

**TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT ADOPTED FORMATIVE
ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES IN TEACHING WRITING
IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

A CASE STUDY

DOCTORATE IN EDUCATION (Ed.D)

APRIL 2005

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DECLARATION

**I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THIS THESIS IS ORIGINAL
AND IS MY OWN WORK.**

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ABSTRACT

Background: This research investigates teachers' beliefs about techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment. The study critically evaluates whether techniques adopted can be considered as formative assessment conceptualised as 'assessment for learning' and whether these techniques change teachers' ideas about teaching writing. This case study is set in an inner city primary school in a North East LEA. It has 300 pupils on roll, 30% of which have English as an additional language and 70% are on the Special Educational Needs register.

Methods: A multi-method approach was used, incorporating positivist and interpretative dimensions. Views of teachers were gathered using a self-completed questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Views of pupils were collected using pupil response templates. Further evidence was collected using direct lesson observations and documentary analysis of teacher's short-term planning for Literacy, targets set for Literacy and samples of children's writing.

Sample: The primary school, consisted of a Headteacher and 15 teaching staff: all teaching staff and the Headteacher completed the questionnaire. Seven teachers participated in semi-structured interview and seven lessons were observed. There were 35 responses for each type of pupil response template used. Documentary analysis of Literacy planning, target setting and children's writing was also undertaken.

Main Outcomes: Most teachers found that the formative assessment techniques they adopted of sharing learning intentions, planning and modelling success criteria had a positive impact on specific elements of their teaching. Some results highlighted that these formative assessment techniques could not be globally applied across the full primary age-range. The research suggests that approaches based on more behaviourist traditions were more applicable for younger children. They also showed that the techniques promoted comprise only the teacher-centred aspects of formative assessment. If a more robust approach is to be used, in order to promote a more authentic approach to ‘assessment for learning’ the pupil dimensions of formative assessment need to be much more actively encouraged.

Conclusions: Teacher-led formative assessment strategies may have potential benefits for specific elements of teaching. However, results also indicated that some strategies of formative assessment could have potentially negative motivational effects upon children and based upon behaviourist traditions. Formative assessment strategies may need to be adapted by practitioners to take into account children’s age and academic ability. There is also the danger that formative assessment could become little more than an instrumental support for SATs, with little attention to pupils’ engagement in learning.

Implications: Practitioners need to be aware of formative assessment strategies and how they can be implemented. Policy makers need to advertise the potential benefits and possible adverse effects of formative assessment and how it can be used. Future research could investigate formative assessment strategies through other curriculum areas and in a wider range of schools, paying particular attention

to the effects of verbal feedback teachers give to their pupils as well as techniques to encourage active pupil involvement in assessment for learning.

INTRODUCTION

“School Improvement has at its heart the improvement of teaching and learning, with assessment essential to both” (Sutton, 2000, p. 75).

Competent teaching and formative assessment are key factors in promoting an effective school. They are key features of both first and second generations of research and policy on school effectiveness. From this research the following key points emerge that are particular to this study:

- **Good quality structured teaching** was vital in effective schools (Edmonds, 1979; Mortimore, 1988; Rutter *et al*, 1979).
- **High expectations** that included challenging teaching with clear academic goals were crucial in promoting learning in children. (Brookover *et al*, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Mortimore, 1988; Rutter *et al*, 1979; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993).
- **Good communication with positive reinforcement** was a key factor. Teachers who talked to and praised individuals were most competent. (Brookover *et al*, 1979; Mortimore, 1988; Teddlie and Stringfield, 1993).
- **Frequent formative assessment** of students to ascertain success of teaching programmes ensured that teacher had realistic knowledge and understanding of pupil progress. (Brookover *et al*, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Mortimore, 1988;).

However, critical analysis of these key points suggests the need for some critical analysis of what might count as standard approaches to how professionals define ‘formative assessment’. If there is no sound understanding of formative assessment and its applications in specific contexts, there could be serious implications for the

effectiveness of schools and the quality of pupils' learning. In addition, a growing body of research shows that a coherent, robust theory of formative assessment is only just emerging and that many teachers are not clear what formative assessment is or where it differs from summative assessment (ARG, 2002; Black *et al*, 2004; see also Torrance and Pryor, 1998). For example, one school may understand formative assessment simplistically, as continuous summative assessment of children's learning for the purposes of external testing, without the information gleaned being used in any constructive way. Additionally, an excessively teacher-centred view of formative assessment may leave pupils out of any meaningful involvement in their own learning (Black *et al*, 2004). In a political context where there is pressure on teachers to produce good learning results, these misinterpretations could lead to teachers feeling overburdened by administrative paper work that has no direct effect upon classroom teaching strategies, or led to didactic, formulaic approaches to formative assessment. Both outcomes could produce negative effects on good quality structured teaching and pupils' ability to take a meaningful part in their learning.

Critical analysis of the key themes in both the school effectiveness and formative assessment literature illuminates therefore crucial factors that are imperative in becoming an effective school and the need for a common interpretation of crucial points of effectiveness. A key question underlying these points is how to improve teachers' ability to promote learning through formative assessment.

In the case study primary school featured in this thesis, I will evaluate teacher and pupil beliefs about an adopted system of formative assessment being used within the context of The National Literacy Strategy (NLS) Framework of objectives for writing.

The teaching of the NLS Framework has been well established in school since Autumn 1998 and the school hopes that assessment strategies adopted will have a positive effect on the teaching of writing as well as on pupils' motivation and autonomy. It is paramount that views of teachers are investigated because their beliefs and understanding about approaches in place maybe vital to successful implementation. Pupils' views may highlight issues about how particular procedures are regarded and used. To summarize, this study is important because it investigates how key stakeholders view the role formative assessment in raising standards in Literacy.

I aim to evaluate a specific approach to promoting formative assessment strategies, specifically aimed at improving the teaching of writing in a large primary school in a North East of England LEA. By evaluating this approach, I hope to promote a qualitative improvement in teachers' commitment to their own Formative Assessment practice.

Initially, I will discuss theories of teacher beliefs and values, followed by a discussion of definitions and strategies of formative assessment. I will synthesise the two areas of discussion and place them in a context of an initiative to improve the teaching and assessment of writing. I endeavour to evaluate critically formative assessment strategies adopted in the school, with reference to theories discussed. This evaluation will enable me to address the following questions:

- Can the strategies adopted in the school be characterised as formative assessment?
- Have the strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment, promoted the teaching of writing within the school? If so, in what ways?

- Do teachers' values and beliefs about adopted formative assessment affect their approach to teaching writing?
- What factors have a positive or negative effect on how teachers regard adopted strategies in teaching writing?
- Do the adopted strategies affect pupils' motivation and autonomy?
- What implications are there for improving formative assessment in the school?

