think it would be important to let him fly? Tell us the ideas in the poem that you think are well put?" (FNRR.CT6). Although on the surface, learning experiences in the mainstream class appear to offer increased opportunities for higher-order thinking, observations revealed that class teachers selected the highest achievers to respond to open questions. An exception was observed in an English lesson focusing on reading and comprehension of the story 'The Magic Bowl' when the fourth class teacher pronounced that "there could be lots of alternative endings" and asked Colm with SEN to "think of a possible ending for the story" (FNRR.CT3). Although fewer, typically, open questions asked by resource teachers invited children to predict story events, to speculate what they might do in similar circumstances or to express their thoughts on a learning activity, for example, by making "two stars and a wish" about a short story they had composed (FNRR.RT6). However, the children with SEN required much teacher-prompting and modelling of appropriate language to respond to these questions (this is elaborated in the following section on teacher mediation and the intentional learning of children with SEN).

While the purpose of the structured observation schedule was not comparative but to increase understanding of the persistence and pervasiveness of communicative routines in teachers' constructions of inclusive practices, almost one quarter of resource teachers' questions were designed to assess learning in contrast to just over one tenth of class teachers' questions. Whether factual, closed or open, questions which assessed

learning specifically related to the content of the lesson being observed were coded in this category. A one-way ANOVA confirms a statistically significant difference in the use of questions to assess learning, $F(1, 17) = 6.2, p = .024$. With a p-value of 0.075, Levene's homogeneity of variance statistic indicates that the assumption of homogeneity of variance between the two groups of resource and class teachers was not violated. This confirms that resource teachers were more frequent in their use of questions to assess learning than class teachers, supporting a significant difference in the proportion of questions to assess learning asked by resource and class teachers.

In dialogue with class teachers following observation and in response to their scanning of the completed structured observation schedule, a number commented that questions to assess learning relevant to one particular lesson would normally be included in the introduction of a follow-up lesson or next lesson in the series, and with formal assessment in the form of a test, multiple choice, quiz, hot seat or presentation at the end of a series of lessons on a given topic. However, as indicated in the case studies, observations revealed that resource teachers' use of questioning to assess learning within a lesson is critical to determining the understanding of each child and thus, the direction and pacing of subsequent learning for the child within that lesson. The link between questions to assess and the intentional learning of children with SEN is evident in the following extract from the field notes; although the extract relates to an instance of co-teaching, it is representative of assessment-focused questions in the communicative routines of resource teachers in this enquiry.

For teaching mathematics, this multi-grade fourth to sixth class of twenty-six children is divided into five ability-based groups. All children cover the same topic but at differentiated levels and in-class support is provided by the resource teacher who always works with the two groups containing children with SEN. On this occasion, Oonagh, the resource teacher, teaches the topic of weight to one group of five children while the class teacher teaches problem-solving in relation to weight with a second group, the SNA supervises a third group completing exercises from *Mathemagic Five*, a fourth group of three children wearing headphones complete topic related activities on class computers and a fifth group of four children work independently on Learning Disability Association (LDA) cards. In previous lessons, the children in Oonagh's group have measured and recorded the weights of objects lighter than and equal to 100 grammes. Using weights, a balance and kitchen scales, in this lesson the children estimate, weigh, record and compare the following four items: a bag of icing sugar at 500g, a bag of apples at 1kg, a bag of sand at 3.5kg and a bag of stones

at 4.5kg, in this sequence. As a result of the process of estimating and weighing the icing sugar and the apples, the children figured out that five one hundred gramme weights were equivalent to the 500 gramme weight and to this measure on the kitchen scales while similarly, ten one hundred gramme weights were equivalent to one kilogramme and to this measure on the scales. Having continued with questioning to establish that two bags of icing sugar weigh the same as one bag of apples and seven bags of icing sugar weigh the same as one bag of sand, it is evident from Liam's incorrect responses (child with SEN) that he experiences difficulty with comparison, equivalence and conversion. To address this, Oonagh returns to assessment of his understanding of the composition of one kilogramme, prompting the following interactive sequence:

Oonagh: So how many hundred grammes are there in one kilogramme?

Liam (child with SEN): A thousand

Oonagh: A thousand grammes in one kilogramme altogether, but how many hundreds? *(pauses for Liam to respond, then hands a one hundred gramme weight to him and asks)*

Oonagh: So how many of those one hundred gramme weights were in the kilogramme? *(pauses for response)* How many did we use for the bag of apples?

Liam: Ten

Oonagh: Yes, ten hundred grammes. So you have one kilogramme here *(pointing to the weight)* and one kilogramme is the same as *(and points to the hundred gramme weight)*

Liam: One kilogramme is the same as ten hundred grammes

Oonagh: So if one bag of icing sugar weighs five hundred grammes what does two bags weigh?

Liam: Ten hundred

Oonagh: And ten hundred grammes is the same as ...

Liam: One kilogramme, oh yeah, so two sugars the same as the apples

Oonagh: Yes, two bags of icing sugar weigh the same as one bag of apples. Right, so say it's two bags of apples. What would two bags of apples weigh?

Liam: Twenty hundred the same as two kilogrammes.

Oonagh: Yes, so how many bags of icing sugar would weigh the same as two bags of apples?

Liam: Four, that's four five hundreds the same as twenty hundred grammes the same as two kilogrammes and teacher can I just say this, I know six, six fives, thirty hundred grammes is three kilogrammes.

Oonagh: Good work so what's five, five bags of icing sugar?

Liam: Five fives, twenty five hundred grammes, between two and three kilogrammes, it's the one with the point, eh, what's it, the point five. (FNRR.Co-t.RT8)

Apart from illustrating the link between assessment questions and the intentional learning of the child with SEN, the communicative routine of following assessment questions with questions to clarify misconceptions illustrated above requires time and is

no doubt facilitated by the practice of teaching small groups rather than whole-class. Regarding the centrality of communicative routines to teachers' constructions of inclusive practices, further evident is the teacher's proficiency at attuning pedagogy and curriculum to difference in addressing individual needs within the context of the group.

Regarding teachers' use of questions, observation and further analysis revealed that the dominant pattern of interaction is teacher-led, giving rise to an interactive sequence of teacher-child-teacher-child which is rarely disrupted. This applies both to class teachers engaged in whole-class teaching and to resource teachers working on a small group or individual basis. The dominance of teacher-led interaction mirrors the proto-typical three part exchange structure identified by Sinclair and Coulthard (1992) in their investigation of classroom discourse, which consists of initiation in the form of teacher question, response given by the student and feedback provided by the teacher to the student's response. It also reflects findings of teacher-controlled interactions reported in recent investigations on discourse in primary classrooms (Myhill, 2006; Parker and Hurry, 2007). Criticism of teaching-learning interactions characterised by initiation-response-feedback exchanges relates to the inherent expectation that children are passive and respond only when required to do so while interactions with other learners are not encouraged (Rojas-Drummond and Mercer, 2003).

Although observations revealed that little talk is initiated by the children, it was evident that resource and class teachers in this enquiry devised learning activities which required children to initiate. Organising the children to engage in group work afforded them the opportunity to initiate and generate questions albeit within the context of responding to teacher-set questions or teacher-prescribed learning tasks. Furthermore, specifically in relation to teaching English comprehension and SESE subjects, the interactive sequence of teacher-child-teacher-child was altered by teachers directing children to generate questions about a particular topic as the following extract relating to a geography lesson with fourth class typifies:

Aoife, the class teacher, had drawn three columns on the chalkboard, each headed with the letters KWL respectively. In introducing the lesson on Brazil, Aoife reminded the class of the programme about the Amazon which they had previously watched. She called on two children to come up and locate Brazil on the globe and then questioned the class about the size and position of the country within South America and in relation to other countries. Aoife recorded the

children's responses in the 'K' column, denoting what they already knew about Brazil and with further teacher-questioning the column displayed information such as: world's fifth largest country, takes up more than half the continent of South America, has a big coast line, Brasília is the capital, Rio de Janeiro is a city in Brazil and, the Amazon is in Brazil. As she moved over to the second column, Aoife asked "what would you like to find out about Brazil?" and following this, children whose hands were raised were called upon to contribute while others spontaneously proffered answers giving rise to the following interactive sequence:

Child 1: The poverty in Brazil. What's happening if the country's rich in soil and produce but the people are poor?

Child 2: The money's not divided equally.

Child 3: How did they start off getting rich?

Child 4: Where does Brazil get its name from?

Child 5: It's something to do with the soil zil zoil.

Child 6: Why does Brazil have shanty towns?

Colm (child with SEN): It should be called a death town.

Child 8: How are the forests being destroyed?

Child 9: Teacher I have a question. How long does it take you to get from Brazil to Australia?

Child 10: What about if you went on a boat?

Child 11: Do they speak Brazil?

Child 12: Do they or do they speak Spanish?

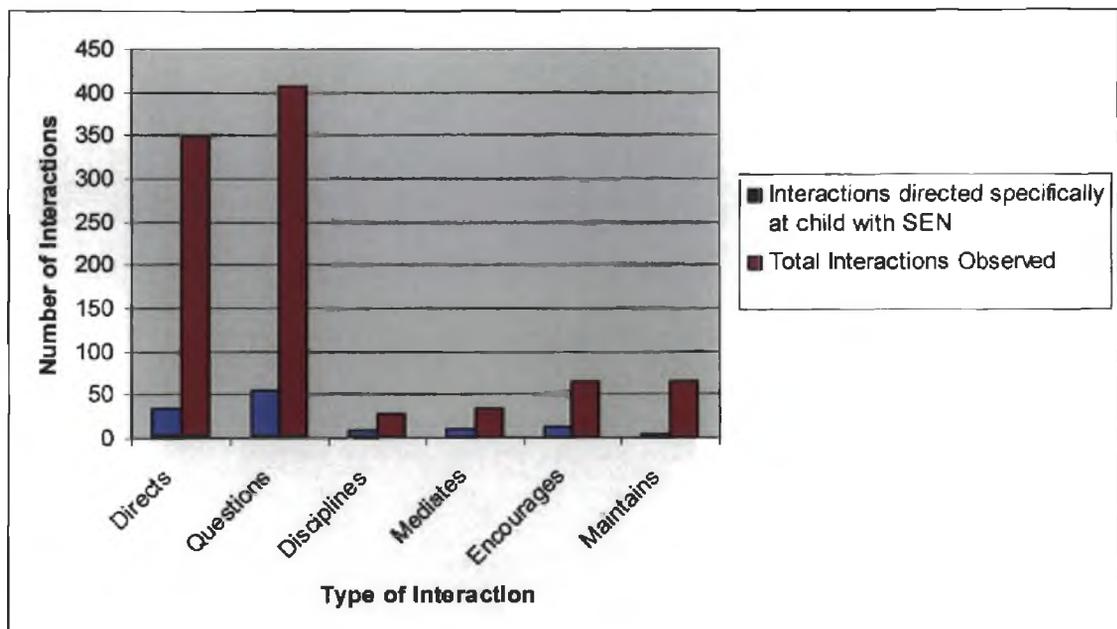
Aoife's response to the children's questions at this stage was to record each in the L column on the chalkboard. (FNRR.CT3)

Apart from facilitating the children's active participation, the multi-directional sequence of the dialogic exchanges presented above acted as a catalyst for learning where based on their own priming, the children actively sought solutions and explanations as the lesson progressed. With specific regard to inclusion, the more informal mode of multi-directional interactions appeared to promote spontaneity whereby higher numbers of children contributed within a short amount of lesson time while peripheral participants were drawn in who were otherwise reluctant to contribute. Furthermore, children's utterances tended to be more extended than their monosyllabic responses evident in teacher-led interaction.

Although associating ability with gender rather than special needs, variation in participation between children of differing abilities has been reported in research, with high achievers being more involved and participatory than low achieving peers (Collins, Kenway and McLeod, 2000; Dyson and Millward, 2000; Myhill, 2006). Specifically,

Myhill (2006) reports that “high achievers are more involved ... they voluntarily involve themselves in positive learning interactions such as putting hands up and joining in collective responses” in contrast to low achievers who “are more likely to be engaged in more negative interactions such as being off-task” (p. 31). Furthermore, in their investigation of patterns of teacher-student interaction in inclusive classrooms, Jordan and Stanovich (2001) found that teachers who attributed learning difficulties to permanent characteristics of the learner interacted infrequently with their students with SEN and at low levels of cognitive engagement. Contradicting this, to the extent that in mainstream teaching, class teachers in this enquiry gave dedicated time to the child with SEN, a series of teacher-child with SEN-teacher interactions occurred, boosting the participation of the child with SEN. Figure 9.3 presents the percentages of all class teachers’ interactions by type directed at the child with SEN within the context of class teaching, during the lessons for which the systematic observation schedule was used.

Figure 9.3: The number of class teacher interactions directed at the child with SEN in comparison with the total number of class teacher interactions



Given that the total number of children in each class in this enquiry ranged from fourteen to thirty, based on the numbers recorded in Figure 9.3, it is reasonable to speculate that the children with SEN may have experienced a higher number of direct teacher-child interactions and provided more responses than other children in the class. However, based on observation and reflecting previous research, the children with SEN were unlikely to volunteer or raise their hands and were rarely involved in collective responses in class.

Examination of Figure 9.1 indicates a difference between resource and class teachers in their use of talk to mediate learning. This difference along with the association between teacher mediation and the intentional learning of children with SEN are discussed in the following section.

TEACHER MEDIATION AND THE INTENTIONAL LEARNING OF CHILDREN WITH SEN

As indicated in Table 9.1, types of teachers' mediated talk include paraphrasing of questions or statements, tentative questioning, and cues, prompts and probes while the purpose of such talk is to tease out the child's understanding, clarify misconceptions, facilitate thinking, scaffold learning and enable the construction of meaning. Mediated talk resonates with the principles of the social constructivist theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978); specifically, the teacher scaffolds to support the child in her or his zone of proximal development by providing hints, prompts and nudges at different levels while the role of the learner is assisted "through the graduated intervention of the teacher" (Greenfield, 1984, p. 119). Scaffolding is characterized by teachers lending "their mental capacities to learners in order to support and shape learning" (Goodwin, 2001, p. 129) and then, fading this support with corresponding increases in the learner's understanding and independence.

At a general level, to the extent that all teachers in this enquiry structured learning activities and sequenced questions and directions to build on learners' thinking and understanding, there was ample evidence of 'graduated intervention' of teachers, indicating that scaffolding learners was integral to their teaching practices. However, as revealed in the case studies, class teachers pitched and paced activities and questions to

facilitate understanding of the majority of learners in the class. As such, the collective aspect of their scaffolding was frequently lost on the child with SEN. Further revealed in the case studies is evidence that children with SEN require very specific forms of scaffolding to operate successfully within their zone of proximal development, and that teachers' mediated talk constitutes such a form of scaffolding. The critical link between teachers' mediated talk and the intentional learning of children with SEN is evident in the following extract from the field notes. Using a text about 'Organs of the body', Marie, the resource teacher, is teaching comprehension strategies to a group of three children withdrawn from fourth class. Specifically, she is teaching the children how to apply a PQRS strategy when reading. The PQRS acronym refers to preview, question, read and summarise. There is a chart on the notice board displaying the four letters of the acronym with the corresponding word for each along with prompts, for example, under preview there are questions such as 'what do the pictures, title and headings tell me this story is about?' Each child also has a post card displaying a mini version of the chart content. Previous lessons have focused on previewing, questioning and reading and the interactive sequence below begins with a brief recap and progression to the final step of summarising.

Marie: ... we previewed it and questioned it and read it. What's the next thing we have to do?

Jade: Summarise it.

Marie: Very good response. Back to preview for a minute. Pre, you preview it, something you do before, pre. How do you preview, Jade?

Jade: (*Looking at mini-cue card*) You look at pictures first, then you look at the title and then you look at the headings and it'll tell you what it's about.

Marie: Yes, so if it's a newspaper, you read the headings and you see what it's about to see which bits you want to read. Now what about questions? What do we do for Q?

Lisa (child with SEN being tracked): What do I already know about this topic?

Marie: And what did we know? (*pauses for response*). What words did we come up with?

Children: Eyes, bladder, stomach, brains, heart ...

Marie: And what are all those things? (*no response*)

Marie: Anybody? (*pauses for response*). It begins with /o/.

Kelly: Organs.

Marie: Organs of the ... (*raising intonation*)

Children (chorus response): Body

Marie: Yes, isn't that what we're reading about? Organs of the body. Was it a good idea to preview and question?

Children: Yeah.

Marie: Why?

Jade: Cause it gets ye, cause it gets it in your head.

Marie: Yes and it helps when we go to read. R for read. Do you remember we had that big word yesterday?

Kelly: Damage?

Marie: Damage, yes, and what did we do with the big word?

Kelly: We divided it up.

Marie: That's right. Divide up the big words. And sometimes we concentrate so hard on trying to read the words that we forget what it's about. So we have to summarise. We have to ask what's that bit about? What's that part saying? So today, I'm going to give each of you an organ to read about quietly, think about the meaning, the information in that paragraph and put all of that into one sentence (*Marie deals one card with the name of an organ to each child*). Jade, what organ do you have to read about?

Jade: (*reading from the card*) Lungs.

Kelly: I've got heart.

Marie: Lisa, what's yours?

Lisa: (*reading from the card*) Intesticals.

Marie: Look at the ending, the magic e (*pauses for response*).

Marie: (*covers letters with the forefingers of each hand so that only /tin/ is visible*) What's that little word?

Lisa: Tin.

Marie: (*moving her right finger to reveal /e/*) And magic e makes tin say?

Lisa: Tine (*as Marie removes her fingers to uncover the word, Lisa self-corrects*) intestine, intestines.

Marie: OK, intestines. What's the most important thing I can say about this? Read quietly and try and think if there's one sentence that tells me what it's about.

Having read the assigned sections silently, Marie asked each child to summarise.

Jade: Your heart pumps blood round your body.

Marie: Who thinks that's a good summary?

Lisa and Kelly: Me

Marie: Kelly, what about your lungs?

Kelly: Your lungs are in your chest, they're like two wind bags.

Marie: Is that the most important thing?

Kelly: When you breathe out your lungs empty.

Marie: What's the most important thing? What do your lungs do?

Kelly: They help you breathe.

Marie: Good, lungs help you breathe. Lisa, what's your summary?

Lisa: When you eat food, it goes in your intest, intestines.

Marie: Is that the most important thing? What happens the food in your intestines?

Lisa: When you eat food the acid breaks the food into small pieces.

Marie: And where does that happen?

Lisa: There's acid in your intestines and the acid breaks the food into small pieces.

Marie: Good and what's the word for that? (*pauses for response*). It begins with /d/ (*pauses again*). /di/.

Lisa: Digest, where it breaks down all the food.

Marie: Good summaries. So what do we do to summarise?

Kelly: Say the most important thing about it, in the reading, in the paragraph. (FNRR.RT2)

The above interactive sequence is quoted at length as, apart from including examples of teacher mediated talk essential to scaffolding children's understanding, it indicates the teacher's use of communicative routines to attune pedagogy and curriculum content to diverse needs. Such use of communicative routines is dependent on the teacher's knowledge of pedagogical principles, curriculum and teaching methods along with understanding of why and how content and method are attuned to difference. Given their inclination to direct and co-complete the learning activities engaged in by the children with SEN revealed in the case studies, it can not be assumed that the appropriate communicative routines can be replicated by the SNA who does not have such knowledge and understanding.

Further indicated in the interactive sequence above is the extent to which both continuity of sequence and synchrony of teacher-talk and learning of children with SEN are dependent on sufficient time. As revealed in the case study reports, when the interactive sequence involving mediated talk was halted or disrupted, typically on account of the class teacher having to redirect her attention to the learning experiences of the majority, so too was learning for the child with SEN. A synthesis of the critiques of leading researchers presented in the review of literature revealed a perspective on pedagogy for children with SEN that supports common pedagogical principles and generic strategies attuned to difference by degrees of deliberateness, attention and intensity of teaching (Lewis and Norwich, 2005). To the extent that it encapsulates deliberateness, attention and intensity of teaching to support individual needs and facilitate the intentional learning of those involved, the above interactive sequence is representative of the qualitative examples of teachers' inclusive practices. Significant to this enquiry's purpose of increasing understanding of inclusive teaching in mainstream settings is the centrality of teachers' communicative routines and more specifically,

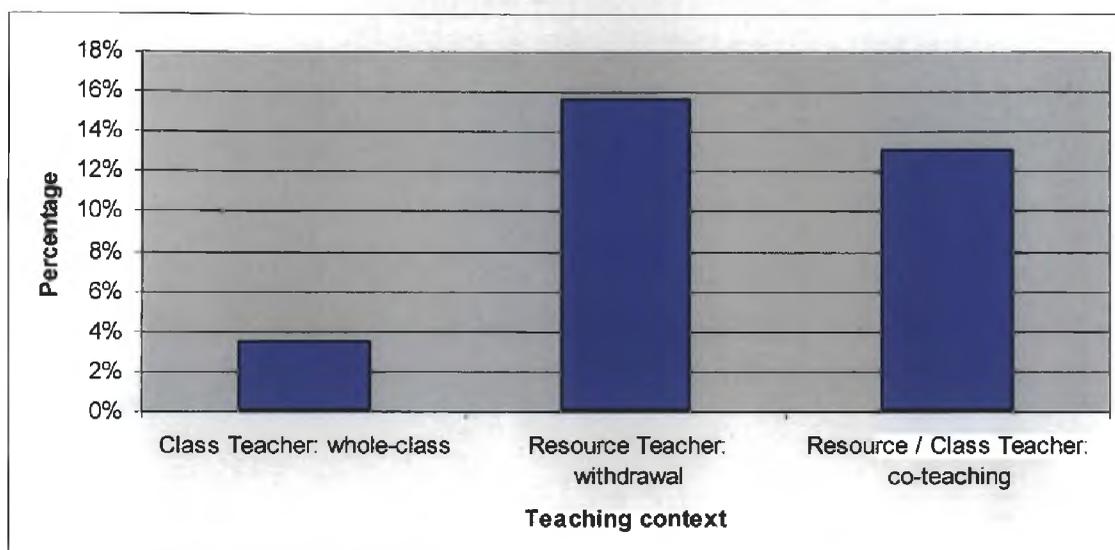
teachers' mediated talk to their constructions of inclusive practice. Regarding the reviewed research on pedagogy and practices for teaching children with SEN in mainstream settings which variously advocates targeted intervention involving direct teaching approaches (Dowker, 2001; Cass et al., 2003; Witzel et al., 2003; Johnson and McDonnell, 2004), constructivist methods (Stockall and Gartin, 2002; Flem et al., 2004) and connective pedagogy (Corbett, 2001a, 2001b), this enquiry highlights the importance of teachers' communicative routines and particularly their mediated talk regardless of approach.