From multi-method data analysis and discussions, I will propose and justify a simple model to link formative assessment strategies and particular elements of teaching, linked to learning theory, motivation and autonomy.

CHAPTER 1:FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Before exploring theories of Formative assessment for learning, it is important to acknowledge growing dissatisfaction about the impact of summative assessment of learning (Broadfoot, 1996). For example, some teachers may see summative assessment as an unrealistic snapshot of a pupil's learning that is used for external agencies, rather than an indicator of new concept acquisition that can be useful for the teacher to inform next steps in learning. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis within primary schools on national statutory summative assessments, which have skewed teaching approaches due to a disparity between curriculum and test content. This pressurises teachers to shift teaching and learning approaches from understanding complex skills and knowledge, to approaches that involve rote learning and practice tests for immediate yet short-term success. (Assessment Reform Group, 1999; Black, 2000; Newton, 2000).

In addition, Broadfoot (1996) highlights growing political and academic concern about lack of validity and reliability of both national and external tests. Not only do test items often fail to measure their intended skills and knowledge, but testing also has an unattractive effect on instruction by affecting the nature of the curriculum children are receiving. That is teachers may teach unwittingly to a hidden test agenda and with possible negative effects upon children's motivation (Assessment and Reform Group, 2002). As James points out, "You cannot fatten the pig simply by weighing it" (James, 1998, p.171): instead, something meaningful has to be done with the outcomes of assessment. Assessment measures serve little purpose to the learner if nothing is done with them. To be useful, assessment should contribute to the future learning of children and formative assessment aims to do that.

This is compounded by the external pressure placed upon schools by central government agencies and the LEA for the school to reach prescriptive numerical targets.

Awareness within schools, local education authorities and government agencies about the limitations of relying on summative assessment procedures has promoted great interest in formative assessment for learning, and research findings also show formative assessment to be very effective in promoting learning gains (Black, 2000).

Ideas about formative assessment:

In order to analyse how formative assessment has influenced the teaching of writing, clear theories and definitions of formative assessment are crucial. A better understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of formative assessment could help us justify and explain the value of practical classroom approaches.

Political interest in formative assessment

QCA (April, 2000) have attempted to define formative assessment as something that

“...happens all the time in the classroom. It is rooted in self-referencing; a pupil needs to know where s/he is and understand where s/he wants to be but also how to “fill the gap”. This involves both the teacher and the learner in a process of continual reflection and review. The teacher provides quality feedback to the learner ...”
(Neesom, QCA, April, 1999, p.22)

According to research and government support for formative assessment, a variety of formative assessment procedures can and should have a constructive bearing on raising children's achievement in the primary school. As early as the Nursery and Reception years of a child's educational life, assessment could be used to ensure that the learning needs of the child are met. Baseline assessment of children's acquisition

of stepping-stones towards their early learning goals could inform subsequent teachers of relevant next steps in learning within the National Curriculum (Sainsbury, 1998; DFEE, May 2000).

Formative assessment processes can ascertain precise knowledge that children need, namely the skills acquired over time to contribute to broader National Curriculum objectives and could gauge a child's understanding of concepts and how their knowledge and skills can be applied to new learning situations (Morgan, April 1999). Shirley Clarke (1998) stresses this viewpoint: " All assessment processes should be useful, and should have a specific purpose which ought be clear to the teacher (see also Sutton, 1997; Powell, 1999). They must have a positive impact on children's learning and the teacher's teaching- they must make a difference to be worthwhile." (p.2). Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasised that improvement in formative assessment systems could contribute to "... significant, and often substantial learning gains..." (p.3). Drawing on Black and Wiliam's research, the Assessment Reform Group (1999), concluded from their review of research that:

"...initiatives designed to enhance the effectiveness of the way assessment is used in the classroom to promote learning can raise pupil achievement." (p.4).

Techniques of formative assessment

Clarke (2001) and The Assessment Reform Group (1999) highlight characteristics of assessment that promote learning. They argue that formative assessment should be implanted within teaching and learning. It should involve pupils in their learning so they know and are aware of the standards they are aiming for. This could imply that pupils are involved in their own self-assessment. Formative assessment provides

feedback to pupils, which should enable both them and the teacher to address the next steps in learning.

Good formative assessment is also integral to teaching competence and to pupils' learning (Clarke, 2001). Recognition of formative assessment's essential function to promote learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998) has resulted in a new emphasis in the OFSTED Handbook (2000), which asks, "Do teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and use assessments to help and encourage pupils to overcome difficulties?". Within this OFSTED framework, specific criteria direct inspectors to look for effective teaching, where teachers look for and identify lack of concept acquisition in learners. For OFSTED then, the effectiveness of the teacher will come from how teachers act upon responses and information gleaned from assessment to re-address teaching to clarify misunderstandings and promote concept acquisition. In contrast to this teacher-centred view, a definition of formative assessment by Black and Wiliam (1998) suggest that formative assessment procedures influence all features of classroom teaching and is therefore much more wide-ranging than OFSTED implies (Black, 2000). Black and Wiliam (1998) argue that:

"... Activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged." (Black and Wiliam, 1998, p.7).

In theory, formative assessment evaluates how well children fulfil the teacher's and children's learning intentions. It enables the teacher to provide feedback to the pupil, but also informs subsequent planning of learning outcomes for the individual. Black and Wiliam have stressed that assessment only becomes formative "...when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet the needs.", or when

students use feedback pro-actively to improve (Black and Wiliam, 1998 p.2). Formative assessment involves a variety of practical techniques, beginning with teacher's planning; sharing learning intentions with children; marking, feedback, evaluations and target setting. Each strategy satisfies a particular purpose. They ensure that learning outcomes are clear and the next steps in short-term planning are accurately informed. This could guarantee that the pupil and teacher focus on the purpose of the task and they are both aware of learning intentions. Potentially then, formative assessment strategies allow the teacher to track diagnostically the progress children have made and to provide targets and records of children's learning needs. In other words, it should ensure that teachers know where children are in their understanding, in order that teachers can plan where children need to go next (James, 1998).

Implications for Pedagogy in the Literacy Hour

However, it could be argued that teacher pedagogy is more complex in my study, since pedagogical issues not only relate to Literacy, but could also relate to teachers' assessment pedagogy. For example, Black (1998) found that formative assessment within the classroom was less accurate when teachers were not clear about its purpose or methods. Therefore, evidence collected was inappropriate or teachers used appropriate evidence inappropriately. For example, Black and Wiliam (1998) found that:

“For formative purposes a test at the end of a block or module of teaching is pointless in that it is too late to work with the results” (p12-13)

Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasise the need for active pupil involvement where pupils have a clear understanding about their learning and how they need to progress. However, moving formative assessment forward in school could be determined by current school priorities and the needs of the pupils. In this case study primary school, significant barriers to this approach included the need to develop speaking and listening skills in pupils who start school with English language delay or no spoken English at all. However, there is still a top-down governmental pressure upon schools to integrate formative assessment within the Literacy Hour irrespective of the needs of the school.