Variations in the frequency of teacher mediated talk essential to the intentional learning of children with SEN were evident in different teaching-learning contexts across the mainstream setting. Links between teachers' use of mediated talk and the teaching-learning context are discussed in the following section.

MEDIATED TALK AND THE TEACHING-LEARNING CONTEXT

While mediated talk was evident in the communicative routines of all teachers, analysis of their verbal interactions revealed a potentially significant difference between resource and class teachers in their use of talk to mediate learning (see Figure 9.1, p. 3). A One-way ANOVA provides evidence for this, $F(2, 39) = 29.149$, $p < .001$. Although the homogeneity of variance statistic ($p = .009$) indicates a lack of homogeneity of variance between the two groups and so raises issues about the validity of the statistical significance of the finding, from Figure 9.1, it is evident that resource teachers were more frequent in their use of mediated talk than class teachers. In the lessons for which the systematic observation schedule was used, sixteen percent of the total of all resource teachers' talk was designed to mediate learning in contrast to only three percent of the total of all class teachers' talk. Furthermore, although the systematic observation schedule in this enquiry was used during only three sessions of co-teaching, quantitative data reveals a similarly high frequency of teachers' mediated talk in withdrawal and co-teaching contexts in comparison with whole-class teaching, as indicated in Figure 9.4 overleaf. Co-teaching observations focused on teacher interactions with the group including the child with SEN being tracked; two sessions involved a resource teacher and one involved a class teacher.

Figure 9.4: Mediated talk as a percentage of all verbal interactions engaged in by class teachers in whole-class teaching context, by resource teachers in withdrawal context and by teachers in co-teaching context



Using mediated talk to facilitate learning is within the pedagogical repertoire of class teachers. However, qualitative data revealed that the necessity for class teachers to use mediated talk appeared limited for two interlinked reasons. Firstly, the predominance of factual and closed questions asked by teachers supports the expectation of correct responses. Myhill (2006) attributes the “tendency towards more factual questioning” to teachers feeling “under pressure to cover teaching objectives and to achieve pre-specified goals” associated with “curriculum delivery” (p. 29). Whether such an attribution applies, teacher dominated question and answer sessions with a high frequency of factual and closed questions inhibits the mediated talk essential to learning for children with SEN. Secondly, in the majority of cases, children who were called upon by the class teacher to respond or contribute were the ones most likely to do so correctly and appropriately. Furthermore, a pattern was evident in class teachers’ handling of incorrect responses and misconceptions. In instances where the class teacher was surprised at the child who was incorrect or confused, mediated talk was used to probe, rephrase the question and cue to elicit the correct response. In other instances, the question was repeated verbatim for another child to respond and in some cases, the first

child was re-questioned to repeat the correct answer. In contrast, as all resource teachers' interactions involved children with SEN, the frequency of incorrect responses and therefore opportunities to clarify misconceptions was higher, increasing the need for mediated talk.

Despite the low frequency, as indicated in Figure 9.3, one third of all class teachers' mediated talk was directed at the children with SEN being tracked in the enquiry and generally occurred when the class teacher was working one-to-one with the child with SEN. Class teachers' use of mediated talk to facilitate learning of all children, including the child with SEN, is evident in the extract below relating to an Irish lesson; having reminded the children that they "were talking about action words last week", Breda mimed a number of actions which were imitated by the children and then individuals were called upon by name or gesture to identify the action, giving rise to the following interactive sequence:

Breda: Tá tú ag ... (*rubs eyes*)

Child 1: Tá tú ag caoineadh.

Breda: Tá tú ag ... (*laughs*)

Child 2: Tá tú ag athás.

Breda: Action words. Not feeling words. Tá tú ag g... (*laughs*)

Child 3: Tá tú ag gáire.

Breda: Ag gáire. Melanie?

Child 2: Tá tú ag gáire.

Breda: Tá tú ag ... (*mimes fishing*)

Lisa (child with SEN): Tá tú ag catchn a big shark (*shouts out of turn*)

Breda: Maybe not a big shark. Gach duine, bígí ag iascaireacht. Ag iascaireacht. Tá tú ag ...

Class chorus: Tá tú ag iascaireacht.

Breda: Tá tú ag ... (*mimes fishing*)

Child 5: Tá tú ag iascaireacht.

Breda: Tá tú ag ... (*repeats fishing mime*)

Child 6: Tá tú ag iascaireacht.

Breda: Lisa, tá tú ag ...

Lisa: Tá tú ag ias, ag ias, ag ...

Breda: ias cai reacht (*claps each syllable*)

Lisa: iascaireacht, tá tú ag iascaireacht.

Breda: You are ... (*rubs eyes*)

Child 1: You are crying.

Breda: You are ... (*laughs*)

Child 2: You are feel happy.

Breda: Action words. Not feeling words. You are l... (*laughs*)

Child 3: You are laughing.

Breda: Laughing. Melanie?

Child 2: You are laughing.

Breda: You are ... (*mimes fishing*)

Lisa (child with SEN): You are catchn a big shark (*shouts out of turn*)

Breda: Maybe not a big shark. Everyone, pretend to fish. Fishing. You are ...

Class chorus: You are fishing.

Breda: You are ... (*mimes fishing*)

Child 5: You are fishing.

Breda: You are ... (*repeats fishing mime*)

Child 6: You are fishing.

Breda: Lisa, you are ...

Lisa: You are fi, fi, f ...

Breda: fish ing (*claps each syllable of word*)

Lisa: fishing, you are fishing.

Breda: Ceann nua. Tá tú ag drea pa dói reacht (*mimes climbing and then claps each syllable when sounding word*)

Class chorus: Tá tú ag drea pa dói reacht.

Breda: A new one. You are climb ing (*mimes climbing and then claps each syllable when sounding word*)

Class chorus: You are climbing.

Breda repeats this action for a choral response a number of times, building their fluency before calling on individuals to respond. Then roles are reversed and children are selected to mime an act and call on a friend to identify the action. (FNRR.CT2)

The frequency of class teachers' mediated talk in this enquiry is relatively consistent with the use of "cued elicitation" in the discourse of class teachers reported by Myhill (2006, p. 29) which totalled six percent of all verbal interactions. To the extent that cued elicitation was the term given by Myhill (2006) to follow-up questions designed to cue, prompt and probe the elicitation of a particular response, it mirrors the category of mediated talk in this enquiry. Similarly, the frequencies of resource teachers' mediated talk during withdrawal sessions and teachers' mediated talk during co-teaching are consistent with findings on class teachers' verbal interactions when teaching children in groups within the class (Gillies, 2006). Defining "mediating behaviours" as paraphrasing to assist understanding, prompting and questioning in a tentative manner to promote thought (p. 279), Gillies (2006) reports that teachers who incorporated cooperative learning groups in their classrooms engaged in more mediated-learning interactions (18.2%) than teachers who implemented small-group work (12.5%). Although arguing that the "structure and direction" of cooperative learning groups which is lacking in small-group work (p. 284) contributes to more frequent mediated-learning behaviours, Gillies (2006) concludes that teachers' verbal interactions are affected by the organisational structure of the classroom. Within the context of previous research, findings of this enquiry support the significance of the smaller group for facilitating the mediated talk critical to intentional learning of children with SEN. Regarding inclusive practice, findings also indicate that two teachers working with smaller groups within the mainstream class can create the conditions necessary to facilitate teachers' use of mediated talk.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, resolution of tensions associated with planning curriculum for the class grouping that includes children with SEN by prioritising the

intentional learning of children with SEN. While resource teachers were more frequent in their use of mediated talk than class teachers, the organisational structure of the teaching-learning context was associated with the frequency of mediated talk. As such, smaller groups withdrawn to the resource room or co-taught within the mainstream class facilitated teachers' use of mediated talk.

While mediating prompts and cues were a feature of class teachers' practice, the proportion directed to the child with SEN in any given lesson within the context of the mainstream class was inevitably substantially less than those provided by the resource teacher working with small groups and individuals, or by the co-teacher working with smaller groups in the mainstream class. The persistent dilemma for class teachers is the challenge of addressing individual needs in a classroom situation. Although dilemmatic for class teachers, the details of how all teachers manage this dilemma are of significance for inclusion as it crystallizes round the tensions associated with addressing individual differences, while nurturing the potential of all and with variations in teachers' responsibilities and knowledge. In practice, class teachers resolve the dilemma by prioritising the needs of the majority. In these circumstances, resource teachers, precisely because of their knowledge of learning, could have a role in sustaining focus and maintaining pace by mediating the learning experiences for the children with SEN in the mainstream class. It is also possible from a professional development perspective, through teacher collaboration, that teachers' pedagogical repertoire is more likely to be enhanced reinforcing the benefits of co-teaching (this is elaborated under the theme of coherence-fragmentation, which is presented in Chapter Eleven). Through their involvement in co-teaching, this role was undertaken to an extent by two resource teachers in the enquiry.

This chapter on teachers' communicative routines has focused on the substance of the dialogic exchanges that facilitate learning and contribute to inclusive teaching. The context that gives rise to communicative routines is inextricably linked to the needs of learners, curriculum content, teaching methods, the teaching-learning environment and the expertise of the teacher. The appropriateness of communicative routines to addressing needs of individual learners relates to that aspect of attunement which incorporates the considered selection of curriculum and method to match the needs and

CHAPTER TEN

ATTUNEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Evoking metaphor in order to convey more vividly and to structure understanding (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), if communicative routines are the fortified centre of the web of teachers' constructions of inclusive practices, attunement is the spiral of threads that maintains the orb of that web intact. The focus of this chapter is on the theme of attunement in resource and class teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusion.

Regarding human development, the emergence of attachment is one of the milestones in the first year of life. Apart from increasing evidence to suggest that attachment is a strong evolutionary adaptive survival mechanism, a persuasive research base supports the shaping influence of early interactions with attachment figures on children's continuing development, particularly in relation to cognition, social skills and a sense of self¹. Attachment theory and specifically, ethological theory of attachment (Bowlby, 1958, 1969, 1973) emphasises the reciprocal nature of the attachment process, the active role in formation of attachment played by the infant's early social signalling systems, the mutual bonding of partners, and the perspective of attachment as a relationship rather than behaviours of either infant or carer (Bowlby, 1973; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters and Wall, 1978; Sroufe, 2002; Thompson, 2006). A transactional aspect of attachment theory (Bell, 1968; Sameroff and Chandler, 1975) stresses the role played by the child in constructing his or her experiences by selecting activities but more significantly, by the influence his or her behaviour has on carers. Extending beyond one-way effects of basic interactions, the concept of transaction is concerned with the changes in one partner as a result of the other's behaviour which influence the partner's behaviour and are then fed back, transformed, to the other (Oates, 1994). For the purposes of this enquiry, the term attunement has been coined to capture the essence of

¹ For research on links between secure attachment and cognitive development see Matas, Arend and Sroufe (1978) and Stams, Juffer and van IJzendoorn (2002, cited in Hetherington, Parke, Gauvain and Otis Locke, 2006); for research on attachment and social development see Thompson (2006), Carlson, Sroufe and Egeland (2004) and Schneider, Atkinson and Tardif (2001); for research on attachment and sense of self see Harter (2006) and Thompson (2006).

the transactional nature of interactions characteristic of attachment theory and evident in the dynamics of teacher-learner relationships. As such, supported conceptually by attachment theory, attunement refers to the mutually transformative reciprocal interactions among teachers and learners in teaching-learning episodes. Such attunement involves a degree of 'mirroring' whereby the teaching-learning dance routines are shaped by both parties, while the degree of reciprocity is determined by the 'reign' kept on the interactions by the teacher.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, responsiveness to individual needs emerged as one of a number of key teaching and learning approaches to facilitate inclusion in teachers' intentions regarding their pedagogical routines. Responsiveness was manifest as individualisation in resource teachers' intentions and differentiation in class teachers' intentions. However, it was only as a result of prolonged observation and detailed analysis of practice that the prevalence of mutually transformative reciprocal interactions characterising the nature of teacher-learner dynamics arising from teachers' responsiveness was revealed, leading to the prominence of attunement as the second of three central themes of teachers' constructions of inclusive practice. Drawing on qualitative data and supported by the case studies, the first section of this chapter focuses on attuning pedagogy to connect with learners' needs. This section presents an analysis of teachers' selection and sequencing of learning experiences, specifically designed to take account of learners' interests, abilities, learning styles and needs for the purpose of promoting learning, as a prerequisite to attunement. The transactional dynamics of attunement and the deliberate promotion of learning form the substance of the second section, while analysis of the links between attunement and teachers' explicit and reflexive thinking about learning is the focus of the final section.

ATTUNING PEDAGOGY TO CONNECT WITH LEARNERS' NEEDS

As reported in Chapter Seven, in discussing their selection of curriculum content and approaches to teaching for inclusion, consideration of children's individual needs, interests, existing knowledge and experience featured strongly in teachers' pedagogical intentions. Such emphasis on responsiveness to learners' needs is hardly surprising since one of the key principles of the Primary School Curriculum relates to "celebrating the

uniqueness of the child” (Government of Ireland, 1999, p. 8) and has a range of associated pedagogical principles. Observation of practice revealed that teachers were judicious in their selecting, structuring and sequencing of learning experiences. More specifically, at the level of the learning activity, they were judicious in their focus on content, skills and concepts, in their selection of teaching approaches and resources, and in their organisation and management of the learning context. Resonating with research on the multifaceted nature of pedagogy which highlights interactions between pedagogical and learning processes (Alexander, 2000; Fischer and Bidell, 2006; Tomlinson, 2008), teachers’ decision making was judicious precisely because it was determined by their knowledge of the learning processes, developmental levels, abilities, interests, needs and learning styles of their learners.

Given the extent of variation in learning processes and developmental levels among children in mainstream classes, the practice of pitching and pacing the learning activities to connect with all learners was highly complex and problematic for class teachers. Although differentiation to accommodate needs of the child with SEN emerged in class teachers’ pedagogical intentions as reported in Chapter Seven, in practice, they included all children by attuning the learning activities to the varied conceptual levels and learning processes represented within the class. Ann’s maths lesson with sixth class, focusing on area, is representative of class teachers’ practice of attuning the learning activities to facilitate the learning of all. In Ann’s class of twenty-eight, four of the five children² allocated additional support were grouped on the basis of similar needs and were withdrawn for daily maths support at a time coinciding with the class maths lesson. However, as Fiona’s conceptual understanding was less developed than this group of four, she remained in the class “doing a separate programme ... on the same topic but working at a way lower ... level” (CT1.12, p. 2) generally corresponding to “second class maths” (CT1.4, p. 1).

Following oral questioning on number facts, the first activity the children were engaged in involved estimating the area of regular shapes, measuring their length and width, and calculating the area and perimeter. Through questioning and demonstration,

² These four children scored below the tenth but above the second percentile on standardised assessments of mathematics and were considered to have learning support needs in contrast to Fiona who had Mild GLD and Cornelia de Lange syndrome (Case Study One, Appendix V).

Ann modelled the processes of estimation, measurement and calculation of one example as a scaffold to the children who then worked independently on this task. As a third activity, they were required to use two methods to find the area of irregular shapes, where measurements for lengths of a number of sides were provided and had to be used to calculate lengths of at least two sides of each shape. As this was a 'figure it out for yourselves' activity, Ann circulated and was in a position to question, prompt and cue as necessary while following the activity, two children were called upon to calculate the area of two of these irregular shapes on the chalkboard as a demonstration and for the purposes of correction. The second learning activity involved Ann requesting the children to construct a regular shape of a given area independently, the areas being twelve, sixteen and twenty centimetres squared respectively. As the open-ended nature of this question allowed a number of correct responses, the children were then invited to pair with a partner and share their choice of measurements. Apart from enabling them to compare choices and recognise the possibility of alternatives, through social interaction, incorrect measurements were renegotiated to produce accurate results. Ann's pitching of these learning activities, her questioning and modelling of estimation, measurement and calculation, her selection and use of resources, and her incorporation of closed and open questions, of individual and pair activities, and of activities that required active participation of the children constitute the visible or 'sight-structures' of teaching activities, central to the 'choreographies of teaching' identified by Oser and Baeriswyl (2001). Acknowledging the intimate connection between teaching and learning, Chomsky (1957) distinguishes between teaching activities as the surface structure of teaching and learners' learning processes as the deep structure of teaching. To the extent that Ann's teaching activities connected with the inner learning processes of the learners in ways that brought about the intended learning outcomes, it can be claimed that her teaching was attuned to their needs.

In contrast to the conceptual level at which the class was operating and to their maths lesson which involved three core activities with one including pair work, Fiona was engaged in two activities on a one-to-one with either the SNA or the teacher. The first was a reinforcement activity with the SNA and involved pasting templates of squares and rectangles with cut-out square centimetres and then counting the total to

find the area and record it in the centre of the tessellation. The second activity was directed by the teacher and focused on new learning which involved the use of the cut-out square centimetres to construct tessellations based on measurements initially given by teacher and later by SNA. Along with attuning the activities on the topic of area to connect with Fiona's developmental level and needs, communicative routines were integral to facilitating her learning. These routines are characterised by teacher directions and closed questions with some prompts and cues, as the following extract from the field notes reveals:

As indicated in her interview, once she had the class settled into an activity, Ann turned her attention to Fiona. On approaching Fiona and Mairéad, the SNA, Ann asked "how are we getting on here?" and Mairéad responded that Fiona was "doing a great job." Selecting one of three covered templates on the desk, Ann asked Fiona what its area was. Fiona proceeded to count out each of the centimetre squares and as she tracked her finger across the third row, she noticed her written record of the area in the centre, discontinued counting and answered "fifteen." Ann pointed to the 'cm²' and asked "fifteen what?" to which Fiona responded "fifteen centimetres." At a deliberate pace, Ann called out "fifteen centimetres squared" with an emphasis on 'squared', and she invited Fiona to chorus this with her by repeating "fifteen" with raised intonation. Following the comment of "well done" Ann informed Fiona that she was now going to make her own shapes, directed her to "use the squares to make a shape that's four centimetres by two centimetres" and put a post-it on the desk beside Fiona with '4cm X 2cm' written on it. Fiona proceeded by pasting three squares in one row and three squares in the second row. However, as she was about to place a square in a third row, Ann drew her attention to the post-it and asked "what length, look at the length of the sides?" Fiona may have been repeating the pattern of the "fifteen centimetre squared" shape she had been asked the area of immediately prior to this activity and she got flustered at the request to look at the post-it. Pointing at the '4cm' Ann asked "what's that number?" and when Fiona correctly responded, finger-pointing across the first row Ann asked "so how many squares should be here?" to which Fiona again correctly responded "another one." Having completed the first row, Fiona then pointed to the gap underneath in the second row, looked uncertainly at Ann saying "one goes there" and following Ann's nod, pasted the final square. Noticing that sound levels in the class were rising, Ann requested those children who had completed the assigned task, to "quietly" draw shapes of two by two, three by three, four by four, five by five and so forth and to record the area, and she indicated that she would be "ready to move on" with them "in a few moments." Ann refocused her attention on Fiona, directing her to record the measurements from the post-it underneath the corresponding shape she had pasted into her copy. When Fiona had completed this, Ann requested her to "count the area, what's the area?" Fiona proceeded to count each square arriving at the total of eight which Ann

directed her to record after the '4cm X 2cm' measurements. Ann took the biro and adding in the squared symbol, called out "eight centimetres squared." She then asked was "there a quicker way to get eight centimetres squared" and when a response was not forthcoming, she asked "what about counting up in fours? Do you remember counting up in fours?" Then, by way of wrapping up with Fiona she said "Right, we'll come back to this again" and handing a set of post-its with further measurements to the SNA, asked her to "go through as many as she can but try and get her to count up in twos, fives and threes for the totals, for the area" and before leaving Fiona and SNA to continue, she added that she would "be back over to check" progress. Before drawing the lesson to a close, Ann did get to return, to cast her eye over the shapes constructed and the measures and areas recorded. (FNRR.CT1)

Ann attuned the learning activities in terms of conceptual level, teaching methods and resources, to meet the needs of the child with SEN. Such attuning resonates with a perspective on pedagogy for learners with SEN prevalent in the literature that supports common pedagogical principles and generic teaching strategies attuned to difference by degrees of deliberateness, attention and intensity of teaching (Dyson and Hick, 2005; Fletcher-Campbell, 2005; Lewis and Norwich, 2005; Portwood, 2005; Reid, 2005; Norwich and Lewis, 2007). However, the above extract also reveals that at a critical point in Fiona's learning about the concept of area, Ann had to withdraw from the teaching-learning episode to return to the remainder of the class, interrupting the pace of learning for Fiona. Documenting each teacher's return to the learning needs of the majority evoked reflection on my practice as a class teacher, leading to the acknowledgement that this was a regular occurrence and one with which most teachers in the Irish context would readily identify. In response to the summary of her practice, Ann's attribution of compromise to the needs of majority and a crowded curriculum was evident in her note that she was "conscious of short changing her (*Fiona*) and concerned" but "this is sixth class, they have to move on and there is just so much to cover each day and only so much is possible" (RS.CT1). Although requested to continue in a similar vein, the SNA proceeded to join in the pasting activity and rather than allowing a wait time for Fiona to notice errors or attempt to self-correct as the class teacher had done, on anticipation of the error, she directed Fiona swiftly with comments like: "no, no, that one goes there" (FNRR.CT1). The class teacher's responsiveness to Fiona, made possible by her knowledge of pedagogical principles, curriculum and

teaching methods along with her understanding of the child's needs, was not replicated by the SNA. Reflecting understanding of the teaching-learning encounter located more in the tradition of 'right answers', the SNA sought to control the learning episode to ensure a correct outcome. As such, the requirement for Fiona to think through the activity was as diminished as the possibility of intentional learning from the experience was thwarted. Apart from short-circuiting the learning, such episodes also draw attention to the possible conflicts of interest between teachers' intentions and the SNA's sense of efficacy 'to help' the learner and bring her or him up to speed with the class.