Dean (2000) argues that direct teaching styles are effective methods to use formative assessment to check that children understand a concept, and are an “economical way” of ensuring learning has taken place. In fact, during whole class plenary sessions in Literacy, the teacher reinforces, consolidates, and assesses taught learning intentions. However, formative assessment within a small group focussed teaching situation allows the teacher to concentrate on facilitating and accessing a deeper understanding of children’s learning. This could be due to a smaller teacher to pupil ratio.

Teachers ask many different types of questions for a variety of different purposes (Clarke, 2001; Gipps, 1994). For example, closed questions elicit the recalling of factual knowledge by the learner. Open questions allow for a range of responses from learners and could promote more complex cognitive demands of deduction and inference that foster a deeper understanding of concepts. Clarke (2001) argues that teachers use a variety of types of questioning as a form of formative assessment to glean particular responses from children. Teachers could use different types of

questions within different parts of the literacy hour (Knight, 2000): for example, during the whole class shared work, the teacher could use questions to assess what children know and remember; during guided reading or writing group sessions questions can be used to engage the pupils to reflect on their learning and therefore develop critical thinking:

“Through effective questioning, the teacher can assess the pupils’ understanding and can move them forward in their learning.” (Clarke, 2001, P.93).

Formative assessment of children’s knowledge and misunderstandings can be highlighted through the use of different categories of questions. Literal questions aim to recall children’s knowledge but provide little academic challenge to some learners. High-order questions such as application questions, analytical questions, synthesis questions, and evaluation questions elicit responses from learners. The teacher can address whether the learner can apply skills and knowledge; build on existing knowledge and imply meanings through inference and deduction. Synthesis questions inform the teacher whether the learner can reapply learning to different contexts, be critical of information they receive and use it to produce an effective argument. Such questioning techniques could promote critical autonomy within the learner, which is discussed in detail in later sections of this chapter. Evaluation questions enable the teacher to assess whether the learner can make judgements to compare and contrast information using evidence and reasoning. Planned formative assessment could, therefore, promote the use of such questioning within the classroom.

Following the discussion so far, it is clear that focused learning intentions may be a crucial factor in formative assessment, and may enable the teacher to assess children against specific taught criteria. Making the learning intentions specific, focused, and

clear is a crucial part of teachers' planning (Clarke, 2001). Sharing learning intentions could enable both teachers and learners to focus attention on what is to be taught and learned (Dean, 2000). A study by Clarke (2000-2001) and the Gillingham Partnership revealed that teachers thought "that sharing learning intentions had a positive impact on their teaching" (P.31). They found that they had stopped "waffling" and teaching was more focused on what teachers wanted children to actually learn. Teachers also felt that planning had improved because specific focused learning intentions were made explicit and activities were planned more carefully in order to achieve the designed learning intention. Other evaluations also found that setting learning targets by the teacher for learners enabled teachers to focus their teaching (AAIA, 1992). Target setting complements plans by enabling the teacher to be more effective in reflecting on children's knowledge against set learning criteria. The teacher can then be clear about the progress made and the knowledge children need to have in order to achieve the set target. (QCA, 1999).

Pupils' engagement

Despite the apparent logic of these ideas, they raise questions about the nature of pupil involvement in the processes outlined above. Central to ideas of formative assessment for learning is the pupil taking responsibility for his/her own learning. In other words, there is a shift of responsibility from the teacher to the pupil, where the pupil can recognise next steps in learning and become actively involved in the learning process, rather than being a recipient of pre-defined over-instrumental learning outcomes. In theory, the learner should actively seek out next steps for improvement and the quality of pupil action depends on active feedback from the teacher:

“Pupils can only achieve a learning goal if they understand that the goal and can assess what they need to do to achieve it. So self-assessment is essential to learning.” (Black, et al, 2002. p.10.)

The AAIA North East Region (2003) notes that “we need to train pupils to self-evaluate- it does not just happen!” (p.9), and suggests strategies such as teachers’ modelling of success criteria, questioning skills, reflection and feedback as building blocks to pupil self-assessment. Practical approaches could include:

- Encouraging reflection time.
- Encouraging pupils to assess their own work.
- Making mistakes as a way of improving.
- Supporting pupils in recognising their next steps.
- Developing questioning towards self-evaluation in oral work.
- Encouraging pupils to explain the process of learning.

There is a danger, in some of the official approaches to formative assessment that they are implemented in a ‘top-down’ approach, where targets for teachers and children are imposed upon them filtered down from national and local government and senior management pressures. Potential side effects of this will be discussed later.

Formative Assessment and Theories of Learning.

Formative assessment that explicitly aims to promote learning encourages ways of evaluating performance, feeding performance back to pupils with strategies to close the gap between actual pupil performance and the intended learning outcome. This further enables the teacher to set targets for future learning. Formative assessment, therefore, interacts closely with student learning. It is important to explain how this

interaction occurs so we can explain and emphasise its importance for teachers and their teaching practice. One problem arises because both behaviourist and constructivist ideas about learning may be evident, at best implicitly, in discussion of formative assessment, creating confusing and contradictory ideas about learning. This confusion affects the extent to which theoretical accounts of formative assessment pupils as being involved actively in their learning, but also affects teachers' beliefs about formative assessment as they interpret theory via political interpretations such as inspectors' reports or guidance for the Literacy Hour.

Behaviourists' View of Learning.

In behaviourist views of learning, students are primarily motivated to learn via the acquisition of rewards through marks or levels. Such views could lead to the domination of summative assessments, which places high stakes on outcomes that could de-motivate pupils by validating low self esteem due to poor performance, thereby fostering a self perpetuating cycle of failure. (Black, 2000; Torrance and Pryor, 1998).

However, James (1998) discusses the advantage that formative assessment within a behaviourist tradition encourages the teacher to clearly specify the performance criteria and clearly illuminate the success criteria involved. Formative assessment is, therefore, integral to teaching and learning. Behaviourist forms of formative assessment encourage:

- Focussed, specific achievable learning goals are set.
- Subject specific tasks matched to learning intentions.
- Tasks/tests constructed whereby performance can be assessed.

- Assessments made against intended learning outcomes.
- Feedback given to students about their performance outcomes, which feeds directly into new learning targets.