Paradoxically, although differentiation was identified by teachers as a means of facilitating inclusion, the inclusive element of one child working exclusively with two adults and being the only child in the class not involved in learning activities with peers is difficult to discern. Given the extent of conceptual variation in the learning activities undertaken by Fiona and those undertaken by the class, her programme involves more than a mere adaptation of curriculum and modification of instructional approaches and resources, two criteria of inclusion proposed by many of its advocates (Sailor et al., 1991; Jorgensen, 1996; Lipsky and Gartner, 1996; Schaffner and Buswell, 1996; Thousand et al., 1996; Holdsworth, 2005). Given the variation in cognitive developmental levels, it is difficult to envisage how the requirement, specified in the Warnock Report (Department of Education and Science, 1978) (England and Wales), of 'joint participation' in education programmes carefully designed to ensure that all children benefit, could have been achieved in this context. Evidently, conceptual differentiation may be necessary to ensure the child with SEN has access to 'individually relevant learning', an access implied by principles of inclusion, safeguarded in legislation in many countries and advocated in the literature (Stainback et al., 1996; Ryndak et al., 2000; Norwich and Kelly, 2005). However, in practice and representative of a large portion of the learning experiences of children with SEN in this enquiry, teaching of this individually relevant programme in maths runs parallel to and is separate from the context of class teaching. As such, the dual-track system to including children with SEN, conveyed in the analysis of teachers' intentions in Chapters Six and Seven, appears unavoidable in their constructions of practice.

In comparison with their class teacher counterparts, responsiveness to individual needs was more straightforward in practice for resource teachers. As claimed in Chapter Seven, individualisation in their responsiveness to learners' needs was characteristic of resource teachers' pedagogical intentions precisely because they considered each child on their 'caseload' in isolation, on a case by case basis in a fashion somewhat reminiscent of the psycho-medical model of teaching children with SEN. Such individualisation facilitated their attuning of learning activities to address each learner's needs, as observations of practice revealed a very strong connection between resource teachers' selection of content and teaching approaches and the learning processes of the child with SEN. The following extract from the field notes relating to Eilish's use of social story³ to teach the social skill of being a good loser to Colm with Asperger's syndrome, from fourth class, is representative of resource teachers' attuning of learning experiences to connect with the learning processes and needs of learners with SEN. As Colm was given to aggressive outbursts and temper tantrums and could become "very physical" (CT3.6, p. 2) when not getting his own way, he was avoided by peers and socially isolated. A priority learning need on his IEP focused on social interaction and relating appropriately with peers and people in school, and previous social stories concentrated on turn-taking, lining up, being caught in a game of chasing, and sharing and receiving a compliment. The extract details the teaching and learning which followed his resource teacher's request to find the story about being a good loser that they had started earlier in the week.

Leafing through the pages of his social story copy, Colm called out the titles and pausing on 'Lining up', he commented that he hated being "stuck behind Jodi". In response to Eilish's repetition of this story's substance that "people had to take their place and except for first and last, everyone was in front of someone and behind someone and people had to try to walk to the line" because "pushing and shoving can cause accidents and people can get hurt", Colm was adamant in

³ The social story was devised by Gray in response to the well-documented need explicitly to teach all aspects of social interaction and communication to children with ASD (Grandin, 1995; Lawson, 2001; Jordan, 2005). It involves both child and teacher describing social situations of relevance to the child in terms of appropriate social cues, anticipated actions and information on what is occurring and why. Balanced use of descriptive, perspective, directive and control sentence types in creating the story is recommended. Descriptive sentences define where a situation occurs, those involved, what they are doing and why; perspective sentences describe and explain the reactions and feelings of others in a given situation; directive sentences state what the child is expected to do or say; and control sentences focus on strategies to help the child remember what to do or say. A ratio of one directive and/or control sentence for every two to five descriptive and perspective sentences is recommended.

his clarification that he didn't mind being "a few behind" but hated being "right behind Jodi in the line and right in front of Jodi in the line cause Jodi smells". Ignoring this, Eilish encouraged him to "hurry and find the page" so they could finish the story. Following location of the correct page, Eilish asked Colm what the story was called and then directed him to read what had been written so far. With ease, Colm read as follows: "Sometimes we play games in school. We play games in PE, in lessons and in the yard. Games are fun and everyone tries hard to win. But not everyone can win. So some people win and some people lose. It's only a game. It doesn't matter who wins. It is OK to lose". Praising him for reading "so clearly", Eilish asked him to think of an ending and elaborated with "what would you say to someone who wins?" His response was to ask: "Is this pretending or is this real?" Eilish confirmed the reality stating that "this is what you would really say to someone else who wins ... when Paul comes down later to play 'snakes and ladders' if he wins, this is what you would really say if I win or if he wins." At the suggestion of someone else winning, Colm got agitated, thumped his fists on the desk and raising his voice, called out that he didn't "want anyone else to win". Returning to the story and lowering her voice, Eilish quietly reasoned that games are fun, not everyone can win, you can't spoil the game and you have to keep the game fun, and allowing some time for Colm to process this, she then re-questioned about what he might say to the winner. At this, Colm stood out of his seat with such force that it fell over and he said loudly that he wasn't picking Paul or any one else to play the game. Again, in a calm voice Eilish reasoned that he couldn't play 'snakes and ladders' on his own, it would be no fun and he needed other people to play. She then mentioned Beckham, his favourite footballer and commented that Beckham's team didn't always win but sometimes lost, she reiterated that it was OK for Beckham's team to lose, referred to Colm's visit to Old Trafford and asked if he noticed what the players did at the end of the game. Listening to this talk, Colm fixed the seat, sat down and repeated "at the end of the game" in a questioning tone and proceeded to recall some details of the visit. Eilish listened, nodded and made affirming facial expressions. When he finished, Eilish asked the question again and added the prompt of "... or games on the TV, what do you see the players doing?" His response of swapping jerseys and shaking hands met with affirmation and the question of what the players say to each other when shaking hands. Colm duly produced a list of phrases such as hard luck, poor you, better luck next time. Praising these as comments that winners would say to the losers, Eilish asked what the losers might say to the winners. When Colm responded with "we'll get you next time", Eilish suggested that they might say "congratulations". Colm laughed at this and said: "no one says that. They'd say lucky you. That's what I'd say ...". Quick to zone on the 'lucky you' phrase, Eilish repeated it a number of times, expressed approval that it was "a good one" and suggested that they use it to end the story. Prompting with the statement "when someone else wins I'll say", Colm added "lucky you" and with his agreement, Eilish scribed this sentence. She directed Colm to read the complete story and then asked what he'd say when someone else wins. Following this, Eilish divided a set of six mini cards displaying emotions with terms between the two of them and each had to

display the emotion with the appropriate facial expression and make a sentence about that emotion. When Eilish came to one of her three cards with a smiley face and the term 'happy', she conveyed a happy expression with a smile and said "I felt happy when I said lucky you to the person who won the game of snakes and ladders". Once each had taken three turns, the cards were swapped and this time, as each had to recall the expression made and sentence given by the other, when Colm came to 'happy' he had an opportunity to match expression with comment while reinforcing the notion of praising the winner. Following questions to recap on what to say when someone else wins, the next learning activity involved playing snap with a deck of word cards for the purposes of generating a winner and a loser and praising accordingly. Colm won the first game and Eilish modelled the comment of "lucky you, well done". He also won the second game. When Eilish won the third game, although Colm said "lucky you" in a monotone, he pushed the cards backwards and forwards on the desk, said he was tired of the game and reminded Eilish that he had to find a photo for the cover of his project⁴. (FNRR.RT3)

Evident in the above extract is teaching that involves the intricate interweaving of the teacher's knowledge of the learner's developmental level, social needs, interests and previous experiences with her knowledge of methods of teaching towards acquisition of the social skill and containing the negative emotions of the learner, to deliberately promote learning. Apart from illustrating the resource teacher's proficiency at attuning the learning experience to address the needs and to connect with the learning processes of the child with SEN, the extract also illustrates that maintaining the consistency and momentum of the learning experience requires intense one-to-one interaction. However, the teaching context in which such interaction is possible constitutes an artificially privileged one for class teachers. Although necessary in terms of working towards achievement of the learning outcome, it is difficult to envisage how the class teacher could attune the learning experience similarly within the context of teaching all children in the class. Regarding the specificity of focus on certain social

⁴ As revealed in Case Study Three (Appendix V), on subsequent visits to the school Colm was observed consolidating this skill with a group of peers invited to join him in the resource room and generalising the social skills to other locations beyond the resource room. He accepted other children being called ahead of him to read or answer questions in class, but would prefix his contribution with a comment such as "I'm the fifth one to read". At the end of the school year, both class and resource teacher expressed the view that socially, Colm had made a significant improvement, he had joined the Scouts and managed to go on a two-night stay and would be heading to Scotland for five nights in August, which was "great progress"; he was a much happier child, was relating better to his peers and was much more settled in the class; outbursts were very infrequent and the class teacher could now include competitive games in PE where previously the focus had to be on skills and drills and obstacles courses.

skills, this is representative of the necessity to focus on learning that is of high personal relevance and a developmental priority for the child with SEN but that may be meaningless to their class peers. Once again, the pursuit of individually relevant learning is influenced by context and can imply parallel and separate programmes. Consistent with research indicating that learners with SEN require the additional academic support provided in the resource room (Marston, 1996; Manset and Semmel, 1997; Baxter et al., 2002; Magiera and Zigmond, 2005), the withdrawal context supporting the intensity of teaching evident in the selected vignette brings into sharp focus the limits of inclusion juxtaposed with the benefits of withdrawal in certain teaching arrangements for learners with SEN. This, in turn, highlights the need for resource teachers to work closely with class teachers to create more porous boundaries between mainstream and withdrawal settings. Such collaboration presents challenges to teachers in terms of sharing and interfacing their expertise and to schools in so far as dedicated time is secured to pursue collaborative activity; these challenges are further elaborated under the theme of coherence-fragmentation in Chapter Eleven while policy implications are discussed in Chapter Twelve.

Investigating exceptions, checking the meaning of outliers is a recognised element of qualitative enquiry (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Sieber, 1976; Miles and Huberman, 1994). An exception which came to light during the interview with a class teacher and one which I would have preferred to ignore, related to an arrangement for teaching maths to Paul, a thirteen year old with Mod GLD from sixth class. His was a multi-grade two teacher school and every afternoon, following release of the junior and senior infants, Paul joined múinteoir Gráinne with her first and second class of seven children ranging from six to eight years of age. Apart from its seeming 'political incorrectness', such an arrangement does not appear in any analysis of inclusive practices in schools, nor might it be countenanced by advocates of inclusion.

Despite expectations to the contrary, observation revealed rewarding and inclusive teaching-learning experiences. The learning context, with eight children and an adult seated in a group round desks clustered together, was akin to a large family completing homework under their mother's guidance at the kitchen table. Children throughout the school were either siblings and/or cousins and their banter along with

teachers' rapport contributed to a warm, friendly and relaxed atmosphere in both senior and junior rooms. However, it was only in the junior room that Paul vocalized to engage in this banter by responding to and initiating verbal exchanges with the other children and teacher. Learning experiences were attuned to his level and he actively participated in buying and selling at the class shop, exchanging coins with peers, counting and sorting cubes in bundles of tens and units, matching numbers to given quantities up to twenty, reading time on the hour from an analogue and digital clock, making a timetable of his favourite TV programmes and playing group games based on number recognition, sequencing and basic number facts⁵. Contrastingly, observations in the senior room revealed that, seated beside the window he spent much time gazing out, some time looking at other children contributing and responding, and very little time looking at the teacher unless called upon, while verbal interactions with the other children were minimal. The teacher was an enthralling story-teller and had a most interactive and engaging style of teaching. However, conceptual pitching of lesson content which successfully addressed the needs of learners from third to sixth class rarely connected with Paul's developmental level and learning processes. Activity types in which he participated included holding the banner with another child while the class played tin whistles and practised marching for the St Patrick's Day parade, painting sections of a wall mural depicting 'Fionn agus na Fianna', collecting copies and workbooks, distributing pencils and materials for art and unlocking the school gate at home time.

Such activities support observations reported by Stockall and Gartin (2002) of students with SEN servicing the learning of other students. Though an exception, apart from indicating the influence of context on teachers' actions, this case further substantiates the dual-tracked nature of securing an individually relevant learning programme for the child with SEN in the mainstream school. However, further analysis of Paul's participation in the junior classroom reveals that apart from attuning the learning experiences to connect with his learning processes, other dynamics are at play. The smaller numbers, he being older than the other children although at a similar

⁵ As indicated in Case Study Eight (Appendix V), accurate counting and ability to tell time on the hour and manage money were priority learning needs for Paul which his parents were very eager he would acquire as he helped his father on the farm and his parents wanted him involved in counting the sheep on the mountain, herding cattle for milking in the morning and evening, and buying and selling cattle at the mart.

cognitive level, the junior teacher having time to establish and maintain a rapport with him during teaching-learning episodes, his need for and enjoyment of the use of concrete materials not available in the senior classroom and his ability to keep pace with the conversations of the others also contributed to Paul's learning. Not alone do such dynamics support the significance of social and environmental factors in influencing learning, they also highlight the relational aspect between learner and design of educational arrangements which seems critical to understanding SEN, but is overlooked in definitions provided in Irish legislation⁶.

Significant to this enquiry's purpose of increasing understanding of inclusive teaching in mainstream settings is teachers' practice of attuning learning experiences to connect with the developmental levels and learning processes of each learner in ways that imply acknowledgement of a continuum of inclusion. As such, teaching-learning activities that connect with the needs of the learner are the priority while the degree of inclusion they provide is secondary in teachers' constructions of inclusive practice. This resolution is consistent with the assertion that primacy be given to the provision of high-quality, appropriate education (Hegarty, 2001; Allan, 2003). Furthermore, the contradictions and dilemmas that give rise to resolution resonate with research forming the interpretive lens for this enquiry which draws on the theory of dialectics to account for the complexities and tensions associated with resolution of dilemmas endemic to inclusion (Clark et al., 1995a; Clark et al., 1995b; Clark et al., 1997; Clark et al., 1999; Dyson and Millward, 2000). Rather than directly mapping principles and ideology of inclusion to practice, the particularities of context influence the realisation of teachers' interpretations in action. As such, evidence supports a dialectical relationship between 'theory' of inclusion and the practices of teachers in this enquiry. While contradiction and complexity are acknowledged by proponents of the transformation and restructuring of schools to increase participation in learning of all students, the absence in their research of detail and analysis of teachers' practices 'at the chalk-face' to promote learning does little to shed light on the influence, form or shape of transformation and restructuring at the level of teacher actions (Dyson and Millward, 2000; Ainscow et al., 2006). A significant contribution of this enquiry is the provision of detail and analysis of

⁶ Definitions of legislation are discussed in Chapter Two.

teachers' practices to promote learning of all children. Within this context, attuning learning experiences to learners' needs in a variety of locations in the mainstream setting is a key element of teachers' inclusive practice. However, it is also evident that inclusion, as currently practised, leaves much to be desired since those with SEN are accommodated only to the extent that they can be included within the needs of the mainstream. Furthermore, such limited inclusion may be eroded by well intentioned SNAs who interrupt or subvert the pedagogical intentions of teachers. This raises implications regarding capacity building initiatives, particularly the provision of appropriately qualified personnel to safeguard the learning of all students, and to ensure inclusion is adequately addressed and sustained; these policy implications are elaborated in Chapter Twelve.

Connecting with the developmental levels and learning processes of each learner is a prerequisite of attunement. Maintaining the connection throughout the teaching-learning episode in the deliberate promotion of learning is discussed in the following section.

ATTUNEMENT: TRANSACTIONAL DYNAMICS, TRANSFORMATIONAL TEACHING-LEARNING EPISODES AND THE DELIBERATE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

Observation of practice revealed a transactional aspect of learning where teachers monitored learners' progress in their development of understanding and such monitoring had a transformative influence, manifest in modification and adaptation of teaching-learning activities; reciprocally, through participation, learning processes were continually modified in response to teaching activity and so learners' development of understanding was transformed. The transactional aspect of teacher-learner dynamics gives rise to a mutually transformative reciprocal process in teaching-learning episodes, characterising teachers' constructions of inclusive practices. To reiterate for the purposes of this enquiry, the term attunement denotes the mutually transformative reciprocal interactions among teachers and learners. Transactional teacher-learner interactions as a gateway to transformational teaching-learning episodes and central to the deliberate promotion of learning are evident in the following extract from the field

notes. Representative of teachers' practices of attunement, this extract was selected as it relates to an episode of co-teaching where the persistent dilemma for class teachers of the challenge of addressing varied needs while nurturing the potential of all, is managed by the presence of both class and resource teacher in the one room.

For teaching mathematics, this fifth class of twenty three children is divided into two ability-based groups. The same topic is covered by all, but at differentiated levels and in-class support is provided by the resource teacher who alternates with the class teacher between ability groups by topic. On this occasion the topic is fractions and Jacqueline, the resource teacher works with twelve children in the higher ability group while Nicola, the class teacher works with eleven children in the lower ability group. Variation in the cognitive levels of task requirements is striking⁷. ... On the topic of fractions, Nicola's group focuses on calculating total quantity based on a fraction of the quantity. Having calculated totals based on halves and quarters, the group is experiencing difficulty with eighths, specifically with calculating what $\frac{8}{8}$ is if $\frac{1}{8}$ is 3. To address this difficulty, Nicola passes round an A4 sheet to each child and modelling the activity, asks them to "fold it once in half, again in quarters and again in eighths ..." and then open the sheet (represents two folded spaces by four). She asks each child to count the folded spaces and building on their response, prompts with: "so each space is one ..." to which some respond "one eighth". Pointing to one folded space, Nicola states "this is one eighth" and then asks each child in turn to point out a given number of eighths and call it out to the group, and directs the group to check and call "correct" or "re-count". Once every child has taken a turn, Nicola asks "if each $\frac{1}{8}$ had 3 squares of chocolate on it, how would you find out what $\frac{8}{8}$ had?" Most children immediately start to count up in threes using the folded spaces but after twelve, the sound tapers out and two continue to arrive at twenty-four. Kathleen, the child with SEN being tracked appears confused and says "I don't get it teacher. If it's eighth why are they going up it in threes?" Swiftly, one of the successful counters offers the explanation that "it's like crackers ... you open the packet ... there's three crackers in each part of the packet". Nicola affirms and builds on this response and explaining that the crackers might get squashed and broken if they were all on top of one another, returns to the folded spaces on the A4 sheet and asks

⁷ For example, during warm-up mental activities, children in the higher group were given the numbers 25, 9, 8, 11 and 2 and asked to perform any combination of addition, subtraction, multiplication or division using all of the numbers once to come up with a total of 301. As the children were speedy and accurate, they had the opportunity to complete a number of such examples. In contrast, children in the lower ability group were given a similar task but with single-digit numbers of 1, 3, 5, 4 and 7 to arrive at a total of 29. As they tended to work with the sequence in which the numbers were given and relied on fingers, ruler or hundred-square for calculating, the process took longer and although some were correct in the calculations they provided, their overall responses were incorrect. Following individual incorrect responses, Nicola recorded the numbers on the board and working collectively with the group, she ticked off each as it was used and recorded the sequence of calculations started by one child and continued by the next, as a scaffold to the children working correctly with the remaining numbers and while this approach led to the correct response, the children just got to complete this one example.

“what did we fold this into?” To Kathleen’s correct response, Nicola adds that “if this is the packet of crackers divided into eighths and if we put three crackers in each part of the packet, in each eighth” and then directs Kathleen to draw three lines for crackers in the first one and asks “how many go in the next one?” Kathleen correctly responds and proceeds to draw three lines in the second ‘eighth’ space. Again, Nicola affirms and pointing to the first eighth asks “how many in this one eighth” and when Kathleen provides the correct number, Nicola emphatically states “one eighth has three” and asks Kathleen to say this. Nicola then repeats it after her and pointing to the second space, proceeds to add “two eighths has” and raising her intonation, both she and Kathleen say “six” and Nicola continues with “three eighths has ...” and raising intonation higher again, Kathleen, who’s adding in the three lines to the third space responds “nine”. Kathleen continues to add three lines in each space and correctly counts and calls up to “eight eighths has twenty four.” Meantime, the other children have inserted the numbers and one, who after adding 12, continues in two’s with 14, 16, 18, 20, but runs out of spaces before reaching 24, asks “Didn’t get 24 ... what?” Nicola asks him to go back to three and check that he’s counting up in three’s each time he moves to the next eighth. Following this direction, he spots and corrects the error and lets Nicola know that “I done wrong after 12.” ... In contrast, children in the higher ability group use the terminology and identify numerators and denominators. Jacqueline records $\frac{3}{2}$ on the board and asks “what type of fraction is this?” When only four hands go up, Jacqueline adds $\frac{5}{2}$, $\frac{7}{5}$ and $\frac{4}{3}$ to the board with the reminder that they had the name for these fractions yesterday. More hands go up and Jacqueline calls on one who responds correctly. She then asks “Why is it called an improper fraction?” and calls on another who doesn’t have his hand raised. In response to his claim that he forgets, Jacqueline adds $\frac{1}{2}$ to the board, directs him to look at the numerators and denominators of all the fractions on the board and asks him “what’s the difference between this $\frac{1}{2}$ and all the others?” He then correctly explains an improper fraction. This part of the lesson continues with Jacqueline asking the children to identify and explain mixed number fractions and then they work on a series of exercises involving conversion of improper fractions to mixed number fractions. (FNRR.Co-t.RT6 and CT6)

Regarding this selected vignette, in contextualising the learning as particular teaching moments emerge, Nicola internalises the calculation difficulties being experienced by the children which has a transformative influence on her practice in so far as in a flexible fashion, she comes up with a series of ideas to advance learning: use of the A4 sheet for folding, the three squares of chocolate for counting and specifically for Kathleen, the idea of drawing the three lines on each fraction to represent quantity. Through engagement in the folding activity and use of counting props, the children internalise and make their own of the concept of eighths which has a transformative

impact on their learning processes. As such, teacher and learners 'internalise and make their own' in a dynamic and mutually transformative reciprocal process of action and interaction. Similarly, in contextualising the learning for her group, the transformative moments in Jacqueline's teaching arise from her insights regarding the dynamics between the learners and the teaching-learning process and relate to the recording of additional improper fractions and later, the recording of the proper fraction with the direction to look at their numerators and denominators. This holistic and flexible practice enables learners' understanding, contributing to transformation of their learning processes. As such, transformative elements are evident in the ongoing and renewed insights regarding the dynamics between the learner and the processes of teaching and learning gleaned by the teacher and the teacher's incorporation of these insights in subsequent action and interaction, and in the progressive intentional learning of the children⁸. In so far as teachers' actions in the vignette connect with and build on the understanding conveyed by the children, in a mutual and continual cycle and leading towards achievement of certain but varied learning outcomes, it is evident that teachers' attunement is central to the deliberate promotion of learning of all children, including those with SEN. To the extent that it is more mutual and reciprocal than teachers "lending their mental capacities to learners in order to support and shape learning" (Goodwin, 2001, p. 129), and then fading this calibrated support with corresponding increases in the learner's understanding, attunement is an advancement on scaffolding. In acknowledging that development occurs when concepts first learned through social interaction become internalised and made one's own, attunement resonates with reciprocal teaching (Siraj-Blatchford and Sylva, 2004); however, in recognising that

⁸ Transactional teacher-learner interactions and actions of attunement are reported throughout the case studies (including Chapter Eight), substantiating transformational teaching-learning episodes in teachers' inclusive practice (for diagrammatic examples drawn from vignettes see Case Study Three and Case Study Five, Appendix V). Specifically, extracts illustrating teachers' communicative routines in Chapter Nine and their attuning pedagogy to connect with learners' needs in the previous section of this chapter also illustrate transformative aspects of attunement in practice. For example, in the extract relating to assessment-focused questions in the communicative routines of resource teachers, the transformative aspect of attunement is evident in so far as Oonagh internalises Liam's confusion leading to her questioning sequence on the number of hundred grammes in the kilogramme combined with her pointing to draw his attention to the connection between the weights, and her pauses for him to respond; this is reciprocated with Liam's progressive transformation of learning processes evident in his articulation of the equivalence between grammes and kilogramme followed by his conversion of higher numbers of kilogrammes and their connection with the weights of certain items.

both teacher and learner ‘internalise and make their own’ in a dynamic and mutually transformative reciprocal process, attunement represents a richer, more sophisticated pedagogy than reciprocal teaching. As such, attunement provides a distinct contribution to understanding of pedagogy and inclusive practice. Furthermore, regarding the challenge and complexity of addressing the range of needs and accommodating the extent of variation in the developmental levels of all in the class, the selected vignette substantiates that attunement to advance each learner is more likely with two teachers.

As supported by the case studies, teachers’ maintenance of the connection with the learner was compromised when class teachers had to divide teaching time between groups of learners and therefore needed to switch from one individual or group to another and when there were interruptions from outside the class or resource room. There were exceptions when attunement was not in evidence in the resource room. However, the exceptions further substantiate the centrality of teachers’ attunement to the promotion learning. One such exception relates to the resource teacher’s use of the *Toe by Toe* programme to teach literacy to Patrick, a fourth class child with severe dyslexia. The programme recommends approximately twenty minutes input daily and provides instructions for the ‘coach’. Details of the teaching-learning activities related to the programme are provided in the following extract where on this occasion the focus was on syllable division, based on the exercise of dividing polynons according to the programme’s rules for syllable division⁹.

The relevant page of the manual displayed two columns with twenty-four polynons each, one shaded column with the polynons correctly divided by lines for the teacher’s use to teach syllable division and the other unshaded, for the student to draw the dividing lines with a pencil. Following the instructions for the coach, Noelle stated the rule and proceeded to talk through six examples with reference to the rule, the first three without twin consonants; for example, for the polynon ‘cran/tip/at’ Noelle explained as follows:

Noelle: So starting at the left, that’s here (*pointing at c with her biro*) and look for the first vowel, that’s /a/ and take the consonant to the right, look that’s /n/

⁹ The programme describes polynons as “words which are both polysyllabic and meaningless” while the rule for syllable division is “starting from the left, look for the first vowel, take the consonant to the right of it and divide. Twin consonants count as one letter” (Cowling and Cowling, 1997, pp. 62-63). Some examples of syllable division provided in the manual are as follows: han/pes/tot; fram/gop/dom; bras/ken/mip. An example of syllable division where twin consonants count as one letter is the following: fenn/am/an.

and divide, so the dividing line is after /n/. Now start again, well continue from the left, that's here (*pointing at t with her biro*) and look for the first vowel, that's /i/ and take the consonant to the right of it, that's, what's that one /p/ and divide so the dividing line is after /p/ and that's it.

Following her explanation of the six examples, Noelle asked Patrick to say the rule and as he stopped and started, she directed him to read the rule in the box at the top of "Column 2" and they co-read as follows: "The rule is: find the consonant after the vowel and divide. Use a pencil." Then asking if he was sure of what to do, Noelle gave the go ahead. However, the first polynon was 'plettonsig' and in applying the rule as it was written, Patrick inserted the dividing line as follows: plet/ton/sig. Noelle reminded him of the twin consonant part of the rule, referred back to the examples in the shaded column and directed him to rub out and redo. This appeared to result in further confusion as he proceeded to insert dividing lines after a series of consonants but immediately before the vowel, which only led to more correction, rubbing out and redoing. Having tried seven examples in similar fashion, Noelle called the exercise to a halt, reassuring that it takes time to learn the rules and explaining they could work on it again the following day. (FNRR.RT7)

In subsequent dialogue with Noelle and unprompted, she commented that *Toe by Toe* was not working for Patrick and proceeded to list a number of activities¹⁰ that could have helped him to understand syllable division, which were more consistent with her imaginative approach to teaching observed in other teaching-learning experiences. Her reason for not incorporating these activities was the recommendation to adhere to the programme and follow 'instructions for the coach'. Evidently, adherence to the programme inhibited the teacher's attunement, the "requisite learning functions" were not adequately brought "into play" (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 510), opportunities for learning were neither optimised nor maximised and the intended learning did not occur.

¹⁰ Deciding that it might have been less confusing to focus on one part of the rule at a time and consolidate this before introducing the double consonant part of the rule, and that he needed more involvement in the 'explanation phase' an example of one such activity proposed by Noelle involved getting Patrick to: (1) cut and fold strips of paper in three and asking him to write any consonant, vowel and consonant of his choice on the first fold, a different consonant, vowel and consonant on the second fold and again, a different consonant, vowel and consonant on the third fold; (2) draw a line on each of the folds and following a few examples, see could he figure out the first part of rule for himself and having done so, getting him to divide written words that followed this first part of the rule; (3) switch roles so he could call the sequence of consonant, vowel, consonant for Noelle to write on the three folds and then divide with the line. Following the same procedure but asking him to write a consonant, vowel, consonant and same consonant again on the first fold, a vowel and consonant on the second fold and a different consonant, vowel and consonant on the third fold, could be used to help him figure out the second part of the rule.

Teachers' practices of attunement strike a chord with the notion of socially negotiated responsiveness to the learning potential of every child, a basic tenet of responsive pedagogy promoted by Daniels (1993, 1996a, 1996b). To an extent, attunement connects with the concept of therapeutic teaching skills introduced by Morris (1991) and developed by Hanco (1999, 2002) whose collaborative problem-solving staff support approaches focused on "how the negative feelings that children can cause adults to have about them, can unintentionally influence the disaffecting messages teachers often send out to children" (Hanco, 2005, p. 146). Based on their investigation of inclusive practice in secondary schools, the speculation by Florian and Rouse (2005) that "what enables ... teachers to include pupils with a wide range of learning abilities seems to be the way in which they embed a responsiveness to individual need within the process of whole class teaching" and their conclusion that "plans are constantly under review during lessons in the light of pupil responses" (p. 157), echo elements of attunement. Ware (2003) defines a responsive environment necessary for teaching students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) as one "in which people get responses to their actions, get the opportunity to give responses to the actions of others, and have an opportunity to take the lead in interaction" (p. 1). A strong sense of one-way effects of interaction emanate from this definition. Nonetheless, Ware's elaboration of the responsive environment highlights the manner in which adult sensitivity in monitoring the movements of the child with PMLD can inform adult understanding and influence subsequent interaction, which in turn has a modifying influence when experienced by the child. Although not acknowledged in the definition, to the extent that the responsive environment implicitly recognises the ongoing and reciprocal process of each partner influencing the other, it shares some similarities with attunement. However, responsive pedagogy, laudable in itself, is necessary but not sufficient for attunement. To the extent that attunement pays attention to the actions and interactions of teacher-learner encounters and their mutually transformative potential in enabling learning, it is dynamic, holistic and flexible and involves much more than the unidirectional responsiveness to individual needs associated with constant review and adaptation of teacher actions in light of pupil responses. In this respect, it is a development of responsive pedagogy.

To the extent that attunement captures the teaching-learning dynamic of inclusion, it offers a preferable alternative to the pedagogical determinism implied in identifying particular teaching strategies, interventions and programmes as effective or best practice, whether evidence-based or not (Dowker, 2001; Stockall and Gartin, 2002; Cass et al., 2003; Witzel et al., 2003; Flem et al., 2004; Johnson and McDonnell, 2004). It also supports the significance of sharpening teachers' recognition of the nature of teacher-learner actions and interactions to augment their practices of creating and sustaining teaching-learning episodes that deliberately promote the learning of all children, including those with SEN. Along with the social skills learned by Colm over the course of the school year reported in the previous section of this chapter, there was evidence of learning being maintained by learners with SEN based on observation and teachers' commentary, the detail of which is documented in the case studies. However, consistent with the challenges relating to consolidating and maintaining learning evident in teachers' pedagogical intentions as discussed in Chapter Seven, the learning gains of learners with SEN were measured as much by the decreasing levels of assistance required over a period of time as by their independence in participating in and completing learning activities.

Analysis of class teachers' practices of attunement, with its prerequisite of attuning learning to connect with all learners, challenges the principles and practice of differentiation. Although actively promoting the varying of curriculum, activities, methodology and resources to take into account the range of abilities, interests, needs and experiences of pupils¹¹, as a term in the lexicon relating to special needs and inclusion, differentiation implicitly denotes aspects of the identity of learners with SEN in relation to a significant other group which in this instance comprises the majority of learners.

More fundamentally, acknowledging common, distinct and unique needs, the principles of differentiation endorse the commonality of all students as the starting point for planning and teaching (Visser, 1993; O'Brien, 1998; O'Brien and Guiney, 2001; Holdsworth, 2005; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007). Although inclusive in intent, a starting point that progresses from the commonality of all learners to differentiating for the

¹¹ As implied in definitions of differentiation presented in Chapter Three

distinctive and individual needs of some paradoxically reinforces a mindset that regards those with SEN as occupying a secondary position in relation to the more significant majority of learners and thus, supports practices that are somewhat inimical to inclusion. Furthermore, rather than starting with commonality shared by all, analysis of teachers' practice in the mainstream classroom reveals considered selection of learning experiences and outcomes, teaching approaches and resources to connect with individuals within the context of a curricular theme or topic common to all. This can lead to separate and parallel programmes being taught during the one lesson, as evident in the two vignettes relating to mainstream class teaching featured in this chapter¹². Revisiting Ann's maths lesson with sixth class, the topic shared by all learners was area. However, the commonality of all as a starting point would have been unhelpful and somewhat irrelevant given the cognitive variation between Fiona with SEN and her mainstream peers. Elaborating on the understanding of "doing a separate programme ... on the same topic but working at a way lower ... level" (CT1.12, p. 2) conveyed in her pedagogical intentions, observation reveals that Ann has a dual starting point of individual learners and topic through which to promote learning experiences. Addressing diversity from the outset rather than as an 'add on', teachers attune pedagogy, methods, curriculum and learning environment to meet the needs of all learners in the class. As such, attuning teaching and learning activities to individual needs for the purpose of promoting learning renders attunement more holistic, generative and inclusive than differentiation.

However, as the selected vignette also indicates, teaching in more diverse classrooms can push the boundaries of attunement for all learners beyond what is possible to achieve with regularity by even the most competent teachers. Revisiting the class maths lesson on fractions taught by Nicola and Jacqueline, attunement for all was safeguarded by the co-teaching practices of the two teachers. This has implications for policy and practice which are discussed in Chapter Twelve.

Teachers' practices of attunement involve teachers' engagement in a process of ongoing explicit and reflexive thinking about learning. Links between attunement and

¹² These relate to Ann's maths lesson on area with sixth class and the lesson on fractions with fifth class taught by Nicola and Jacqueline.

teachers' explicit and reflexive thinking about learning are discussed in the following section.

ATTUNEMENT AND TEACHERS' EXPLICIT AND REFLEXIVE THINKING ABOUT LEARNING

Teachers' descriptions of their teaching for inclusion were somewhat peppered with terms like "trial and error" "switching track" "going with the flow" and "getting us back out of the rut". As claimed in Chapter Seven, such terminology supported teachers' recognition of the need for flexibility in pedagogical approaches for learners with SEN, reflecting the Shakespearean adage that 'by indirections find directions out'¹³.

On the one hand, observation revealed teachers were quite certain of the intended learning and teaching outcomes of their lessons, were very aware of the learning styles, preferences, experiences, abilities and needs of their learners, and were highly selective in the design of teaching activities to facilitate learning and secure or work towards achievement of intended outcomes. Against this backdrop, however, there was spontaneity in practice, contributing to attunement in their teaching. By way of illustration, returning to the vignette relating to Eilish, Colm and being a good loser, to the extent that the teacher's reference to Beckham and to the child's visit to Old Trafford could not have been pre-specified in any lesson plan, it was spontaneous but effectively served to get learner and teacher 'back out of the rut'. Evident is the teacher's ability to draw on information already in her possession regarding Colm, for example, his admiration of Beckham as a player and his visit to Old Trafford. Apart from retaining this as part of building rapport and sustaining a relationship with Colm, it is also used to contextualise the learning as a particular teaching moment emerges, spontaneously, and in getting Colm 'out of the rut', Eilish is moving him from his cognitive and emotional comfort zone to a plateau of possibility where learning again becomes possible. Resonating with 'procedural' rather than principled learning¹⁴, the

¹³ This quote is drawn from the instructions of Polonius to Reynaldo in Hamlet, Act Two, Scene One.

¹⁴ This is an important Piagetian distinction between the conceptually rich information inherent in the principle which facilitates transfer of learning and procedural information. Learning depends on the process of restoring the balance between present understanding and new experiences (equilibration) and with procedural and principled learning experiences, eventually, qualitatively new ways of thinking about the world emerge and the learner advances to a new stage of development (Piaget, 1960, 1985).

plateau becomes a temporary resting place where further scaffolding, teacher monitoring and prompting may be necessary to scale subsequent cognitive challenges and so, the plateau is the launch pad for transformative learning. This is the real potential of attunement and it is made possible by the teacher's knowledge of the learner, the subject-matter and pedagogy, combined with her explicit and reflexive thinking about learning. Based on the claim that the "teacher's key function is to combine monitoring of and assistance for students' learning rather than simply their task completion", Tomlinson (2008) contends that "designing activity for learning and any sort of adjustment to the planned teaching interaction arguably both require conscious problem-solving involving explicit thinking about learning" (p. 521). The 'assisting and monitoring' functions of teaching evident in teachers' practices of attunement require explicit thinking about learning. However, as the teachers' explicit thinking about learning was directed back upon themselves and their subsequent actions, this enquiry also supports a reflexive aspect of thinking about learning in teachers' practice.

The significance of teachers' explicit and reflexive thinking about learning is that such thinking has to be grounded in some form of knowledge base. According to the definition of pedagogy provided by Alexander (2004, p. 11) as "what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted", the requisite knowledge base relates to children, learning, teaching and curriculum¹⁵. To sustain diversity in teaching and reflecting the Code of Practice (Department for Education and Skills, 2001), Frederickson and Cline (2002) propose knowledge of the child's learning characteristics, the learning environment, the task and the teaching style. For teaching children with SEN, Norwich and Lewis (2007) stress the "need to integrate teacher knowledge about learning processes and about the nature of disability, curriculum, and pedagogic strategy" (p. 127). Of significance to this enquiry's focus of teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice is the centrality of attunement to the deliberate promotion of learning for all, the link between attunement and teachers'

¹⁵ Specifically, knowledge of children relates to their characteristics and development; knowledge of learning relates to how best to motivate, assess and build on learning; knowledge of teaching relates to planning, execution and evaluation, and knowledge of curriculum relates to ways of knowing (Alexander, 2004).

explicit and reflexive thinking about learning and the grounding of this in teachers' knowledge and professional experience. As such, the formation and nurturing of teachers' knowledge of the learner, the subject-matter, pedagogical principles and teaching methods, is critical to influencing their practices of inclusion.

SUMMARY

Responsiveness to individual needs emerged as a key teaching and learning approach to facilitate inclusion in teachers' intentions regarding their pedagogical routines. Highlighting the critically important means of classroom observations for capturing teaching-learning processes, it was through observation that the prevalence of mutually transformative reciprocal interactions, characterising teacher-learner dynamics arising from teachers' responsiveness, was revealed. This supports the prominence of attunement in teachers' practices of inclusion which is central to the deliberate promotion of learning of all children, particularly those with SEN. Transformative elements of attunement are most evident in the renewed insights regarding the dynamics between the learner and the processes of teaching and learning gleaned by the teacher and the teacher's incorporation of these insights in subsequent action and interaction, and in the progressive intentional learning of the children. Furthermore, the distinctive contribution of attunement to understanding of pedagogy and inclusive practice is intimately connected with transformational teaching-learning episodes which render it more dynamic, holistic and flexible than scaffolding, reciprocal teaching and responsive pedagogy.