Constructivists' View of Learning

In contrast, some systems of formative assessment follow a constructivist view of learning where in place of rewards of specific normative or performance-based outcomes, teachers and learners are motivated towards learning by the desire to teach and learn in order to build up an understanding of concepts and skills. Formative assessment based on a constructivist view also links with Piaget's belief that we learn by sorting and classifying abstract thoughts based on known concrete learning, and failure to make connections with concrete prior learning could result in failure to learn:

"...teaching that teaches children only how to manipulate abstract procedures (e.g. learning how to solve equations) without first establishing the deep connections between such procedures and activities involved in the solution of practical concrete problems (which the procedures serve to represent at a more abstract level) is bound to fail." (Wood, 1996, p.9)

This implies that learning is promoted when the learner makes relationships or "mental connections" (Newton, 2000, p.23) with previous existing knowledge or revises concepts already acquired and assimilated. Therefore, the teacher must have a good knowledge of a student's prior learning to foster connections and challenge the student's new learning appropriately. James (1998) also emphasises that if students are to make sense of what they have been taught, "...it is important that teachers should try to discover how students have related new knowledge to their existing understandings..." (James, 1998, p.181). From a constructivist perspective then, the

function of formative assessment could be to illuminate a student's prior knowledge of a skill or concept that is to be extended. (Black, 1999, in Murphy (ed) 1999).

The role of the teacher is paramount to Vygostky's constructivist view of learning, cited by many researchers of formative assessment (Shorrocks, 1993; Gipps, 1994; Torrance and Pryor, 1998; Black, 1999 Newton, 2000). Black (2000) argues that strategies within formative assessment could help to recognise not only what children have achieved, but also what they could attain within a level of challenge. As Black (2000) explains, formative assessment could ascertain Vygostky's (1962) 'zone of proximal development' where challenges are within reach rather than unobtainable. Identification of the zone would help teachers bridge and scaffold learning to 'close the gap' (Clarke, 1998) with prior knowledge and new learning. As Black (1999) succinctly puts it: "One function of assessment would then be to help to identify this zone accurately and to explore progress within it". (Black, 1999; in Murphy, 1999 (ed) p.122). This may provide teachers with accurate and detailed information about how planning for future learning should be addressed. Yet, as research cited in this section shows, the subtleties of constructive approaches to formative assessment require sophisticated understanding amongst teachers of notions such as scaffolding, closing the gap and working within zones of proximal development. One problem is that these subtle notions can be re-presented as apparently simple behavioural techniques, a danger that is evident in the work of Clarke (1998).

In addition, a constructivist view of learning, whereby meaning is constructed from prior learning, cannot be taken in isolation from a socio-political, cultural, or ideological context. In this case study, we need to recognise that learning is mediated

and influenced by the teaching and learning policies being implemented and put into practice by the school in question (socio-political influences), traditions of parents and peers within the community (cultural influences) and the educational ideal and beliefs of current government initiatives, managers and teachers of the school (ideological influences). In other words, learning does not take place within a bubble; external contexts and influences may have a bearing on ideas and approaches in relation to motivation and autonomy (Ecclestone, 2002). It is important to discuss these dimensions to formative assessment because different types of motivation and autonomy can affect learning and in turn, formative assessment practices, and may produce some effects upon motivation and autonomy.

Motivation

Motivation could have a profound effect upon learners' attitudes towards learning and consequently can be linked to formative assessment for learning. Broadly, theories of motivation encompass behaviourist and humanistic perspectives (Ecclestone, 2002). Behaviourism links to reliance upon external rewards as incentives for learning, which are often short term, linking to the desire for appropriate levels or grades from summative assessments. This may encourage short-term rote learning, without deep understanding, for instant success based on innate intelligence and challenging test item criterion. It could lead to a lack of motivation amongst individuals who are unable to perform within norm-referenced assessments due to lack of ability (Black, 2000). Student negative outcomes could reinforce a pessimistic belief about ability, reinforcing a lack of motivation towards learning.

Humanistic approaches to motivation emphasise an internal desire for learning for self-improvement, and link to some aspects of constructivists' ideas about learning. Intrinsic motives serve to promote an individual's aspiration to improve, whether it is within a curriculum area or creatively. Newton (2000) argues that it is imperative to promote factors that develop intrinsic motivation as it will enhance the individuals need to think about and develop his/her own learning. Therefore, it should be the duty of teachers to use teaching and assessment strategies that promote such intrinsic traits.

However, Eccelstone (2002) argues that a problem with much of the literature on motivation is that motivation cannot be split simply between these dichotomies, where intrinsic motivation is seen as inherently good and extrinsic motivation as somehow undesirable. Drawing on work in German vocational education by Prenzel and colleagues, Ecclestone (2002) argues that motivation might be better categorised in six different motivational states, thereby counter a simplistic distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations as disconnected from each other. Prenzel *et al* present these as:

- **Amotivated:** without direction. Individuals are indifferent and apathetic.
- **External:** learning is linked to positive reinforcement or reward for outcomes.
- **Introjected:** learning occurs when an individual internalises an external concept.

It is stressed that this motivation is not 'self-determined'

- **Identified:** the learner has identified a task, which aims to close the gap with attaining a targeted concept.
- **Intrinsic:** this works independently from any external rewards. The learner's incentive is intrinsic to the activity.

- **Interested:** the learner places intrinsic value on a concept because s/he has some personal curiosity towards the learning offered from the task.

(Prenzel, 1999, quoted and used in Ecclestone, 2002)

It is therefore important in terms of formative assessment, that teachers use methods and strategies that tap into and utilise identified, intrinsic, and interested motivation categories. However, in some contexts external and introjected motivation could be an acceptable springboard to other deeper forms. The problem comes if teachers and pupils only aspire to external and introjected motivation (Ecclestone, 2002).

Autonomy

Autonomy may suggest a level of independence within a learner. It allows a learner to think about his/her own thinking, by using metacognitive knowledge relating to people, the task, and strategies (Newton, 2000, p.160). Ecclestone (2002) outlines different types of autonomy that learners may acquire and links these to different formative assessment activities:

- ***Procedural independence***, s/he can understand the nature of assessment and its purpose. S/he can use this knowledge to produce a piece of work to a set of given criteria. For example, a set of year 6 children may use knowledge of structural routines in story writing to produce a narrative piece of writing within a given time. Assessment of this task will grade work against the set of criteria the learner needed, to complete the narrative story to his/her potential level;
- ***Personal independence*** comes from within a learner. It manifests itself when the learner can organise his or her own learning. They can choose strategies, from within their assimilated cognitive repertoire, to apply to learning: that is, they can

decide to apply known concepts to finding a solution to a problem. For example, upper Key Stage 2 children could decide to use known features of a story genre to apply to a given narrative title (National Literacy Strategy, 1998, Year 6 Term 2 Text Level Objective 10) or decide upon the appropriate mathematical operation and method to solve a real life word problem (National Numeracy Strategy, 1999, p.74-75). Ecclestone argues that this level of autonomy could be linked to internal motivation. Students use teacher feedback to self assess their learning gains and use scaffold feedback to close the gap to new learning. However, personal independence could also be linked with identified levels of motivation, where students are highly aware of systems and concepts needed to reach a learning goal. Student may not have an interest in this new learning, but rather have a functional motivation to learning in order to get the job done!; This, therefore, makes personal autonomy easy to confuse with procedural autonomy.