As a prerequisite to attunement, teachers' attuning of learning experiences to connect with the developmental levels and learning processes of each learner is complex and substantiates a dialectical relationship between the principles and ideology of inclusion and teachers' practices. Particularly for class teachers, diversity in the mainstream class can push the boundaries of attunement for all beyond what is achievable with regularity by the most competent of teachers. As with the use of mediated talk in teachers' communicative routines, attunement to advance each learner in a whole class context is more likely with two teachers. The enquiry's evidence on teachers' practices of attunement also raises questions regarding differentiation and how

it is constructed in practice in mainstream classrooms. To address developmental variation within the class grouping, teachers work from a dual starting point of individual learners and the curricular theme or topic through which to promote learning experiences; they decide on multiple learning outcomes for individuals and groups of learners in relation to the topic or theme. In principle and practice, certain multiple learning outcomes for each individual are shared by all, some are shared by a group and some may be unique to the individual. Consequently, teaching-learning experiences and outcomes may differ in connection with varied developmental levels within the class grouping, while social and environmental factors relating to the need for varied individualised supports are considered, thereby acknowledging a relational aspect in the understanding of SEN. As such, in terms of principle and practice, attunement is more holistic, generative and inclusive than differentiation. The implications of attunement for policy and practice are elaborated in Chapter Twelve.

Regardless of the pedagogical determinism of a specific teaching method, intervention or programme, in so far as attunement captures the teaching-learning dynamics of inclusion, it highlights the significance of teacher-learner actions and interactions and the ability of the teacher to engage in explicit and reflexive thinking about learning to promote deliberately the learning of all. Such thinking about learning is facilitated by a well-informed knowledge base and again, the implications of this for CPD are discussed in Chapter Twelve.

This chapter on attunement has focused on the sum and substance of teacher activity in teaching-learning episodes to promote learning and support inclusion. Although analysis of attunement acknowledges the influence of context, a multi-variety of factors in the teaching-learning environment influence teachers' constructions of inclusive practices, contributing to more or less coherence in the quality and inclusiveness of teaching-learning experiences. This is encapsulated in the final theme of coherence-fragmentation which is presented in detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

COHERENCE-FRAGMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

Revisiting the metaphor of the spider's web, if communicative routines are the fortified centre of the web of teachers' constructions of inclusive practices and attunement is the spiral of threads that maintains the orb of that web intact, coherence-fragmentation is the adhesiveness of the threads in determining their tensile strength to support the web and fulfil its purpose. This chapter focuses on the theme of coherence-fragmentation in teachers' constructions of inclusive practices.

As discussed in Chapter Five, there were contradictions between teachers' understanding of inclusion as accepting all children and their promotion of varied practices across locations within the mainstream setting along with acceptance of an ability cut-off point beyond which children could not be included. Their understanding that inclusion involved joint responsibility on the part of both resource and class teacher was at odds with the compartmentalised division of teaching duties evident in their interpretation of teachers' roles. Further discussed in Chapter Six were ambiguities between teachers' involvement in the preparation of the educational programme for the child with SEN and subsequent lack of reference to this programme in planning for inclusion. In Chapter Seven, analysis of teachers' pedagogical intentions revealed that the methods identified as promoting inclusion also contributed to the pursuit of separate programmes, supporting dual-track teaching-learning episodes. Using the contradictions in teachers' intentions as an interpretative lens for understanding practice, observation and detailed analysis revealed that the pervasiveness of how the dilemma posed by such contradictions was managed, contributed to more or less coherence in teaching-learning experiences to facilitate inclusion. Drawing on Kelly's personal construct theory (1955) which proposes that in order to understand and interpret the actions of others, people formulate specific hypotheses or personal constructs as pairs of opposing concepts, the bipolar constructs of coherence-fragmentation refer to the third and final central theme to emerge in teachers' constructions of inclusive practice. Rather than being posited as dichotomous, these constructs represent more or less in teachers' practices and thus, coherence-fragmentation can be understood as a continuum.

Based on qualitative data, the first section of this chapter focuses on fragmented learning experiences and participation of learners with SEN. Analysis of the coherence of curriculum and demands on the learner with SEN is presented in the second section while the interface of mainstream and additional support and the complementariness of teachers' roles forms the substance of the final section.

FRAGMENTED LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND PARTICIPATION OF LEARNERS WITH SEN

As indicated in Chapter Six, in planning for inclusion, although two resource teachers co-taught in the mainstream class, all withdrew children to provide additional support individually or in small groups. Further substantiated by the case studies, the practice of withdrawal invariably led to most children leaving their mainstream classes during one lesson and returning during another; for those withdrawn at the start of the school day or immediately after break or recess times, they returned during lessons while children withdrawn nearer the end of the school day returned for tidy-up time. Reflecting on my practice as a resource teacher, a priority was to ensure that all children received the correct allocation of daily additional support time and although class teachers were consulted and clashes with class time for PE were to be avoided, cross-referencing both resource and class timetables to reduce the number of lessons from which the child with SEN was withdrawn, was not considered.

Observation revealed that leaving and returning during lessons was disruptive to the logical and consistent flow of learning. In anticipation of leaving the class, children with SEN were observed checking time on watch or clock, with the SNA or with the teacher. On their return, the children's difficulty settling back into lessons was observed in the frequency of their trips to the toilet or to the bin, in their prolonged rummaging in school bags or on class shelves, or for one child, the constant cleaning of her glasses. These are important coping strategies, elaborate mechanisms that some learners develop, avoiding engagement to protect their often fragile identity (Holt, 1982; Woods, 1983). Even as an adult with experience of classroom environments, returning to the mainstream class with the children with SEN being tracked in this enquiry was a disorienting experience. Invariably the landscape had altered with changes in seating arrangements, the focus and nature of learning tasks and whether children were working

independently, in pairs or in groups. Often the child's return to class was unacknowledged by the class teacher because to have done so would have disrupted the continuity and pace of learning for the others. Despite the rhetoric and practice of having learners with SEN in mainstream, the learner is made to feel marginalised in that milieu (Sugrue, 2006). As if compensating for the learning experiences from which children with SEN are withdrawn with those learning experiences for which they are withdrawn, Ann's comment in dialogue following observation is representative of class teachers' acknowledgement of tensions associated with balancing withdrawal support and mainstream class teaching:

Fiona (*child with SEN*) will fall behind in history and geography because she's missing, because she's leaving the class. I mean, does she not leave the class and stay for history and geography? I mean it's a tricky situation. (FND.CT1)

This dilemma resurfaced in our final dialogue as the class teacher's tentative airing of the possibility that the resource teacher "could maybe come into the classroom and work with Fiona during English and maths time" was countered with her statement that "in this school, older children go out to resource in the afternoon but everyone, the class teachers teach English and maths first thing, early in the day when the kids are awake and up for it" (FNFD.CT1). Balancing the provision of appropriate education with the principles of inclusive ideology while ensuring the adequacy of resources and flexibility of organisational structures within the school raises questions about the articulation of a policy of inclusion that is supportive of teachers' constructions of inclusive practice as opposed to restrictive, to the extent that it leads to fragmentation characterising the teaching-learning experiences. Specifically, fragmentation is what the learner with SEN experiences, whereas the teacher and mainstream peers do not. As such, the policy impacts very differently on these different constituents: fragmentation for those learners who have least resources to cope with it, while coherence is maintained for mainstream peers and class teacher.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, a key factor to emerge shaping teachers' pedagogical intentions for inclusion centered on teaching that enabled the children with SEN to consolidate learning and maintain learning gains. However, as documented in the case studies, it was only through observation of practice that the pace of learning in terms of continuity, the time required to process information and the number of learning

experiences necessary to allow consolidation of learning emerged as a critical issue in the education of children with SEN and their inclusion. This gives rise to two distinct but related issues: the learning as encountered by the learner with SEN, and the extent to which the manner in which that learning is constructed from the learner's perspective, fosters inclusion or fragmentation and therefore forms of exclusion within the mainstream. Small group and one-to-one teaching practised by resource teachers allowed adjustment of pace to match the needs of the children with SEN, securing their participation while promoting learning. This was in stark contrast to the group and class teaching practised by class teachers which was paced to cover an age appropriate curriculum matching the needs of the majority. Furthermore, as highlighted in the previous two chapters focusing on teachers' communicative routines and attunement, the pace of learning for the child with SEN was frequently compromised by class teachers' withdrawal from teaching-learning episodes involving this child to return to the learning needs of the majority. While extracts relating to teachers' use of mediated talk and their practices of attunement support a logical and consistent progression in teaching-learning activities promoting intentional learning, equivalently, interruption to the continuity and pace of learning leads to incomplete teaching-learning activities and fragmented learning experiences inhibiting participation and consolidation of learning. As argued in previous chapters, prioritising the needs of the majority invokes analysis from the dilemmatic perspective (Clark et al., 1995b; Clark et al., 1999; Dyson and Millward, 2000; Norwich, 1996; Norwich and Kelly, 2005; Norwich, 2008) which resolves that in balancing "potentially contrary rights and values ... some ... may not be met or met fully" (Norwich and Kelly, 2005, p. 57). However, the continual compromise of the needs of learners with SEN further raises questions about the articulation of a policy of inclusion that is supportive of schools making "learning more than a random business" (Hirst, 1974, p. 107) for all students.

As reported in Chapter Seven, opportunities for collaborative learning afforded by group work and peer tutoring as a means of facilitating inclusion featured in teachers' pedagogical intentions. As reported in Chapter Three, a compelling evidence base supports the effectiveness of collaborative learning for improving the social and academic competence of students (Palincsar and Brown, 1984; Topping and Lindsay, 1993; Cohen, 1994; Slavin, 1995; Webb et al., 1995; Schmidt et al., 2002; Heron et al.,

2003; Mastropieri et al., 2003; Doveston and Keenaghan, 2006; Stenhoff and Lignugaris/Kraft, 2007; Johnson and Johnson, 2008). Based on the assumption that collaborative learning promotes active involvement, Loreman et al. (2005, p. 155) argue that it is “especially important for students with disabilities.” Collaborative learning, co-operative group work and peer tutoring are regularly cited as ‘inclusive practices’ (Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Corbett and Norwich, 2005; Rix, 2005; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007; Westwood, 2007; Ferguson, 2008). However, research also reveals that simply placing children in small groups does not guarantee that learning will occur. To this end, as reported in Chapter Three, gains from working with others are dependent on the nature of students’ participation in group work, specifically in relation to quality and depth of group discussion determined by the extent to which they give and receive help, share knowledge, build on each others’ ideas and justify their views, and the extent to which they resolve contradictions between their own and other students’ perspectives (Webb and Palincsar, 1996; King, 1999; Mercer et al., 1999; Howe and Tolmie, 2003; Veenman et al., 2005; Webb, 2009). By corollary, students on the periphery of group activity invariably gain less.

Observations in this enquiry revealed that while collaborative learning afforded children with SEN opportunities for reinforcement and some form of social interaction with peers, their role was peripheral. Typically, opportunities for collaborative learning were incorporated in SESE and SPHE lessons which generally opened with a whole class introduction followed with group work and then returned to whole class presentation of group work and discussion, concluding with some form of written activity. Representative of the participation and social engagement of children with SEN in collaborative learning activities is the experience of Fiona in sixth class illustrated in the following extract which relates to a lesson in SPHE focusing on decision-making. For the group activity, children had to discuss and record two major and two minor decisions that were made for each of them along with two major and two minor decisions they each made for themselves:

There were five in Fiona’s group, four huddled closely with the paper facing them on one side of the desk and Fiona on the opposite side looking at an upside down version of the scribe’s recording. She had to kneel on her seat and lean over the desk to see the paper. There was a sense of purpose and energy among the others as they shared examples of decisions and justified their selection as

major or minor. There was instant agreement that “a major decision made for me” was to “make sure I get a good education” ... However, “dinner choice” being proposed by one as “a major decision made for me” generated more debate; it was challenged as being “minor because it’s a quick decision and it’s not a big decision” and as being a decision “you just make yourself” but defended on the basis that “what you eat is important for your health” and eventually agreed as a “major decision I make myself.” As the children discussed, selected and worded the information to be recorded, Fiona removed and cleaned her glasses. For the ten minutes approximately of this group activity and the remaining fifteen minutes of the lesson, Fiona removed and cleaned her glasses twenty-seven¹. However, there was no evidence of this during the morning lessons with the SNA or the afternoon lessons with the resource teacher, leading to the reasonable deduction that her low tolerance may be related to some form of anxiety associated with the nature of the afternoon activities, specifically the requirements to participate in group work and be without the SNA. Only in response to a direct question from one group member who assumed the role of leader but was not the scribe, did Fiona contribute that “using my mobile” was a decision she made herself and when she delayed in response to the question of this being a major or minor decision, the others decided to record it in the minor category and she nodded in agreement. (FNRR.CT1)

The extract reveals the peripheral role played by Fiona in terms of location and involvement and resonates with research on levels of student participation and learning gains (Webb and Palincsar, 1996; Mercer et al., 1999; Reznitskaya et al., 2007; Webb, 2009). Furthermore, such a role is consistent with findings from previous research that low status individuals are less assertive and more anxious, talk less and give fewer suggestions and less information than high status individuals in group work (Cohen and Lotan, 1995; Mulryan, 1995; Baxter et al., 2001). Although previous research indicates the significance of the teacher’s role in contributing to the effectiveness of cooperative learning through preparation in communication (Mercer et al., 2004; Blatchford et al., 2006; Reznitskaya et al., 2007; Bienes et al., 2008), nonetheless, group work, even with mixed ability groups, may well create its own hierarchies based on perceptions of ability-performance. In such circumstances, those who carry the stigma of withdrawal have little possibility of gaining the respect of other group members. Following this group activity, the teacher fielded group responses by recording examples of major and minor decisions made by self and others on the chalk board. Throughout discussion of

¹ One of the symptoms of Cornelia de Lange syndrome is that half of those diagnosed experience a number of ophthalmologic difficulties and among this group glasses are often poorly tolerated.

the decision-making examples which followed, synchrony between teacher questioning and children's understanding was evident as in response to specific questioning, the children reasoned why certain decisions were made for them and contrasted the "major ness" of decisions made by self and parents, leading them to articulate that with increasing responsibility as they grew older, they would make more major decisions for themselves. Although not every child contributed, there was a sense in which collectively, the children were following the line of reasoning with the exception of Fiona, who if she was not looking at the surface of her desk, was cleaning her glasses. As observed repeatedly throughout such class discussions, either the children with SEN were not clued in from the start or they lost the focus and withdrew at some point in the discussion.

Given its dyadic basis, peer tutoring facilitated higher frequencies of social interaction for children with SEN, as revealed in the following extract which details the peer tutoring activity of Philip with SEN and Norman during an English lesson in their mainstream class of first grade.

Philip and Norman each have a copy of the book and the intention is to share, with each reading alternate pages. Norman, who reads accurately and with fluency, speeds through the first page. Philip, who takes his turn to read the second page, is more hesitant, gets stuck on the word 'boy' and does not employ any strategy to sound out the word or read on and guess. In coming to his rescue, Norman prompts the following interactive sequence:

Norman: What am I?

Philip: Norman.

Norman: No not me name. What am I?

Philip: A *fagga*.

Norman: Don't say *tha*. Am I a boy?

Philip: Yeah.

Norman: What's *tha* (*pointing at the word*)?

Philip: Boy

Norman: Yeah.

Philip continues to read the page. When Norman starts the third page, Philip looks round the room. This is noticed by the class teacher who intervenes to say: "Philip, you listen when he reads and he listens when you read". On Philip's turn to read, he has lost the fourth page and has to be redirected by Norman. As he starts reading below the illustration rather than above, again he has to be redirected to "start at the top". Norman flies through the next page and noticing Philip is lost again, he says "go, read, you're always *skippin* loads, go, go on, go". This time, Philip comes to the word 'inn' which he correctly but hesitantly reads and then asks what it is to which Norman responds: "an inn is a house. Look at it (*meaning the illustration*)". Again, Norman flies through his page and

has to redirect Philip to the start of the next page. Philip reads with stops and starts, and when he completes the page Norman says: “wait, read that again, I wasn’t listening”. Saying “no, no” at first, Philip relinquishes and re-reads the page. By the time they finish reading the book of twelve pages, the class teacher signals an end to the peer tutoring activity and the children regroup to their original seats in the classroom. (FNRR.CT5)

While collaborative activities provide variation in teaching-learning episodes, the levels of participation and interaction of the children with SEN contribute to more or less fragmentation in their experiences of learning. Furthermore, as reported in Chapters Nine and Ten, the intentional learning of the children with SEN in this enquiry is intimately connected with teacher activity, particularly teacher’s mediated talk and practices of attunement. However, teacher involvement to scaffold the child with SEN during pair or group work could appear antipathetic to the purposes and function of collaborative learning. During group work sessions, teachers were observed monitoring and consulting with group members generally, while on occasion some teachers used group activities in English to tutor individually children experiencing difficulty. Regarding the learning experience of children with SEN arising from collaborative activity, this may be illuminated by a theoretical framework based on a continuum of pupil outcomes in relation to ‘educational experiences’ proposed by Brown (1996) and extended by Byers (1999). One end of this continuum involves “encountering” or being present during an activity and “awareness” as in noticing that something is going on; at the other end of the continuum is “involvement” as in active participation, doing or commenting and “attainment” as in gaining, consolidating or practising skills and knowledge (Byers, 1999, p. 186). As such, intentional learning for children with SEN becomes a matter of experiencing curriculum and learning activities at various stages along this continuum. Accepting collaborative learning activities as forms of inclusive practices, based on the findings of this enquiry, it would appear that ‘encountering’ is more frequent than ‘attainment’ for these children.

Learning experiences were further shaped by the curriculum. This shaping influence, specifically in relation to the coherence of the curriculum and the demands this placed on learners with SEN, is discussed in the following section.

COHERENCE OF CURRICULUM AND DEMANDS ON THE LEARNER WITH SEN

Analysis of teachers' planning for inclusion presented in Chapter Six revealed the prominence of the IEP in developing individual teaching for the children with SEN. As such, based on assessment of the learner's current levels of attainment, priority learning needs and learning targets were identified and teaching methods and resources likely to lead to achievement of those learning targets were selected. Although class and resource teachers expressed the view that devising the IEP was a shared activity, in their elaboration of the planning process it was evident that responsibility for devising and implementing the IEP was undertaken by resource teachers, supporting a division of labour between class and resource teachers. Prolonged observation of practice revealed that this division of labour between teachers parallels a division of curriculum areas into specific sets of skills and concepts, distorting the knowledge-base coherence of that curriculum area and leading to compartmentalisation of teaching-learning experiences.

By way of illustration, returning to the case of Noelle, Patrick and the *Toe by Toe* programme reported in Chapter Ten, precisely because of Patrick's severe dyslexia, the resource teacher prioritised the development of phonological skills and pursued intensive phonological training, teaching a "reading programme separate from the class programme" (RT7.83, p. 14). However, using a reading scheme designed specifically for learners experiencing reading difficulties with Patrick's group, the class teacher focused on the development of his comprehension (CT7.12, p. 2). In practice, the focus of each teacher on distinctive but separate elements of the one curriculum area prevented both from capitalising on opportunities to teach Patrick how to apply the phonological skills he was learning in one programme to the reading and comprehension of texts in the second programme. As substantiated by the case studies, curriculum areas typically divided into distinctive sets of skills and concepts were English and maths. Although justifiable to the extent that it derives from assessment and analysis of the child's needs, the separate foci of both resource and class teachers contribute to fragmented learning of isolated skills and concepts for children with SEN. As such, arising from teachers' practices of inclusion in this enquiry, great demands to synthesise learning from a number of sources and locations across the mainstream setting are placed on the children least likely to be able to synthesise. Corbett and Norwich (2005)

argue that “individual planning cannot be separated from curriculum planning and teaching which is sensitive to individual needs” and their recommendation for “a combination of top down systemic curriculum planning which builds flexibility into teaching approaches and bottom up individual assessment and planning” (p. 23) is supported by findings in this enquiry.

A second aspect of practice that contributed to distortion of the coherence of curriculum related to children with SEN covering a differentiated programme in their mainstream classes and then covering another programme in the resource room but without links between the content of these programmes. Revisiting Ann’s maths lesson on area reported in Chapter Ten, her attuning of the activities to connect with Fiona’s developmental level and needs contributed to Fiona’s participation in a separate maths programme on the topic of area running parallel to the mainstream class programme. However, during the afternoon in withdrawal, Fiona was learning the concept of decomposition for subtraction. The transactional dynamics of attunement are evident in the following extract relating to the maths lesson in which Aileen, the resource teacher, teaches the concept of decomposition using lollipop sticks and a notation board.

Aileen requested Fiona to “make forty-six”. Fiona lifted four elasticised bundles of ten sticks and placed them under the ‘T’ heading of the notation board and then proceeded to count out six single sticks, locating them under the ‘U’ heading of the board. Aileen asked “How many tens in that?” to which Fiona correctly responded “four tens”. Then Aileen asked “how many units in that?” and again, Fiona correctly responded “six units”. Aileen checked the sticks on the notation board and affirmed Fiona saying “good, well done, you put out four tens and six units to make?” and both she and Fiona chimed “forty-six”. Aileen then directed Fiona to “write forty-six on the board”. This warming-up activity continued for numbers seventeen and twenty-six and closed with the direction to “wipe the board and put the lollipop sticks back in the basket”. The second stage of the lesson opened with Aileen directing Fiona to “write thirty-five take away seventeen”. This completed, Fiona was further directed to “show thirty-five on the notation board”. Fiona correctly assembled the lollipop sticks and paused. Mediating the learning, Aileen prompted as follows: “you have five units and you want to take away seven units. What can you do?” As this was met with silence, Aileen continued: “Do you remember when your Mam was baking a cake and she ran out of flour, you told me she went next door and borrowed from Celine” Fiona responded saying “from *Saylene*”. Acknowledging this correction to her pronunciation by repeating the name as modelled, Aileen questioned in an expressive voice with exaggerated tone: “seven from five, hhem, hhem hhem, I wonder, can you borrow (*emphasizing this word*) from anywhere?” to which Fiona responded “from the tens”. Again, Aileen affirmed saying “yes from the

tens and how do we do that?" Fiona lifted one bundle of ten from the board, removed the elastic and placed the sticks with the units. Aileen then asked: "now how many do you have?" As Fiona pushed some sticks over others while counting, confusion arose so Aileen directed her to start again and finger moved each stick aside with her, while Fiona counted up to fifteen. Then Aileen asked "now can you take away seven?" At this point and without any further prompting, Fiona took away seven, counted the remainder, recorded in writing on the notation board, and proceeded to take away one bundle of ten and record this in writing, calling out "the answer is eighteen". Following praise for this, Aileen directed Fiona to "write this sum in her maths copy" and for each step of the operation recorded, Aileen questioned to elicit from Fiona a recap of the steps completed. This process was repeated for "forty-two take away twenty-six" and "forty-two take away seventeen" and on both occasions Fiona invoked the 'borrowing rule' without prompting. However, for the final stage of the lesson, when Fiona was given a sheet with five subtraction sums and requested to indicate those that involved 'regrouping' she was unable to apply the rule automatically. For each sum, Aileen had to question, for example, "six take away nine. Can you do that?" and on each occasion, rather than indicating whether you had to regroup, Fiona counted on her fingers hidden under the desk, always starting with the larger of the two numbers and provided a numerical answer which was incorrect for three sums. Furthermore, after each incorrect response, Aileen reminded Fiona to "use the hundred square to see if you can do six take away nine" and only following this, did Fiona respond correctly. (FNRR.RT1)

While such intensity of engagement may be open to the criticism of perpetuating dependency in the learner, representative of teaching-learning episodes experienced by resource teachers and children with SEN in this enquiry is the extent to which these children required such mediation to facilitate learning, to maintain focus and to progress at a continuous pace. Furthermore, within the dynamic of teacher-learner interactions, teachers' mediation and attunement are evidence of carefully planned and enacted learning experiences. As argued previously, these learning experiences are intimately connected with teachers' reflexive thinking about learning processes, the child's learning characteristics, the learning environment and the nature of the learning task, all of which is grounded in their knowledge about learning. However, regardless of success in leading towards achievement of intended learning, the dual and separate foci of resource and class teacher without any cross-referencing of programme content contribute to compartmentalisation of curriculum and a fragmented experience of learning for the child with SEN. Although the focus on decomposition for subtraction is consistent with the individually relevant learning delineated in the child's IEP, it

represents a discontinuity of curriculum between resource and class teacher². Having already spent forty-five minutes of the school day working on area, this child spends an additional thirty minutes on decomposition and subtraction. Invariably, access to greater breadth and balance of curriculum is compromised by the daily-double dose of English and maths provided for children with SEN.

Distortion of curriculum coherence and consequent demands on learners with SEN to synthesise learning from a number of sources and locations across the mainstream setting evident in this enquiry echo the well-articulated challenge for teachers to secure breadth, balance and relevance of curriculum for learners with SEN (DES, 1993; Frederickson and Cline, 2002; Coffey, 2004; Lewis and Norwich, 2005; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007; NCCA, 2007). Furthermore, the practices leading to such distortion are redolent of the dilemma associated with promoting “inclusive values and maintaining a commitment to genuine individual learning and development in practical contexts” (Corbett and Norwich, 2005, p. 27). Drawing on connective pedagogy³ to address this dilemma, Corbett and Norwich propose two aspects: firstly, connecting with individuals and then connecting them with the wider community of classroom and school, requiring “imaginative, lateral thinking and high levels of flexibility” (Corbett and Norwich, 2005, p. 27). As reported in Chapter Ten, evidence in this enquiry relating to practices of attunement indicates the extent to which teachers connected with individual learners and maintained that connection through a process of transactional dynamics during teaching-learning episodes that deliberately promote individual learning. However, regarding the second aspect of connecting learners with the wider community, evidence indicates this is highly complex and challenging for class teachers given the diversity of needs and the variation in developmental and cognitive levels in one class grouping. The complexity is further compounded by fragmented learning experiences and the lack of cross-referencing of content in mainstream and withdrawal programmes (this is elaborated in the following section on the interface and

² As reported in the section on attuning pedagogy to connect with learners’ needs in Chapter Ten, the class teacher’s programme for the child with SEN focused on two activities as follows: pasting templates of squares and rectangles with cut-out centimetres and counting the total to find the area; and, using the cut-out square centimetres to construct tessellations based on given measurements.

³ Connective pedagogy was initially proposed by Corbett (2001a; 2001b), following her investigation of teaching approaches to support inclusive education in a primary school in east London (elaborated in review of literature presented in Chapter Three).

complementariness of teachers' roles). More than 'imaginative, lateral thinking and high levels of flexibility', connecting learners with the wider community further supports the articulation of a policy of inclusion which underscores the synthesis of systemic curriculum planning for all incorporating flexibility of teaching approaches with individual assessment and planning. Such a synthesis has implications for the interface of mainstream and additional support. The links between teachers' practices of inclusion and the interface and complementariness of class and resource teachers' roles are discussed in the following section.

THE INTERFACE AND COMPLEMENTARINESS OF TEACHERS' ROLES

As previously stated, analysis of teachers' interpretations of and planning for inclusion presented in Chapters Five and Six revealed a division of labour between resource and class teachers in relation to planning and implementing the IEP. Regarding planning, resource teachers expended time and effort assessing and analysing the priority learning needs of children with SEN and, as such, the IEP was prominent in securing an individually relevant learning programme for these children. However, teaching to achieve the learning targets specified on the IEP was predominantly, almost exclusively the responsibility of the resource teacher. Only in the interpretations of teachers in three of the nine schools involved in the enquiry was there evidence of discernable degrees of cross-referencing between the individually relevant learning programme for the child with SEN and the mainstream class plans and teaching. Observation of the nature of cross-referencing in resource and class teachers' constructions of inclusive practice brought the interface of mainstream and additional support into sharp focus, revealing that increased complementariness of roles was linked with more coherence in teaching-learning experiences, further facilitating intentional learning. Supported by the detail documented in the case studies, practices relating to complementariness of resource and class teachers' roles are presented in Table 11.1 overleaf; across the nine schools, complementariness of role ranged over four levels from minimal to more optimal.

Table 11.1: Complementariness of teachers' roles represented by level from minimal to more optimal and by school

Minimal complementariness of roles		↔	More optimal complementariness of roles	
<p>Pine SNS; Poplar GNS; Ash SNS; Beech JNS; Lime NS; Fuchsia NS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers meet at start of school year to discuss content of IEP Resource teacher takes responsibility for learning targets and provides support on a withdrawal basis Class teacher is not given a copy of the IEP Class teacher does not incorporate learning targets in class programme but may be working towards addressing priority learning needs, contributing to dual foci and separate programmes Class and resource teacher communicate informally or if a crisis arises At end of year review, resource teacher charts progress with reference to each of the learning targets recorded on IEP; class teacher acknowledges child's learning but expresses concerns about the ever-widening gap between child with SEN and same-age peers At end of year and considering what they might work on for coming year, both class and resource teacher express the need for joint planning, teaching and reviewing 	<p>Sycamore NS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers meet at start of school year to discuss content of IEP Resource teacher takes responsibility for learning targets and provides support on a withdrawal basis Resource teacher provides class teacher with copy of IEP with expectation that class teacher will consider learning targets in class plans Class teacher works towards addressing priority learning needs and incorporates learning targets but plan content is separate from substance of resource teacher's plans, contributing to separate programmes Class and resource teacher have regular brief meetings to discuss progress and needs and resource teacher provides class teacher with fortnightly plans and records of progress At end of year review, resource teacher charts progress with reference to each of the learning targets recorded on IEP; class teacher identifies similar learning gains but expresses concerns about the ever-widening gap between child with SEN and same-age peers At end of year and considering what they might work on for coming year, both resource and class teacher express the need for a more concerted effort to collaborate 		<p>Elm SNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers meet at start of school year to discuss content of IEP Resource teacher takes responsibility for learning targets IEP is held by resource teacher and is available for viewing but class teacher opts not to view IEP Class teacher does not incorporate learning targets in class programme but works towards addressing priority learning needs Class and resource teachers plan collaboratively and co-teach the maths programme in the mainstream class while resource teacher takes responsibility for certain aspects of English and maths on withdrawal basis Regular formal communication between resource and class teacher on planning, implementing and reviewing the in-class maths programme Daily informal sharing of reflections on teaching and children's learning, following in-class maths lesson At end of year review, both class and resource teacher document progress of children with SEN relative to their performance at end of previous year and within context of the whole class, based on informal assessments, criterion referenced tests related to maths topics and standardised tests Considering what they might work on for the coming year, both teachers express need to apply a similarly collaborative approach to teaching English but also express concern that human resources in the school may not permit this 	<p>Oak NS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers meet at end of previous school year to determine content of IEP and class plans, so all teachers teach learners at start of new school year Resource and class teacher co-teach for English and maths and responsibility for learning targets is shared; learning targets have multiple objectives and are incorporated in class plans and for all curriculum areas as relevant Resource teacher also withdraws children with SEN and those having difficulty for intensive small group teaching, as preparation for class learning or for consolidation and reinforcement Regular formal communication between resource and class teacher on planning, implementing and reviewing English and maths programmes and on planning and adapting plans for other curriculum areas Daily informal sharing of reflections on teaching and children's learning At end of year review, both class and resource teacher document progress of children with SEN relative to their performance at end of previous year and within context of the whole class and in relation to all curriculum areas, based on informal assessments, criterion referenced tests and standardised tests Considering what they might work on for the coming year, both teachers express desire to increase the standardised scores of the middle group of learners and need to develop transition structures for children with SEN with second level schools in the locality

By interfacing resource and class teachers' expertise across forms of individual and class assessment, planning and teaching, the inclusive practices constructed by the teachers in Oak NS contributed to a whole class programme which was attuned to provide individual learning programmes in terms of conceptual levels, resources, teaching approaches and learning activities. Individual learning targets deriving from assessment generated multiple learning outcomes which were incorporated across curriculum areas. As such, in a meaningful interweaving of IEP with class plans, children with SEN participated in one programme for all curriculum areas, but with two teachers for English and maths, avoiding the fragmentation of learning associated with dual programmes and separate foci. That such a high number of teachers do not establish connections between IEP and class plans may be attributable to the definition of the IEP as additional to and not a substitute for the curriculum provided in the literature and promoted in guidelines on devising and implementing the IEP produced by the NCSE (2006a). This raises the issue of policy regarding the management of the IEP in mainstream school and the articulation of the need to consider the multiple and related learning outcomes across all curriculum areas associated with specific learning targets. Furthermore, all teachers in the enquiry identify the need for collaboration; even those who evidenced more optimal levels of complementariness and interfacing identify a need to collaborate with second level schools in the locality. However, as reported in Chapter Six, in their intentions regarding planning for inclusion, all teachers highlighted the difficulties arising from lack of time generally and specifically lack of dedicated time.

Co-teaching in Oak NS was a response of both class and resource teacher to managing the persistent dilemma for class teachers associated with the challenge of addressing individual needs in a classroom situation; it was based on teachers' practices of joint planning, teaching, reflecting and reviewing for all children in the class. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, research investigating full inclusion models and co-teaching evidences equivocal results (Manset and Semmell, 1997; Waldron and McLeskey, 1998; Murawski and Swanson, 2001; Rea et al., 2002; Blackorby et al., 2005; Magiera and Zigmund, 2005). Analysing previous research, Volonio and Zigmund (2007) are critical that practices in co-taught classrooms differ widely from the

theoretical models⁴ proposed in the literature and argue that “co-teaching has added another teacher to the general education classroom, without necessarily adding value” (p. 298). The significance of this enquiry is the evidence it provides to indicate that co-teaching creates the conditions for a learning context which facilitates teachers’ mediated talk to scaffold children’s learning and teachers’ practices of attunement to meet diverse needs of larger numbers of children in the mainstream class. As reported in Chapter Nine, by virtue of working with smaller groups, the context of co-teaching facilitated teachers’ use of mediated talk critical to the intentional learning of children with SEN. Further reported in Chapter Ten was evidence to indicate that teachers’ practices of attunement, central to the deliberate promotion of learning of all children in the class, were more likely with two teachers co-teaching.

Along with safeguarding the coherence of curriculum, reducing fragmentation in learning experiences and increasing opportunities for teachers’ mediated talk and attunement, observation of co-teaching practices in Oak NS revealed further enhancement of learning experienced by the children, including those with SEN. Based on joint monitoring of the children’s learning during in-class teaching, Oonagh, the resource teacher, withdrew children experiencing difficulty for intensive small-group instruction during the afternoon. Revisiting Oonagh’s assessment-focused questions which uncovered Liam’s difficulty with conversion of weights reported in Chapter Nine, apart from clarifying this misconception during the maths lesson, Oonagh focused on consolidation of equivalence and conversion of weights for part of the afternoon. In her interview and in dialogue following observations, Oonagh regularly referred to the importance of these “booster” sessions (FNRR.RT8). The following extract from the field notes details the consolidation activities experienced by the four children in the group comprising of two with SEN, one with difficulty due to absenteeism and one who had “a tendency to fall behind”.

For the first activity, the children are asked to pick any weight from the box, feel the weight in their hands, guess the weight and check (*measure recorded on each weight*). Each then holds up and calls out weight in turn and Oonagh records on the board: 1kg, 20g, 500g and 50g. Oonagh then asks the children with the 1kg and 500g to place these on each pan of the balance. Observing the imbalance, the children are asked to work in pairs and think of how to make the pans balance

⁴ For detailed explanation of theoretical models of co-teaching, see footnote 23, Chapter Three, page 74.

keeping the two weights; each pair is given two turns to work with the weights and explain choices while Oonagh records on the board, leading the children through a lengthy process of trial and error to deduce that 1kg is the same as two 500gs, the same as one 500g and two 200gs and one 100g, the same as one 500g and five 100gs, the same as one 500g, four 100gs and two 50gs. This exercise is repeated with the 500g and the 50g, and then with the 20g and the 1kg and progressing through the activity the children's pace at selecting picks up as they recall equivalent weights from the previous exercise, so that without first checking on the balance, they calculate the weights to select in advance. For the final exercise, Liam and Dillon are directing one another with comments like "pick a 500 grammes and four 100 grammes and a 50 grammes and a 20 grammes and a ten grammes" and while they are waiting for the other pair to complete the task, they agree to change the one 20g to two 10 grammes at Liam's instigation. The second activity is a game and the children are given laminated cut-out illustrations of ten items: swan, baby, watch, biro, woman, box of cornflakes, tub of butter, one litre jug of water, lorry and horse. They are asked to arrange the items from the lightest to the heaviest and this generates some discussion and banter as one in the group jokes that the lorry should go before the woman. Satisfied that the sequence is correct, Oonagh empties a plastic pocket of ten laminated cards recording various weights on the desk and asks them to match the weights with the items. Again this takes time and generates discussion and some laughter as another pipes up that "if we didn't swap the woman she'd be thirty-four tonnes". With the sequencing and matching completed, focusing on the weights up to 1kg (20g, 50g, 500g, 750g), Oonagh questions about ways of making up 1kg, 500g and 750g and about how many 100g in 500g and so forth and on this occasion, the children calculate the answers mentally without reference to the weights. For the third activity, Oonagh draws a 2kg bag of flour on the board and asks the children to figure out how many of each measure is in the bag and then to explain how they figured it out: 500g, 400g, 200g, 100g, 250g. According to Liam, for the 500g, 200g, 100g and 250g he knew how many were in 1kg so he doubled that for 2kg but for the 400g, he "wasn't sure" so he counted up in 400's to 2000 and correctly got 5. (FNRR.RT8)

Apart from flexibility of grouping which allows children other than those with SEN receive additional support, the resource teacher's selection, sequencing and steering of the consolidation activities illustrated above indicates the intensity of support required by some learners to make progress. That the resource teacher recognises the necessity for and provides this level of 'booster' support in the withdrawal context resonates with research reporting that students with SEN require the additional academic support provided in the resource room to supplement teaching in co-taught classrooms (Marston, 1996; Manset and Semmel, 1997; Baxter et al., 2002; Zigmond 2003; Magiera

and Zigmond, 2005). Furthermore, it substantiates Wedell's (2005) argument that "withdrawal, if seen as flexible grouping rather than exclusion, also serves its purpose" by offering "pupils the intensity of support they need to make accelerated progress" (p. 9). The significance of this enquiry is the evidence it provides to indicate that by interfacing at the level of co-teaching, additional support in withdrawal can meaningfully supplement and reinforce the programme being covered in the mainstream class contributing to logical, consistent and coherent teaching and learning experiences. However, the more optimal levels of interfacing evident in Oak NS are no doubt facilitated by its context as a multi-grade school with three class teachers and two additional support teachers. As such, the resource teacher is assigned to working with one multi-grade class from fourth to sixth with the highest number of children with SEN and so, collaborates with only one class teacher; the learning support teacher divides her time between the junior room where she works in-class each morning up to break and the multi-grade first to third class where she co-teaches between break and lunch, withdrawing those who need additional support in the afternoon.

Analysis of teachers' interpretations of inclusion in relation to their roles presented in Chapter Five reported that the two resource teachers and two class teachers each pairing in two schools and involved in co-teaching appreciated the knowledge sharing opportunities afforded by this practice. Apart from evidencing increased interfacing and more optimal levels of complementariness of roles, observations in Elm SNS and Oak NS revealed that class teachers had extended their pedagogical repertoire by incorporating and adapting teaching activities from collaborative lessons in their teaching of other curriculum areas. Christine, the class teacher in Oak NS was so impressed with peer tutoring for English that she incorporated this approach into her teaching of Irish to encourage the children's reading of Irish texts. In practice, within the short amount of time dedicated to the activity, peer tutoring gave every child an experience of reading Irish text at levels connecting with ability and if neither tutee nor tutor could recognise a word, both had to record it in writing. Following peer tutoring, the words were handed up to Christine who recorded them on the board for class recognition and explanation. During a history lesson in Elm NS, the group of four

children with SEN were observed wearing headphones and listening to extracts of text⁵ focusing on 'Easter 1916'. Following this, between them they recorded the details they could recall onto a Dictaphone. Catherine, the class teacher circulated to monitor each group's work and as she joined this group, rather than scanning over a list of key events recorded in writing on a flip chart sheet as with the other groups, she listened to a replay of the Dictaphone. In subsequent dialogue, Catherine stated that from teaching maths with the resource teacher and watching how she worked with the children with SEN, "it really hit home ... how they needed things to be broken down into manageable chunks" and this influenced her thinking "about ways to make the history curriculum accessible to them"⁶ (FND.CT6). Such enhancement of pedagogical repertoire through teacher collaboration echoes research reviewed in Chapter Three which concludes that the social learning afforded by collaboration facilitates reform in school and classroom practices (Welch, 2000; Austin, 2001; McLaughlin, 2002; Ainscow et al., 2004; Wischnowski et al., 2004; Ainscow et al., 2006).

The low number of four teachers out of eighteen in this enquiry participating in co-teaching is consistent with research conducted in the Irish context which reports withdrawal as the preferred method among additional support teachers (Travers, 2006), and as the more commonly practised method of providing additional support (Shiel and Morgan, 1998; Costello, 1999; IATSE, 2000; McCarthy, 2001). It is also consistent with international research where lack of dedicated time was the reason given by teachers for the dominance of the withdrawal model of support (Whitaker and Taylor, 1995; Arnaiz and Castejón, 2001; Crowther et al., 2001; Forlin, 2001; Pijl and van den Bos, 2001). While children with SEN may benefit from the individually relevant learning experiences provided in withdrawal, they spend most of their school day in the mainstream class. Regardless of the success of specific teaching-learning episodes in achieving intended learning, this enquiry indicates that securing an overall coherence of learning experiences requires more optimal interfacing and complementariness of roles in teachers' practices. In the context of their expression of the need to collaborate, the high number of teachers whose practices involve minimal interfacing and

⁵ These were based on the class text book and audio-recorded by the class teacher's mother.

⁶ Catherine also indicated being encouraged to alternate with the resource teacher between teaching the higher and lower ability groups by the maths topics.

complementariness of role, further raises questions about the articulation of a policy of inclusion that is supportive of teachers in generating and sustaining their capacity to interface at the level of joint planning, teaching, reflecting and reviewing for all children in the class. This resonates with the call from Wedell (2005) for a “much deeper consideration ... of teacher roles and how collaboration and co-ordination should be implemented in the wider context of mainstream provision” (p. 8).