- ***Critical independence*** encompasses learning in context. Learning is not addressed in a vacuous state, but applied and criticised in terms of social, ethical, or educational issues. For this independence to be achieved, the learner should have sound subject knowledge to make concrete and abstract connections and debate issues in relation to the subject. Teaching and assessment methods, such as giving quality critical feedback to students in order to enhance analytical understanding and asking specific open and closed questions to develop understanding, are vital in promoting critical autonomy (Ecclestone, 2002)

If particular conditions of motivation and autonomy within individuals and educational contexts serve to enhance states of learning, it is therefore of prime importance that teachers are aware of and are using both teaching methods and

assessment strategies to fulfil this provision. Figure 1 below combines ideas from Ecclestone (2002) and Torrance and Pryor (1998) to illustrate how teaching methods and assessment strategies can enhance independence and motivation.

Figure 1: Type of teaching and formative assessment techniques used to promote autonomy and motivation.

PRACTICAL TEACHING/ FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES USED	PUPIL OUTCOME (Knowledge, skills and attitudes)	POSSIBLE TYPE OF AUTONOMY AND MOTIVATION
Teacher observes the pupil's process of work. Teacher examines the product of student work. (Group/Individual Work)	Enhanced motivation due to teacher attention.	Procedural autonomy Motivation is external or largely introjected where criteria are internalised and the pupil can articulate them.
Teacher uses specific open and closed questions. (Marking)	Rehearsal of knowledge, understanding, and skills. Articulation of understanding.	Procedural autonomy Identified motivation
Teacher asks for clarification about what has, is, and will be done. (Plenary session)	Metacognitive outcomes and a re-articulation of understanding.	Personal autonomy Intrinsic motivation
Teacher uses metacognitive questioning about specific processes used. (Questioning)	Articulation of metacognitive processes a deeper understanding.	Personal autonomy Intrinsic motivation
Teacher explains task content and criteria for success. (Questioning, Modelling Success Criteria, Plenary)	Understanding of task and its principles.	Personal autonomy Identified motivation.
Teacher explains and negotiates quality criteria. (Modelling Success Criteria, Sharing Learning Intentions)	Understanding of quality to aid future self-monitoring.	Personal autonomy Identified or intrinsic motivation.
Teacher critiques aspect of the work. (Modelling Success Criteria)	Articulating and interrogating quality criteria. Understanding quality issues, practice in self- monitoring.	
Teacher supplies information, or makes a counter suggestion. (Marking and Feedback)	Enhancement and understanding of knowledge,	Procedural autonomy Identified motivation or Intrinsic motivation.
Teacher gives evaluative feedback on work done in relation to task, effort, aptitude, and ability. (Marking and Feedback)	Enhanced motivation and self worth when realised in a context of empowerment; development of learning goals.	Personal autonomy Intrinsic motivation.
Teacher suggests or negotiated what to do next. (Marking and Feedback, Target Setting,Planning)	Insight into new ways of working. Deepening understanding of process	Personal autonomy. Identified motivation.
Teacher assigns marks or grades to a piece of work. (Marking and Feedback)	Information about present achievement with respect to longer-term goals.	Personal Autonomy. External motivation. Identified motivation.

This approach implies that combined formative assessment and teaching strategies could affect pupil learning positively. Both teaching and formative assessment strategies could provide essential insights about the learner. Such insights could influence a more informed approach to subsequent teaching and affect motivation and independence in pupil learning. Both informed, regular and accurately used formative assessment strategies might enhance motivation, understanding and metacognitive processes in children. This could empower children to learn. This study aims to unravel teachers' beliefs and values about such formative assessment techniques promote teaching writing and if formative assessment is only teacher centred, and pupils are not involved it could reinforce low levels of motivation and autonomy.

Practical Techniques to Implement Ideas of Formative Assessment.

Theoretical discussion so far shows that formative assessment involves both teachers and pupils in evaluating assessment data in order to ascertain new learning needs. Assessment driven models highlighted by Black and Wiliam (1998) explain that 'Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA)' (Black and Wiliam, 1998, p.44) should also evoke evidence about children's learning needs. Once attainment is located, future learning can be relatively ambitious and challenging based on prior attainment information.

These theoretical views of formative assessment suggested that strands of formative assessment are inter-related in a cyclical process. Sutton (1997) illustrates the interconnected nature of formative assessment systems by breaking systems into their component parts and then emphasising that each component is reliant on each other. Information is fed forward into the next stage of the cycle of planning and

management of learning, where assessment “is integral to teaching” (Sutton, 1997, p.86). Figure 2 illustrates the cyclical nature of assessment and teaching, and she stresses that, “The cycle stops only when there is nothing more to learn”. (Sutton, 2000, p.2).

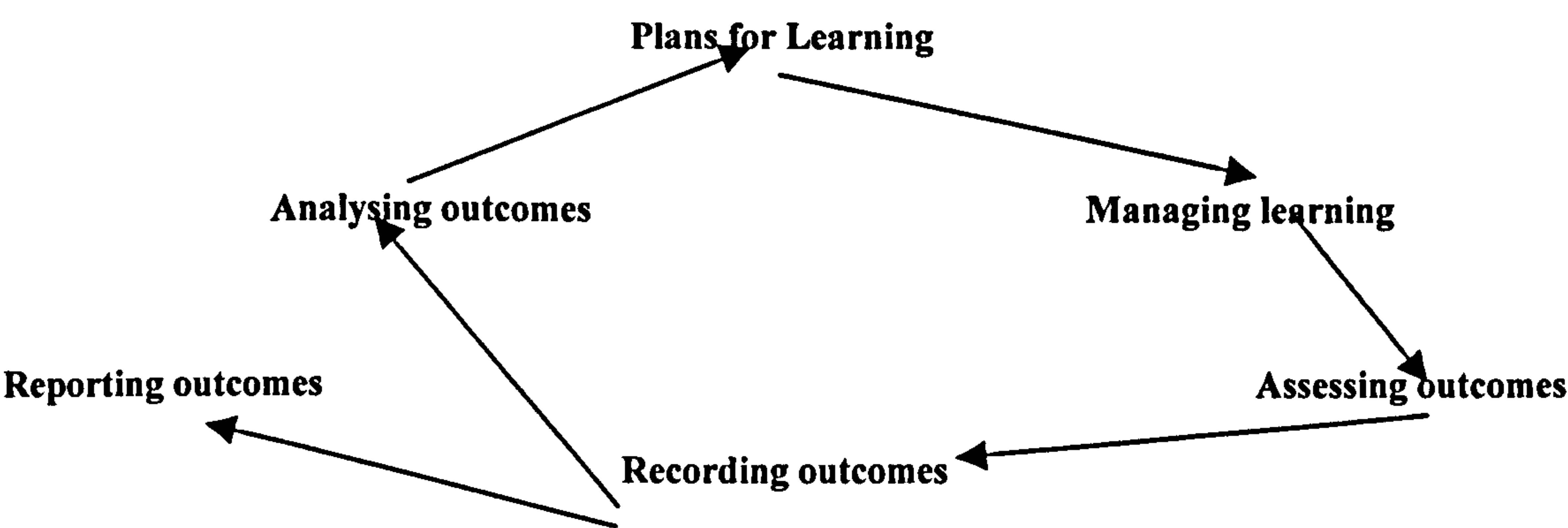


FIGURE 2: The Planning, Learning and Formative Assessment cycle. (Sutton, 2000, p.2)

Each part of the leaning cycle is reliant upon its previous component part and has a specific function in techniques of formative assessment. Each component part of the assessment and learning cycle will now be discussed in terms of its importance within the cycle.

Plans for Learning

Planning could provide essential functions that may contribute to teacher effectiveness. Clark and Yinger 1993, (in Calderhead, 1993) describe three functions of planning which provide a link to models of competence discussed earlier in this paper. They advocate that planning meets the personal needs of the teacher, in that planning increases teachers’ confidence and decreases anxiety of lesson delivery; planning aids organisational craft skill strategies to enhance knowledge transfer to pupils. Direct use of plans during lessons is also used as a pedagogical aid to memory

in lesson instruction, providing a pedagogical framework of reference. Describing a number of studies, Clarke and Yinger (1993) found that

“...planning does influence opportunities to learn, content coverage, grouping for instruction and general focus of classroom processes”. (P.95).

Critical analysis of how theoretical foundations of planning influence teacher planning in reality will be discussed later in this section.

In this section I will briefly describe common planning formats. I will then address critical issues for the implementation of such plans in relation to formative assessment.

Plans for learning in the primary school are usually divided into three layers: Long-term plans, medium-term plans and short-term plans. Each type of planning highlights work to be taught; however, each plan provides an illustration of work to be covered in progressively finer detail from broadly outlined long-term plans to finely tuned and specifically focussed short-term plans. Threaded through all layers of planning are **learning intentions**, that is, the skills, knowledge, and attitudes the teacher intends the children to learn and develop.

Long-term planning: provides an illustration of curriculum coverage. They outline when each year group cover which subject, over the course of a one or two year cycle. This ensures “...breadth, balance and coverage” (Clarke, 2002, p.8) of curriculum areas in order to guarantee that all children receive their full curriculum entitlement. Long-term plans are usually permanent with regular review time built into school improvement planning.

Medium-term planning: provides an overview of the intended learning outcomes for a particular subject, over a particular unit of work. Medium-term plans are usually written for subject coverage over a half or full term. Clear learning intentions are matched to National Curriculum Attainment Targets for the curriculum area. A suggested overview of activities and resources are also listed, and matched to the learning intention of the unit of work. Statements of learning intention use particular vocabulary that illustrates the nature of learning that is to take place. Clarke (2000) outlines clearly such learning intention vocabulary:

- **To know...**(This learning intention represents *knowledge* and factual information).
- **To be able to...**(highlights a *skill* the teacher intends the child to develop, skills will be developed through curriculum content knowledge taught).
- **To understand...**(addresses *concepts*, reasons, causes and effects).
- **To be aware of...**(addresses *attitudes* to be developed, such as empathy and awareness). (Adapted from Clarke, 2000 p.30)

Medium term plans for Literacy are very closely linked to The National Literacy Strategy Framework (DFEE, 1998). Learning intentions to be taught to the whole class are planned week by week over each half term. Medium term planning formats recommended by the DFEE (1998 p.58) are widely used. They illustrate learning intentions that are continuously taught within the half term and learning intentions that can be compartmentalised into weekly blocks. Learning intentions are further segregated across each week, within the half term, into word level, sentence level and text level work to ensure a balance of literacy levels of learning. Texts to be shared with children to teach the learning intentions are also stated.

Short-term planning: This is vital for the teacher's practical use. It takes the learning intentions outlined in the medium-term plan and refines them into clearly focussed and specific learning intentions for a particular session's teaching. Narrow refined learning intentions enable the teacher to assess against known criteria delivered (Sutton, 1997). Learning intentions for the week are organised on a daily basis. Short-term planning is

“...a working tool for the class teacher, setting out the detail of the week to come so that lessons run smoothly, are well prepared and learning intentions are clear”. (Clarke, 2000, p.35).

Short-term planning should:

- Be the teacher's working document, and can include changes on a day-to-day basis.
- Contain amendments, which may be made in the light of previous teaching evaluation.
- Outline clear focussed learning intentions for particular tasks or sessions and referenced to government documentation (for example the National Literacy Strategy Framework for teaching, 1998).
- Include activities used to achieve and deliver the learning intentions should also be highlighted with how activity is differentiated for different abilities.
- Should highlight whether children are working in a group, in pairs or individually.
- List resources used to deliver the learning intention, which should also be outlined on short-term plan. This also includes human resources- any non-teaching support within a session should be made explicit on short-term plans.
- It should also be made explicit what the teacher is doing throughout the session, whether working with a group, the whole class or providing individual support.

Short-term planning should also include notes and records of assessments teachers have made about whether the learning intentions have been achieved. This will be discussed in a later section.

Short-term plans may range in formats between schools. Nevertheless, however the basic structure and content, as noted above, should be consistent across short-term planning, and therefore highlights good practice (Clarke, 2000). Short-term planning should be manageable for the teacher; rigid formats may hamper manageability for teachers. Sutton (1997) argues that flexibility in planning is crucial. They should be flexible enough to respond to changes in the light of new learning. As, noted earlier, short-term plans should be a working document for the teacher to write notes upon and amend where needs be. Rigid inflexible, pristine plans that are handed in to the Headteacher for monitoring purposes could result in teachers spending time on a flawless plan for inspection and then producing their own notes for classroom use. This would create extra work for teachers in an already demanding climate.

Planning: The tight –loose dilemma

Sutton has outlined a potential problem within planning and assimilation of formative assessment techniques that could have a profound effect upon teacher's teaching and children's learning. Medium-term and short-term plans often try to tightly pack in the necessary learning intentions in order to secure coverage of learning intentions the particular unit has suggested it will deal with. This produces plans with no room for manoeuvre, that is, learning intentions must be taught and covered irrespective of any other learning opportunities or unexpected achievements children may make.