Regarding such capacity, research highlights the significance of securing dedicated and scheduled time for joint planning, teaching and reviewing, and of providing pre-service and continuing professional development programmes to prepare class and resource teachers with the practices to enable their teaching to support inclusion (Welch, 2000; Austin, 2001; Wischnowski et al., 2004; Mastropieri et al., 2005). All teachers in this enquiry identified lack of scheduled time as an obstacle to collaboration. Furthermore, extending beyond the enrichment of specific capacities, “more informal networks of professional learning and support that complement and enhance more formal endeavours” are advocated (Sugrue, 2008, p. 222). If the inclusive emphasis directed in regulations issued by the DES (Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05) (2003; 2004; 2005a), mandated in the EPSEN Act (Ireland, 2004) and incorporated in the ‘Continuum of Support’ promoted by NEPS (2006) is to translate into practice, then policy has to address the multi-various forms of capacity building for teachers and schools.

SUMMARY

Teachers’ practices of timetabling withdrawal support and of prioritising the needs of the majority in the pitching and pacing of learning activities, can contribute to more or less fragmentation of learning. While teachers air tentative resolutions to this dilemma, these are countered with statements relating to adequacy of human resources and flexibility of organisational structures in the school. Collaborative learning activities cited by teachers as a means of facilitating inclusion provide pedagogical variety in teaching-learning activities and afford children with SEN opportunities for reinforcement and some form of social interaction with peers. However, given their peripheral role, learning in terms of gaining, consolidating or practising skills and

knowledge can not be assumed. The IEP is prominent in the development of individually relevant learning programmes for children with SEN. Although teachers consider devising the IEP is a shared activity, responsibility for devising, implementing and reviewing is undertaken by the resource teacher, supporting a division of labour between resource and class teacher. This parallels a division of curriculum areas into specific sets of skills and concepts, distorting the coherence of curriculum and contributing to fragmentation of learning determined by dual foci and separate programmes. Arising from this practice, great demands to synthesise learning from a number of sources and locations across the mainstream setting are required of the children least likely to be able to synthesise. To secure greater coherence, teachers' constructions of inclusive practices could consider synthesising systemic curriculum planning and flexible teaching approaches with individual assessment and planning. Such a synthesis has implications for the levels of interfacing of teachers' expertise and complementariness of their roles; these implications are elaborated in Chapter Twelve.

In this enquiry, increased complementariness of role was linked with more coherence in teaching-learning experiences and enhancement of intentional learning. More optimal levels of complementariness of role in teachers' practices contributed to a whole class programme which was attuned to provide individual learning programmes where individual learning targets generated multiple and related learning outcomes which were incorporated across curriculum areas. Interfacing at the level of co-teaching was a response of two resource and two class teachers, to managing the persistent dilemma for class teachers associated with the challenge of addressing individual needs in the classroom situation. Co-teaching creates conditions for a learning context with potential to facilitate teachers' use of mediated talk central to the intentional learning of children with SEN and teachers' practices of attunement to meet diverse needs of larger numbers of learners in the mainstream class. Co-teaching also creates the conditions for knowledge sharing among teachers, enhancing their pedagogical repertoire. Although the need to collaborate more was identified by all teachers in this enquiry, so too was the lack of dedicated time for collaboration. As such, forms of capacity building for teachers and schools could address levels of interfacing and complementariness of roles in

teachers' practices of inclusion to facilitate coherence in the deliberate promotion of learning for all, including those with SEN.

Although emerging and presented as three central themes in teachers' constructions of inclusive practice, communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation are interrelated. This interrelationship of themes and implications for policy, practice and professional preparation form the substance of the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER TWELVE

WHITHER INCLUSION: PEDAGOGY, POLICY AND PRACTICE?

INTRODUCTION

Consistent with the focus, the questions this enquiry addressed were as follows:

How do resource and class teachers interpret and construct practices to include children with SEN in mainstream primary school?

More specifically, how do resource and class teachers interpret the policy and principles of inclusion?

How do they translate their interpretations into action?

How do their actions influence the learning experiences of the children, particularly those with SEN?

The enquiry's purpose was to provide insight into inclusive practice in the mainstream setting from the perspectives of the key constructors of that practice and to increase understanding of inclusion by systematically documenting teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines. Additionally, it was anticipated that documenting these 'realities' had potential to inform, refine and alter existing policies while also providing insights relating to improvement of practice through professional development programmes. Interviews to elicit teachers' interpretations combined with observations to document the detail of practice generated data from which nine case studies were crafted. Based on the naturalistic paradigmatic assumption that by studying individual cases, insights are gained which can "illuminate the general" (Denscombe, 2003, p. 30), adequate contextual detail has been furnished to enable the reader to assess the "transferability" of findings to other situations (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 124). Consistent with interpretive enquiry espousing a grounded theory approach, the cumulative impact of detail and interpretation serves to provide a theoretically convincing base to support the insights garnered in terms of contributing to understanding of inclusion. Drawing on the enquiry's findings and grounded in the three central themes of communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation, the purpose of this concluding chapter is to articulate those insights in a manner that

illuminates existing policy and practice while addressing identifiable professional development needs that the evidence suggests may require attention. The chapter is structured in four sections with the first focusing on inclusion and the relatedness of the three central themes. The second section documents the implications for policy, practice and professional preparation, while the remaining two sections consider strengths and limitations of the enquiry and recommendations for future research respectively.

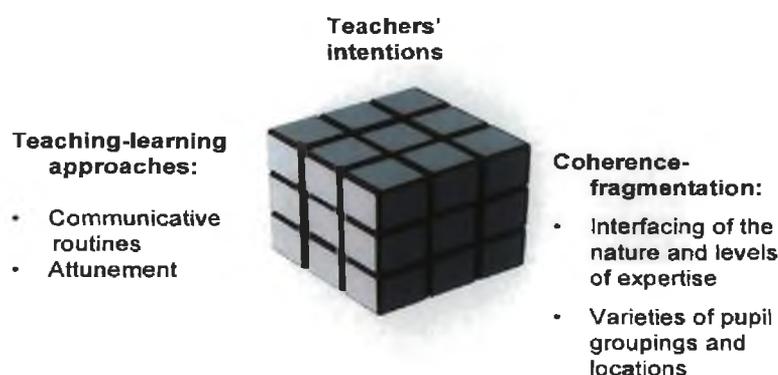
INCLUSION AND THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF COMMUNICATIVE ROUTINES, ATTUNEMENT AND COHERENCE-FRAGMENTATION

Revisiting the enquiry's research question, rapid and successive policy reforms and many and varied principles of inclusive ideology have given rise to multiple interpretations in teachers' practice. Teaching-learning activities that connect with the needs of the learner are the priority while the degree of inclusion they provide is secondary in teachers' constructions of inclusive practices. At times, the withdrawal setting is more appropriate for the intensity of teaching necessary to secure intentional learning of children with SEN. In the mainstream class, their intentional learning is enhanced by one-to-one and small group tuition and by co-teaching practices. Inclusion is highly complex and dilemmatic given the heterogeneity of learners represented in any one class grouping, expectations regarding curriculum which forms the teaching-learning focus, and teacher knowledge and expertise. As currently practised, inclusion leaves much to be desired since learners with SEN are accommodated only to the extent that they can be included within the needs of the mainstream class. Paradoxically, the very resources provided to facilitate inclusion contribute to separate, fragmented, marginalised and often times exclusionary teaching-learning experiences for learners with SEN.

As discussed in Chapter Two, in his Gulliford Lecture in 2005, Wedell (2005) acknowledged widespread concern about the problems in "implementing inclusion" and predicting changes required, he advocated the consideration of three features of an education system "if inclusion is to be realisable" (p. 7). To reiterate, and presented by Wedell (2005) in matrix form to illustrate their interrelatedness, these features are as follows: teaching-learning approaches that are personalised and responsive; nature and

levels of expertise; and, varieties of pupil groupings and locations in which learning may occur¹. In his advocacy for consideration of these features, Wedell (2005) notes: “it is interesting that, compared with ten years ago, one can now discuss these features in relation to some current Government policies” (p. 7). The distinctive contribution of this enquiry to understanding inclusion is that teachers’ interpretations and constructions of inclusive practice are grounded in the central tenets of communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation. Borrowing the concept of the matrix, but based on understanding and actions of teachers in this enquiry rather than on advocacy, the central tenets of inclusive practice, their interrelatedness and their connection with teachers’ intentions are represented in Figure 12.1.

Figure 12.1: Central tenets of inclusive practice, their interrelatedness and their connection with teachers’ intentions



¹ For the purpose of clarification (reported in Chapter Two), elaborating on teaching-learning approaches, Wedell (2005) emphasises “personalising” learning which requires teachers “to be able to use the evidence of pupils’ response to decide how and when they should alter their teaching approaches” (p. 8). The nature and levels of expertise refer to the following: the need for high levels of teachers’ understanding of the nature of child and adolescent development, of learning processes and the content of what is to be learnt; deeper consideration of teacher roles and how “collaboration and co-ordination should be implemented in the wider context of mainstream provision”; and, increasing recognition of the teacher’s role in supporting and facilitating learning rather than the transmission of curricular content (p. 8). Variety of pupil groupings and locations underscores flexibility to match learner needs and demands of the curriculum which Wedell (2005) argues “is clearly at the heart of progress towards inclusion” (p. 8).

In terms of illuminating existing policy and practice, the tenets represented above constitute a development of the three features advocated by Wedell (2005). Firstly, this enquiry's systematic documentation of teachers' interpretations of inclusive policy and ideology informing their intentions implicitly recognises the critical importance of teachers' understanding in shaping practice. Any consideration of challenges in 'implementing inclusion' that sidelines or ignores the voice of teachers provides only a partial narrative. The enquiry's focus on the interplay between the policy and principles of inclusion, resource and class teachers' interpretations of this and the manner in which policy and principle is enacted in their practice has potential to provide a more complete narrative of inclusion. Secondly, although Wedell (2005) acknowledges the importance of responsiveness and 'personalising' teaching, this enquiry elaborates on the nature of teaching-learning approaches to sustain and support inclusion. Specifically, the enquiry's documentation of communicative routines provides detail on teachers' verbal interactions that facilitate inclusion, while documentation of attunement contributes to the presentation of a sophisticated pedagogy which adds to understanding of the complexities of the teaching-learning process. Finally, Wedell's (2005) two features of nature and levels of expertise and varieties of pupil grouping and location were contextualised in the reality of teaching-learning experiences in this enquiry under the theme of coherence-fragmentation. As such, their significance in contributing to inclusion is dependent on the nature and levels of resource and class teacher interfacing and extent of complementariness of teachers' roles.

Evidence from this enquiry indicates that the communicative routines that are critical to intentional learning of children with SEN are questioning to assess progress within a lesson, given its significant potential to determine subsequent pacing and direction of learning, and mediated talk which constitutes a very specific form of scaffolding (Gillies, 2006; Myhill, 2006). Although teachers identified learning through language and specifically the use of talk and discussion as a teaching approach to facilitate inclusion, the nature of teacher communicative routines enabling inclusion remained unarticulated in their intentions. As such, in terms of teacher expertise, details of this enquiry suggest that increased understanding of the type and purpose of verbal interactions initiated by teachers and awareness of their pivotal role in promoting

the learner from her / his cognitive and emotional zone to a plateau of possibility where new learning can occur. Resonating with procedural rather than principled learning², the plateau becomes a temporary resting place where further scaffolding may be necessary to scale subsequent cognitive challenges and so, the plateau is the launch pad for transformative learning. Contextualising of learning occurs in the transactional interplay of teacher's reflexivity and pupil's learning processes, contributing to transformative teaching-learning episodes. Ongoing in the teaching-learning encounter, transformative elements are most evident in the renewed insights regarding the dynamics between the learner and the processes of teaching and learning gleaned by the teacher and incorporation of these insights in subsequent action and interaction, and in the progressive intentional learning of the children.

Illuminating the interrelatedness of teaching-learning approaches and teacher expertise, the learning potential of attunement is dependent on teachers' reflexive thinking about learning which is grounded in their knowledge³ and professional experience. The distinct contribution of attunement to teachers' inclusive practice calls into question the pedagogical determinism implied in the reviewed research on practices for teaching children with SEN in mainstream settings (Dowker, 2001; Stockall and Gartin, 2002; Cass et al., 2003; Witzel et al., 2003; Flem et al., 2004; Johnson and McDonnell, 2004). Rather than adhering to a 'teaching script', applying interventions or implementing programmes identified as effective or best practice, details of this enquiry support the significance of fine tuning teachers' recognition of the nature of teacher-learner actions and interactions to augment their practices of creating and sustaining teaching-learning episodes that deliberately promote learning for all regardless of method, in pursuit of greater inclusion.

Attunement pervades the practices of resource teachers who teach children in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. However, the enquiry's evidence indicates that attunement for all in the diverse classroom is highly complex to achieve with regularity by even the most competent of teachers. As with the use of mediated talk in teachers' communicative routines, the enquiry's details indicate that attunement to advance each

² For elaboration, see footnote 14, Chapter Ten

³ This refers to teacher's knowledge of the learner, the subject-matter and pedagogical principles and teaching methods.

learners. Furthermore, advocating the common, distinct and unique framework of needs supported by the integral-distinctive conceptualisation discussed in Chapter Two, the principles of differentiation endorse the commonality of all pupils as the starting point for planning and teaching (Visser, 1993; O'Brien, 1998; O'Brien and Guiney, 2001; Holdsworth, 2005; Norwich and Kelly, 2005; Griffin and Shevlin, 2007). Although intent on including and addressing the needs of all, a starting point that progresses from the commonality of all learners to differentiating for the distinctive and individual needs of some paradoxically reinforces a mindset that regards those with SEN as occupying a secondary position in relation to the more significant majority of learners and is therefore somewhat antithetical to inclusion.

In contrast, the principles of attunement endorse the considered selection of learning experiences and outcomes, teaching approaches and resources to connect with each individual within the context of a curricular theme or topic common to all. This implicitly recognises the dual starting point of individual learners and of theme; learning experiences are crafted to consider the multiple and related learning outcomes for each individual in relation to that theme. Within the framework of attunement, certain multiple and related learning outcomes for each individual may be shared by all, some shared by a group and some unique to the individual. Consequently, teaching-learning experiences and outcomes may differ in connection with varied developmental levels within the class grouping. Also, social and environmental factors relating to the need for varied individualised supports are considered, acknowledging a relational aspect between learner and environment in understanding SEN. Rather than planning for common needs of the class as if one homogenous group and then adapting, varying and modifying the class plan to accommodate distinctive and unique needs, the implications of the principles of attunement for planning, pedagogy and practice are that the teacher selects a theme and, considering individual learners in the class grouping, generates multiple learning outcomes related to the theme and as relevant across curriculum areas. Considering individual learners means that diversity is addressed at the outset and reflected in the range of learning outcomes. The teacher then determines methods and resources that are likely to lead to achievement of the outcomes; this may result in some teaching-learning experiences shared by all and some that are varied to address

diversity. Evident in its principles, attunement is more holistic, generative and inclusive than differentiation.

In addition to communicative routines and attunement, details of the enquiry highlight coherence-fragmentation as a fundamental tenet of inclusion. At an organisational level, tensions associated with balancing withdrawal support and mainstream class teaching contributed to more or less fragmentation of learning. Specifically, lack of synchrony between the timetabling of withdrawal support and the mainstream class timetable and the practice of withdrawing children from certain learning experiences in curriculum areas which are accessible to their class peers suggest that despite the rhetoric and practice of having children with SEN in mainstream, the learner with SEN is made to feel marginalised in that milieu (Sugrue, 2006). Furthermore, pace of learning in terms of continuity, time required to process information and number of learning experiences necessary to allow for consolidation emerged as critical in the education of learners with SEN and their inclusion. This gives rise to two distinct but related issues: the experiences of learning as encountered by the learner with SEN and the extent to which the construction of those learning experiences, from the learner's perspective, foster inclusion or fragmentation and therefore, forms of exclusion within the mainstream setting. Substantiating the importance of variety of pupil grouping and location, small group and one-to-one teaching practised by resource teachers allowed intensity of teaching and adjustment of pace to address the needs of the children with SEN, securing their participation and enabling learning. However, group and class teaching practised by class teachers paced to teach an age appropriate curriculum matching the needs of the majority frequently compromised learning for children with SEN, reinforced their marginality and contributed to exclusionary experiences. This further highlights the need for realistic numbers of qualified teachers to secure the resource and class teacher collaboration necessary to promoting inclusion and intentional learning of all.

The IEP was prominent in the development of individually relevant learning programmes for children with SEN. Although teachers considered devising the IEP as a shared activity, responsibility for devising, implementing and reviewing was undertaken by the resource teacher, supporting a division of labour between resource and class

teacher. This division of labour paralleled a division of curriculum areas into specific sets of skills and concepts, distorting coherence of curriculum and contributing to fragmentation of learning determined by dual foci and separate programmes. As such, great demands to synthesise learning from a number of sources and locations across the mainstream setting are required of the children least likely to be able to synthesise. The lack of joint responsibility in planning the programme reinforces a discontinuity of curriculum between class and resource teacher. This contributes to a lacuna in teaching and learning which may result from interpretation of the IEP as additional to, and not a substitute for, the curriculum, a definition widely promoted in the literature; it may also result from interpretation of the roles of resource and class teacher provided in guidelines issued by the DES. Although requirements regarding collaboration among teachers are specified, the role of resource teacher is defined as assisting schools in providing support for children with SEN and of class teacher as having primary responsibility for all children in the class. Without any cross-referencing of roles vis-à-vis learners needing additional support in the definitions provided, discontinuities in planning and practice are inevitable.

A distinctive contribution of coherence-fragmentation to inclusion rests in the acceptance of varieties of pupil grouping and location being accompanied by optimal interfacing of class and resource teachers' expertise. Such interfacing is critical to creating more porous boundaries between teaching in mainstream and withdrawal settings. Although teachers in six schools practised minimal levels of interfacing, details of this enquiry indicated that increased complementariness of role was linked with greater coherence in teaching-learning experiences and enhancement of intentional learning. More optimal levels of complementariness of teachers' practices contributed to class programmes attuned to secure individually relevant learning where individual learning targets generated multiple and related objectives which were addressed through topics relevant to all learners in the class grouping and across curriculum areas. In response to managing the persistent dilemma for class teachers associated with the challenge of addressing individual needs in the context of class teaching, only two resource and class teacher pairings interfaced at the level of co-teaching. To the extent that co-teaching created the conditions for a learning context with potential to facilitate

teachers' use of mediated talk and practices of attunement central to the intentional learning of children with SEN, details of this enquiry support a pivotal role for resource and class teacher collaboration and interfacing in meeting the diverse needs of learners in the mainstream class. Furthermore, co-teaching reduced fragmentation for those who have least resources to cope with it by addressing the issue of timetabling of withdrawal which had resulted in learners with SEN missing other curriculum areas while being stigmatised in the process. Restructuring of the learning environment to secure increased levels of interfacing is envisaged in guidelines issued by the DES (Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05) (2003; 2004; 2005a) in relation to collaboration and co-teaching. However, co-planning and co-reviewing⁵ presuppose dedicated planning time which teachers in the enquiry have indicated they do not have, while co-teaching is dependent on the availability of an adequate number of teachers. Furthermore, as with communicative routines and attunement, optimal levels of interfacing are inextricably linked with teachers' knowledge and expertise and their capacity for knowledge sharing, which in turn highlights the critical role of professional preparation and development.

Revisiting this enquiry's purpose, apart from enhancing understanding of inclusion, documenting the 'realities' of inclusive practice has potential to inform, refine and alter existing policies while the evidence may also illuminate improvement of practice through professional development programmes. Having articulated these realities, key aspects of policy, practice and professional preparation with potential to shape more inclusive practice in the mainstream primary school setting are considered in the following section.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

The issues relating to policy, practice and professional preparation that have emerged from this enquiry to advance the 'cause' of inclusion are presented in three subsections. A table summarising these issues concludes this section.

⁵ Regarding use of the term co-review throughout this chapter, review denotes monitoring of learners' progress, monitoring of the influence of co-teaching practices on the teaching-learning experiences and outcomes, and record-keeping.

Issues and implications for policy

As argued in Chapter One, although presented as a capacity building measure to facilitate inclusion but with all the appearance of deficit reaction to crisis management, the categories of high and low incidence special needs along with the GAM were established by the DES to determine allocation of resources on the quantitative basis of assessed individual need combined with prevalence estimates. Copper fastening this system of resource allocation, guidance was provided to primary schools on the deployment and organisation of teaching resources for children with SEN directing resource and class teachers to plan collaboratively and implement a range of teaching approaches combining in-class and withdrawal. Such planning and teaching potentially constitute a restructuring and transformation of practice. However, in so far as teachers in this enquiry are typical, details have indicated that resource and class teachers interpret their roles in relation to educating learners with SEN as distinctive. Consequently, they furrow parallel pathways contributing to fragmentation of learning determined by dual foci and separate programmes. Even though the evidence indicates that increased complementariness of role was linked with greater coherence in teaching-learning experiences and enhancement of intentional learning, only in the interpretations of teachers in three of the nine schools involved in the enquiry was there evidence of more optimal levels of teacher interfacing, with just two resource and class teacher pairings interfacing at the level of co-teaching. The lack of restructuring to facilitate more optimal levels of interfacing relates to a number of fundamental capacity building issues listed as follows and elaborated below: the allocation of adequate teacher provision, dedicated time to plan and review, professional preparation, and documentation relating to the IEP and to definition and role of resource teacher and class teacher. Whatever the policy intended therefore, a twin track approach to teaching and learning for learners with SEN continues to pervade when a more sophisticated choreography of planning and pedagogy is evidently necessary and more appropriate if policy aspirations for inclusion are to become a reality.

for mainstream schools. It is also worth noting that in other jurisdictions there is considerably more flexibility with regard to staffing. In order to address this systemic failure, it may be necessary and appropriate to reduce the teaching-contact time of a class teacher with learners with SEN by five to ten percent to enable the kind of planning to occur that is evidently warranted⁶.