Personal experience has also highlighted for me the pressures teachers feel they are under to plan for curriculum content coverage. With recommendations and guidelines for Literacy and Numeracy, with the introduction of the Framework of objectives for each subject, and also with the adoption of the QCA guidelines for Key stages 1 and 2 in all other subject areas, teachers may have felt that coverage of intentions was paramount from government directed advice. However, Sutton (1997, 2000) underlines that planning must reflect learning intentions that progressively build upon each other, rather than coverage of content of the subject curriculum. Therefore it is the learner's learning that is paramount, not the prescribed teaching programme. In other words, the learning intentions to be taught in subsequent lessons should be informed by learners' achievements in previous sessions identified by teacher assessments.

Conversely, planning that is too 'loose' may lack direction and specific opportunities for formative assessment, because forward planning is not detailed enough. Teaching in this case would be based on the individuals' particular learning needs and may result in a lack of coverage of the required curriculum.

Such a tight-loose dilemma once again illuminates a conflict between behaviourist and constructivist views of learning. Rigid and tight technical planning that emphasises prescribed curriculum coverage reflects a behaviourist view of external or introjected rewards for learning set against fixed teaching criteria, irrespective of learner's prior knowledge. More flexible working plans that can be adapted according to the prior learning reflects a constructivist approach to concept acquisition, where

learning only occurs when mental connections are made between new learning and prior knowledge. This view is also mirrored by Torrance and Pryor (1998) who argue that National Curriculum and Assessment encourage too much convergent rather than divergent thinking.

Ultimately, a balance may have to be achieved for teaching and learning to take place. This approach fosters an emphasis upon the learner. For example, Sutton (1997) stresses that for planning to be effective, it must reflect learning rather than coverage, where time is built in for teaching unexpected opportunities, for remediation, consolidation and extension of learning intention. Time must also be built into planning for assessment and review of learning, which can be acted upon:

“...planning has to find a balance between ‘loose’ and ‘tight’, probably by making teaching intentions more focussed than before, but leaving space within every plan for response to the unexpected, or to the spontaneous ‘teachable moment’ which can have such a positive impact on teachers and learners alike.” (Sutton, 1997, p.21).

Once again, formative assessment is a prime focus for this discussion. For planning to have a place in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Cycle, it needs to be flexible in order to adapt to the learning needs of the individual. Formative assessment is vital in attaining the tight/loose balance. Learning intentions cannot be modified to suit the needs of the learner without formative assessment. Just how formative assessment could have a bearing on effective teacher planning will be discussed later in this chapter.

Managing Learning

The managing learning element of the Planning, Learning, and Assessment Cycle of Figure 2 included methods of delivering the learning intentions to children. It must be

noted, however that the following elements discussed are tightly linked with short-term planning of specific learning intentions.

Differentiation

Central to teaching is that teachers know their pupils in order to maximise learning potential. Formative assessment is central to the teaching process since it provides knowledge to the teacher in order to intervene and facilitate learning (Torrance and Pryor, 1998). It is, therefore, vital that teachers assess children's capabilities accurately in order to inform future learning and provide well-planned differentiated work.

To *differentiate* effectively the teacher needs detailed, clear knowledge and understanding of pupils' ability, and this highlights the importance of assessment of ability and progress in children. Therefore, the teacher is aware of the academic needs of the pupils and can support, develop and challenge learning. Clark and Yinger (1993) illustrate the importance of knowledge of pupils in competent teaching:

“Effective teaching seems heavily based on the successful translation and adaptation of curricula into instructional activities suitable for diverse groups of children.” (P.97).

It is self-evident that different children have different learning needs. In order for children to attain the learning intention planned, it may be necessary to adapt particular activities to particular children or groups of children, in order that they can access the curriculum and learning intention. Bennett *et al* in 1984, found that differentiated activities to support less able and extend more able children were often inappropriate. In classes of 6 and 7 year olds investigated:

- Over half of tasks allocated to children were mismatched to their learning needs;

- High attainers were often not extended in their learning, whereas low attainers where abilities were over estimated, resulted in tasks being pitched at too high a level;
- A majority of number tasks were used as practice for, rather than to develop children's understanding of a concept.

Sutton (2000) offers a definition: “ Differentiation is giving the right learning tasks to the right pupils”(p.22). In order to avoid a mismatch of work, as Bennet *et al* (1984) encountered, we need an effective system that distinguishes differences within individual that could affected their learning potential. Many schools ‘stream’ children into ability groups in order that work taught is matched to ability. However, Sutton (2000) argues that this is insufficient to cater for children’s learning needs within ability groupings. Differentiation should go further to cater for individual differences within ‘streamed’ groups.

Further methods of differentiation incorporate **differentiation by task**. This method involves the teacher providing work for individuals that are matched to their learning needs. This type of differentiation is based on teacher evidence on the ability of the learner and assessment of the learner’s capability to understand prior learning. Therefore, the teacher must have accurate evidence of the learner’s prior knowledge and this placers emphasis on the need for an effective system of formative assessment that precisely highlights prior concept acquisition to inform future planning for learning.

Differentiation by outcome is also influenced by formative assessment. Differentiation by outcome is when the teacher gives the same task to all pupils:

however, the outcome or work produced by children from this task could be assessed to determine individual differences in learning.

Differentiation is integral to the Planning, Learning and Assessment Cycle of Figure 2. Not only can it be used to inform future planning and teaching, through differentiation by outcome, it needs effective assessment in order that children's learning needs are met through the teaching of differentiated work. How differentiation affects teaching will be discussed in following sections of this chapter.

Sharing learning Intentions

Sharing learning intentions with children is a vital ingredient to effective formative assessment (Clarke, 2001) and is a key characteristic of managing learning, in the Planning, Learning and Assessment cycle of Figure 2. OFSTED inspections expect teachers to share learning intentions, and training for teachers to implement the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies emphasized sharing learning objectives at the beginning of a session. This is contrasted with research by Willes (1983), which found that Reception children had little idea about the purpose of their tasks but were merely becoming adept at responding to instructions given by the teacher:

“...finding out what the teacher wants, and doing it constitute the primary duty of a pupil.” (Willes, 1983, p21)

Research into sharing learning intentions with children has provided some positive results for the learner. Ames (1992) referred to learning intentions as ‘mastery goals’ and promoted an individual’s motivation towards developing new knowledge and understanding. Black and Wiliam (1998) cite a Portuguese study that concluded when children understood shared learning objectives and assessment criteria, it gave them

the opportunity to select tasks that enabled them to measure their own learning outcomes. Black and Wiliam (1998) suggest that sharing learning intentions fosters awareness within the learner of how to close the gap between existing and new knowledge,

“...the teacher, who discerns and interprets the gap and communicates a message about it to the student”. (Black and Wiliam, 1998, p.20).