Documentation relating to IEP

The promotion of the IEP in documentation as additional to and not a substitute for the curriculum, supports teachers' interpretation of the IEP as additional to and separate from the mainstream class programme. Such an interpretation may be acceptable for teachers working in special schools or special classes who, by virtue of the setting, are the sole teachers of the children with SEN. However, in the mainstream setting where children with SEN are taught by at least two teachers, but spend the majority of the school day with the class teacher, such an interpretation contributes to a discontinuity of curriculum between class and resource teacher and inhibits joint responsibility in planning and teaching. To secure increased coherence in the learning experiences of learners with SEN and promote more inclusive practice, policy documentation has to reframe the IEP as an individually relevant learning programme with multiple links to the mainstream class curriculum. Within this frame of reference, individual learning targets from the IEP generate multiple and related outcomes which are addressed through themes or topics relevant to all learners in the class grouping and across curriculum areas, in a planning process which involves both resource and class teacher.

Documentation relating to definition and role of resource teacher and class teacher

Since teachers' interpretation of class and resource teacher role supports the division of labour and fragmentation of learning determined by dual foci and separate programmes evident in this enquiry, the organisational and pedagogical flexibility

⁶ Under the terms of the Croke Park agreement (an attempt to secure 'efficiencies' in the public service in return for no further pay cuts), it is anticipated that teachers will work the equivalent of an additional hour of non-contact time per week which may secure such dedicated time for planning, the details of which are under negotiation at the time of writing.

implicit in more optimal levels of interfacing may be dependent on the roles and responsibilities ascribed to teachers. As such, policy documentation relating to definition of role and to guidelines regarding responsibilities has to capture the dynamics and intricacies of the resource and class teacher relationship vis-à-vis learners with SEN. Specifically, a reconceptualisation of role definition needs to consider resource teacher and class teacher interfacing at the levels of planning, teaching, monitoring progress and record-keeping in the promotion of intentional learning of children with diverse needs. This has implications for school leaders and whole school planning in terms of establishing and supporting a collaborative culture which gives substance to the reconceptualisation of teachers' roles.

Definition of SEN in Irish legislation

As discussed in Chapter Two, definitions of SEN provided in Irish legislation, which influence policy directives and guidelines, reflect the psycho-medical model of special needs. This focuses attention on the particularities of the individual's body and/or mind while ignoring the marginalising and exclusionary practices and structures of schools and society. Rather than upholding a commitment to inclusion, such an emphasis supports constructions of practice that are focused on the individual child, reactive and intervention based, aimed at addressing restrictions or deficits. The details of this enquiry indicate that learning of children with SEN is enabled by teachers' communicative routines and attunement and that the organisational structure of the teaching-learning context in the form of smaller groups withdrawn to the resource room or co-taught within the mainstream class is linked with the frequency of mediated talk and attunement. As such, there is evidence that the type of support provided and design of teaching-learning context make a difference. Such evidence highlights the relevance of the interaction between the abilities and needs of the learner with SEN and the environment. This relationship between learner and design of teaching-learning context is acknowledged in international definitions of SEN⁷ and represents a relational aspect of needs. Furthermore, acknowledgement of interaction between learner and environment in understanding SEN reinforces a mindset of looking beyond the label. As

⁷ See footnote 5, Chapter Two

such, it has potential to guide teachers to consider the learning context, the nature and presentation of learning activities and form of additional supports for some in the context of education for all in their constructions of practice. Specifically, definitions of SEN in Irish legislation and policy documentation could consider the interaction between learner and design of teaching-learning context to promote further teachers' practices of addressing potential barriers to participation in learning. Deferral of the EPSEN Act (Government of Ireland, 2004) may be timely in this regard.

Policy documentation and the principles of attunement

Although the term is not specifically cited in the documentation of the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999), differentiation is promoted in policy documentation relating to the education and inclusion of learners with SEN (NCCA, 2007; NEPS, 2007). However, as a central tenet of inclusive practice in this enquiry, attunement challenges the degree of inclusiveness that it is possible to promote or attain through differentiation. As argued in the previous section, in recognising the dual starting point of individual learners and of curricular or subject-matter theme and considering the multiple and related learning outcomes for each individual in relation to that theme, the principles of attunement are holistic and inclusive in addressing diversity. Within the context of attunement, diversity becomes a fundamental determinant in planning and teaching, rather than the 'add on' following consideration of the commonality of all learners implicit in differentiation. Apart from underscoring the significance of teachers' knowledge and expertise in understanding the nature of diversity, policy documentation could consider incorporation of the principles of attunement and the function of attuned learning experiences and outcomes in the promotion of inclusion. From a policy-practice perspective, the professional preparation of teachers has a critical role to play in developing understanding of the principles and sophisticated pedagogies necessary to deploy attunement. Acknowledging the overlap of policy-practice and professional preparation and development issues, the following subsection focuses on implications of the enquiry's findings for practice and pedagogy.

Issues and implications for practice

The issues and implications for practice relate to collaborative practices and the pedagogy and practice of communicative routines and attunement. These issues with certain implications for CPD are elaborated below.

Teachers' collaborative practices

In the context of the levels of diversity typical of mainstream primary classes, teaching practices predicated on assumptions regarding the homogeneity of children's learning needs by chronology are ill conceived. Proposed to accommodate diverse needs and inclusion, the integral-distinctive conceptualisation of SEN discussed in Chapter Two combines common, distinctive and unique needs. However, details of this enquiry contribute to refinement of this common, distinctive and unique needs framework. Arising from teachers' practices of attunement with the starting point of individual learners and a focus on learning, consideration of what is common, distinctive and unique is only useful in so far as it sheds light on which of the learning outcomes related to curricular theme or topic may be common to all, distinctive to some and unique to others. Furthermore, acknowledging the interplay between learner and environment, this enquiry adds relational needs to the conceptualisation of SEN. In this context, rather than exclusively promoting either specialisation or commonality of teaching, addressing individual needs while accommodating inclusive principles, requires increasingly higher levels of expertise. In terms of implications for practice, resource teacher and class teacher collaboration has potential to contribute to securing the necessary levels of expertise. However, teacher collaboration alone is insufficient to develop this expertise entirely and as such CPD also has a critical role to play. Furthermore, the details of this enquiry indicate that increased complementariness of role is linked with greater coherence in teaching-learning experiences and enhancement of intentional learning, supporting optimal levels of resource and class teacher interfacing in practice. Optimal levels of interfacing relate to co-planning, co-teaching and co-reviewing. However, given that only three of nine schools in the enquiry practised more optimal levels of interfacing and the consistency of this finding with previous research indicating minimal

collaboration among resource and class teachers, such interfacing constitutes a radical shift in teachers' practices. The imperative of addressing capacity building issues relating to CPD and those previously identified in relation to policy becomes more apparent if the pedagogical and organisational flexibility implied by optimal interfacing and necessary to promote the intentional learning of all is to be secured in practice.

Pedagogy and practice relating to communicative routines and attunement

As pedagogical elements that support inclusion, this enquiry highlights the importance of teachers' communicative routines and practices of attunement. Regarding communicative routines, questioning to assess progress within a lesson and teacher mediated talk are critical to the intentional learning of children with SEN. To the extent that smaller groups withdrawn to the resource room or co-taught within the mainstream class facilitated their use, this supports the need previously identified for policy measures to create the conditions necessary to secure these communicative routines in the learning experiences of children with SEN. Additionally, more frequent use of assessment-focused questions and mediated talk by class teachers in the context of whole class teaching could be enabled by increasing understanding of the type and purpose of verbal interactions initiated by teachers and awareness of their pivotal role in promoting learning while sustaining inclusion. This signals a focus for professional preparation on the development of teachers' communicative routines; the observation schedule devised for this enquiry considers type and purpose of teachers' verbal interactions and could be useful in augmenting communicative expertise.

Attunement refers to transactional teacher-learner actions and interactions which are the gateway to transformational teaching-learning episodes and are central to the intentional learning of all children, particularly those with SEN. As a central tenet of inclusion, attunement has implications for practice in so far as it requires teachers to draw reflexively on their knowledge of teaching and learning and on their understanding of the learner in order to contextualise the learning as particular teaching moments emerge; such contextualisation enables learning. The principles of attunement also have implications for practice to the extent that they denote diversity as a fundamental determinant in planning, nurturing a mindset that recognises the dual starting point of

individual learners and of theme. Within the frame of reference of attunement, teachers' planning and practice considers the multiple and related learning outcomes for each individual in relation to a curricular theme, and then focuses on certain multiple and related learning outcomes shared by all, shared by a group and unique to the individual. Furthermore, in light of previous statements relating to policy documentation and reframing of the IEP, rather than being regarded as an 'add on', diversity is addressed from the outset in so far as multiple links are determined between the individually relevant learning programmes for children with SEN and their mainstream class curriculum. The implication for teachers' planning is that this process involves both resource and class teacher jointly using IEP learning targets as a stimulus to generate multiple learning outcomes to be addressed through themes relevant to all learners in the class grouping and across all curriculum areas. As the practice of attunement is dependent on teachers' reflexive thinking about learning, grounded in their knowledge and professional experience, it also has implications for professional development. Specifically, professional development has a significant role to play in at least fine tuning teachers' recognition of the nature of teacher-learner actions and interactions to augment their practices of creating and sustaining teaching-learning episodes that deliberately promote learning for all regardless of method, in pursuit of greater inclusion. Although referred to previously, implications of the enquiry for professional preparation and CPD are presented in the final subsection.

Issue and implications for professional preparation and development

Achieving and sustaining inclusion grounded in the foundations of communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation is dependent on class and resource teachers having and sharing knowledge of the range of pedagogical principles, curriculum and generic teaching methods, understanding of how and why pedagogy and curriculum are attuned to individual needs, and proficiency of communicative routines to reflect such knowledge and understanding. This signals the significance of the study of child and adolescent development, of conceptualisations of special needs and diversity, and of the processes of teaching and learning in initial and further professional development of teachers. In a teaching-learning context of

increasing diversity with attendant expectations regarding the reconceptualisation and restructuring of teachers' roles and practices, it is imperative that teachers are professionally prepared to fulfil the roles required of them. However, this is not to imply that these roles are static. Rather, policy evolves and mutates through practitioner adaptation and while issues raised by the enquiry indicate worthwhile next steps in the transformation towards inclusion, they are not intended to function as a blueprint. This implicitly acknowledges the need for continuous review and continuous CPD.

As previously stated, the development of teachers' communicative routines and practices of attunement is a matter for professional preparation courses as is development of knowledge and expertise relating to the collaborative practices of co-planning, co-teaching and co-reviewing. As such, the tenability of separate modules in initial professional preparation courses, focusing on aspects of diversity and on special needs education in particular, is questionable. Although the separateness of the module may lend a certain status to its substance, permeation of knowledge relating to child and adolescent development, diversity, and the processes of teaching and learning has potential to contribute to a more holistic knowledge base for teachers. However, it remains a challenge for initial professional preparation courses to strike the appropriate balance between enabling learning of the necessary knowledge and expertise while avoiding overload. As such, integrating the findings of the enquiry appropriately into initial preparation and CPD is in itself an important policy-practice issue and mechanisms need to be found and put in place to enable this to happen in an ongoing and systematic manner.

Given the fragmentation of teaching-learning experiences and discontinuity of curriculum between resource and class teachers evident in this enquiry, figuring out how to 'join the dots' can no longer be left to chance. In relation to CPD, courses which currently focus on teachers' expertise in diagnostic assessment and planning of an individually relevant learning programme for learners with SEN need to guide teachers working in the mainstream setting on how to link the IEP with the mainstream class curriculum. Specifically, teachers would benefit from professional preparation in determining the multiple and related learning outcomes associated with specific IEP learning targets and their relevance to mainstream class topics and themes across all

curriculum areas. Furthermore, in the context of previous research which highlights the potential of communities of practice to instigate change at school and class levels, there is potential for CPD to adopt a more school-based approach in the professional preparation of teachers regarding management of the IEP in the mainstream setting. This could be undertaken by tutors currently providing CPD in third level institutions working collaboratively with personnel in the SESS and teachers, to address relevant forms of knowledge⁸ and provide on-site technical support. However, there are resource implications for such a recommendation in terms of securing an adequate allocation of tutors and dedicated teachers' time on-site. Nonetheless, such a collaborative endeavour could provide research opportunities, specifically in relation to the influence of this form of CPD as a capacity building initiative and particularly on facilitating change to more inclusive practice. Also, in developing teachers' knowledge of practice through this more school-based approach, leaders, middle management and teachers would have opportunity to evaluate and reflect on their interpretations of inclusive policy in practice. Extending beyond the school community, the inspectorate would also benefit from CPD in order to take these issues and practices into consideration when evaluating the impact of inclusion as a policy and how that policy is interpreted in schools as part of the process of Whole School Evaluation (WSE). A summary of the issues and implications for policy, practice and professional preparation is presented in Table 12.1.

⁸ These three forms of knowledge are identified in footnote 17, Chapter Three.

Table 12.1: Summary of policy, practice and professional preparation implications

Policy	Practice	Professional preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of the GAM system of support allocation allowing adequate teacher provision to secure collaboration and knowledge sharing of class and resource teachers • Dedicated time to secure optimal levels of interfacing in terms of co-planning and co-reviewing • Reframing the IEP as an individually relevant learning programme with multiple links to the mainstream class curriculum • Reconceptualisation of the role of resource teacher and class teacher vis-à-vis learners with SEN • Redefinition of SEN in Irish legislation to consider relational aspect • Incorporation of the principles of attunement in policy documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource teacher and class teacher collaboration across all levels to co-assess, co-plan, co-teach, co-monitor and co-review • Practice relating to teachers' communicative routines, particularly use of mediated talk and questions to assess learning • Practice and pedagogy of attunement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of pedagogical repertoire in relation to teachers' communicative routines and attunement • Development of resource and class teachers' expertise to interface at optimal levels in terms of planning for and promoting the intentional learning of all learners in the mainstream class, including those with SEN • Development of teachers' expertise in linking the individually relevant learning programme with the mainstream class curriculum • CPD for the inspectorate in order to take issues and practices into consideration when evaluating the impact of inclusion as a policy in the WSE process

While this enquiry has provided insight into inclusive practice in the mainstream setting from the perspectives of the key constructors of that practice and increases understanding of inclusion through the systematic documentation of teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines, it has a number of limitations. The enquiry's strengths and limitations are discussed in the following section.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE ENQUIRY

A number of limitations in this enquiry warrant consideration. As discussed in Chapter Four, a methodological limitation relates to the low number of schools and teachers involved which renders generalisation inappropriate to some extent. However, within the naturalistic tradition of interpretive enquiry, the issue is one of transferability rather than generalisation. In this regard, it is the responsibility of the reader to

generalise (Stake, 1995, 2005), where engagement with the detail creates a reflective conversation as the teacher begins to think about his/her practice by imaginatively reconstructing the practice of those who populate the enquiry. The nine case studies generated rich and illuminating data regarding contexts and actors which enables 'generalisability' or transferability to other sites. Systematic and rigorous documentation of detail in terms of thematic analysis regarding teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines is reported throughout while detail relating to eight case studies is included in the appendices and is available for scrutiny and analysis by readers who may judge the transferability of themes and insights to other contexts. An unexpected consequence of the purposive sampling employed in the enquiry in relation to selection of the resource and class teachers was the involvement of a diverse range of schools which maximised the detail from and about each setting, contributing to the generation of typical and divergent data which further substantiates the emergent themes and insights gleaned. As such, the detail of the enquiry has something to offer in primary schools where there are resource teachers working with class teachers in similar and not so similar circumstances. Furthermore, there are pedagogical generalisations applicable elsewhere that could be adopted within teachers' repertoires, for example, attunement is an issue in all classrooms, preferable to differentiation, regardless of the presence or absence of learners with SEN.

My position in relation to the enquiry, as researcher, as former class teacher and resource teacher in a mainstream primary school and as lecturer involved in initial and continuing professional preparation of teachers was both a strength and limitation. Knowledge grounded in professional experience was an asset in heightening my awareness and appreciation of teachers' practices in the teaching-learning episodes and encounters observed, which may have enhanced the extensiveness of the enquiry's detail; however, it may also have been an Achilles' heel. To this end, knowledge informing my understanding of inclusion combined with professional experience relating to my preparation of teachers to assess for, plan and teach individually relevant learning programmes and my observation of these teachers on teaching practice with children with SEN, supported a firmly held view that the professional preparation of teachers to teach children with SEN better in mainstream, was also preparing those

teachers to include. To the extent that this assumption interfered with and delayed the process of data analysis and interpretation, it constituted a limitation. However, being mindful of and responsive to the reflexivity required of qualitative enquiry, every effort was made to identify assumptions and preconceptions, to be self-consciously aware of them, and to work with the evidence in that light. While acknowledging that a process of reflection and refinement is part of the conduct of research and must be expected to influence the outcomes, researcher reflexivity has contributed to the systematic documentation of teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines which remains authentic to their understanding and action regarding inclusion. Furthermore, as reported in Chapter Four, triangulation and peer debriefing were attended to as a means of circumscribing researcher bias⁹.

Against the backdrop of implications relating to policy, practice and professional preparation, areas for investigation which might further enhance current knowledge of teachers' practices of inclusion are suggested in the following section.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This enquiry sought to increase understanding of inclusion through the systematic documentation of the interplay between policy and principles of inclusion, teachers' interpretations of this, and the manner in which policy and principles are enacted in their practice. While acknowledging the shaping influence of the policy environment and school context, increased understanding reinforces the view that the quality of inclusive practice is inextricably linked with teacher knowledge and expertise. As such, further fulfilment of the enquiry's purpose is dependent on opportunities to disseminate the findings with a view to informing adaptations to courses dealing with initial and continuing professional development. In particular, mainstream class teachers, regardless of whether or not they have learners with SEN in their classrooms, could benefit from understanding attunement as a pedagogical concept and embedding it in their pedagogical repertoire. Within such a context, research to investigate links between teachers' knowledge of communicative routines, attunement and optimal

⁹ As indicated in Chapter Four, summaries of interviews, school visits and case studies were shared with the teachers; also, their comments on these summaries were invited and were included in the enquiry's data.

interfacing and their teaching practice to include all learners could further inform decisions regarding professional development courses. Following on the possibility of CPD course providers adopting a more school-based approach in the professional preparation of teachers regarding management of the IEP in the mainstream setting, research to investigate the dynamics and the knowledge- and expertise-increasing capacity of such an approach vis-à-vis changes to practice at school and class levels could also inform professional development courses.

In the context of this enquiry's focus of teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusion, the influence of teachers' actions on the learning experiences of children, particularly those with SEN was also considered. That learners with SEN were made to feel marginalised in the milieu of the mainstream is well documented under the theme on coherence-fragmentation. As substantiated by the case studies, these learners were peripheral in terms of location and participation in collaborative learning activities; the majority pursued programmes in the resource room to develop social skills while teachers' reflections indicated concern regarding their social inclusion, particularly during recess. One of the major arguments in favour of inclusion has been equality of opportunity and treatment along with social development while the cognitive impact on all learners has largely been subordinated to this more general argument. In the context of their marginality in this enquiry, the social development of learners with SEN in mainstream schools may also be an area for further research.

CONCLUSION

Inclusion, in principle and practice, is highly complex and dilemmatic. Within the past two decades in Ireland, rapid and successive policy reforms resulted in the restructuring rather than transformation of educational provision for learners with SEN from segregation to inclusion. This ideological shift with attendant implications for teachers' practice and resources within the system was radical and swift, and severely challenged the established orthodoxy so much so that from the outset, those responsible for devising and enabling policy operated from the reactive stance of crisis management rather than a proactive embrace of and commitment to inclusion. Despite certain capacity building initiatives and changes to the established practices of teachers,

inclusion has to evolve further as learners with SEN are accommodated only to the extent that they can be included within the needs of the mainstream class. Arising from the systematic documentation of teachers' intentions and pedagogical routines in this enquiry, increased understanding of resource and class teachers' interpretations and constructions of inclusion has facilitated the articulation of inclusive practice grounded in the central tenets of communicative routines, attunement and coherence-fragmentation. Developments to practice supported by enabling capacity building measures relating to policy and professional preparation have been identified as a means of mapping the terrain through which inclusion might be further supported and sustained. In the context of a genuine commitment to inclusion, this enquiry calls on all who are in a position to influence change, from bureaucrats and administrators to school principals and teachers to course providers, to reflect on the enquiry's detail and act on the implications. If provoking of thought and action leads to greater inclusion of all learners and particularly the most marginal, then the pursuit of this enquiry will have been all the more worthwhile.

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