The student can then use this information for self-assessment of learning needs or gains. McNeil (1969), also reviewed by Black and Wiliam (1998), found that when the learner understood the purpose and process of the task that had focussed learning intentions, it resulted in gains in mastery learning.

However, a study by Jones (2000) found that sharing learning intentions could have negative effects upon children's motivation within children. Jones (2000) explains that sharing learning intentions advertises performance and children become “preoccupied by the content of the lesson” (p.56) which centres around a whole class learning intention rather than one built on previous learning of the individual.

Clarke (2001) has found that sharing the learning intention has a positive impact on children, by focussing them on learning. They are excited and motivated because they can see their achievement against precisely defined criteria. Clarke (2001) also discovered that children's quality of work improved, because children are able to produce their best because they are aware of what they need to do to get the job done effectively. That is they are aware of the success criteria to achieve the learning intention.

However, sharing learning intentions is more multifaceted than regurgitating the learning intentions written on a teacher's plan (Clarke, 2001). The learning intention needs to be shared with the learner in a clear, precise, and unambiguous way. For example, if the teacher communicated the learning intention to the child from a plan verbatim, it could contain technical vocabulary that is too demanding for the 5 year old learner. However, to make the learning intention unambiguous the teacher could translate the planned learning intention into a child-speak format, whereby vocabulary is simple yet does not omit key words. Furthermore, the teacher has to also ensure that the task used to deliver the learning intention must be clearly matched to it, with criteria for success clearly outlined for the learner. Clarke (2001) also suggests that if pupils are asked to create their own success criteria, the shared learning intention seems to be more effective.

Clarke (1998, 2001) has advocated an approach of sharing learning intentions by using a character W.A.L.T. (for We Are Learning To...) to visually display what the teacher intended the children to learn in language that children can understand. This is followed by the use of visually displayed success criteria where children could gauge their learning. Clarke (2001) found that this approach had a positive impact on teachers and their teaching. Teachers found, as in the Gillingham Project, that they were more purposeful and it sharpened their understanding of the learning intention and related vocabulary, thereby focusing on the quality of work rather than on the quantity produced. This approach also promoted the use of a plenary session, whereby the teacher could assess and children reflect about their learning against specified learning intentions. Feedback given to the child about the work should be strictly

related to its intended learning intention. Therefore, the learner can gauge his/her level of progress against a specified learning outcome.

Assessing outcomes

The assessment of how well learners have done with regards to acquisition of the learning intention is also a key feature in the Planning, Learning and Assessment Cycle of Figure 2. If the teacher does not or is unable to assess achievement against the taught learning intentions, then s/he may be unable to accurately plan future learning. Such assessment for learning can only be effective if it provides accurate information to the teacher, and this could depend on the approach used.

Plenary

“ Stating learning intentions makes a plenary or subsequent reflection against the learning intention a necessity” (Clarke, 2001, p.35).

The plenary is now an important and planned feature of the Literacy Hour and Numeracy Hour. It is a 10-minute section of the hour itself, which is used “...for whole class review, reflection and consolidation” (Beard, 1998, p.5). It enables the teacher to re-visit the shared learning intention and use a variety of teaching strategies in order to reaffirm the criteria for its successful acquisition. The teacher can also use the plenary session to assess children’s learning against the specified criteria.

The plenary can be used to assess understanding in both individuals and groups of children. This can be done by the use of closed questions by the teacher to ascertain factual knowledge gained by the learner, or the use of more open-ended questioning, which could promote explanation of understanding. Accurate assessment of understanding within the plenary may only take place, if shared learning intentions are

reaffirmed and questioning that takes place relates directly back to both learning intention and agreed success criteria for achievement.

Marking and feedback

“Marking has the potential to be the most powerful, manageable and useful ongoing diagnostic record of achievement ...marking has essentially two functions: to provide an assessment record and to provide feedback to the child.” (Clarke, 1998, p.65).

Marking and feedback are a necessary part of both the teacher and learner’s daily experience. Sutton (1997) propose that there should be a move away from grades or marks in feedback. Sutton (1997) describes the limitations of this approach as principally centring around the learner’s lack of knowledge of the success criteria pertaining to the given, for example ‘B’ grade:

“... it offers nothing to the student except the vaguest idea that their work is better than a C and not as good as an A. They know they should aim for an A but don’t really know what an A entails or how to achieve it. ‘Try harder’ says the teacher, but try harder at what?” (Sutton, 1997, p.49).

Black and Wiliam (1998) also recognise negative aspects of current practice where grading is over emphasised within a normative approach. This could have a destructive effect upon learning as it places importance upon the grade given to a piece of work rather than what could be learned from it. Importance is, therefore, placed upon competition and ego reinforcement, rather than assessment for learning.

Other marking and feedback practices concentrate upon the quantity and secretarial skills of students’ work, rather than learning quality (Black and Wiliam, 1998). What

is needed is a change of practice whereby marking and feedback concentrates upon an interaction and dialogue between teacher and pupil that serves to assess previous learning, with opportunities for improvement in order to promote new learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Clarke, 1998). Sadler (1989) explains that the key link between effective formative assessment and teaching is feedback to the student that informs the student of how to narrow the margin between actual and expected performance and emphasises the importance of an active pupil role in formative assessment:

*“The indispensable conditions for improvement are that the student comes to hold a concept of quality roughly similar to that held by the teacher...Stated explicitly, therefore, has to (a) possess a concept of the **standard (or goal, or reference level)** being aimed for, (b) compare the actual (or current) **level of performance with the standard**, and (c) engage in appropriate **action which leads to closure of the gap.**”* (author emphasis, P.133)

Feedback to the learner can be oral or written. It should be descriptive (rather than a judgement about learning), specific, immediate (as humanly possible after completion of the task), used to enhance future learning while addressing the learning rather than the person (Sutton, 1997). Both Sutton (2000) and Clarke (1998, 2001) address key issues in implementing practical strategies within marking and feedback to ensure it is an effective formative assessment tool. A major issue is that marking and feedback should have a specific purpose. Clarke (1998, 2001) offers a detailed approach whereby the shared learning intention is purely the focus of marking, rather than the glut of secretarial skills and quantity which can often divert the focus of marking, thus limiting action taken to close the gap between expectations and actual performance. This approach could also help with the clarity of feedback given to the learner. If feedback is focused against a planned and shared learning intention codes and short hand (understood by the learner) may be a succinct and manageable way of

communicating a descriptive account of learning. Comments, which can be understood by the learner, could aim to close the gap between actual and expected learning. Clarke (1998, 2001) highlights three different types of teacher prompt that serve to fulfil this purpose:

- ✓ A *reminder prompt*, suitable for more able children, would remind children of what could be improved.
- ✓ A *scaffold prompt* would be more appropriate for children who need more structure to their learning. This type of prompt could use a question, directive, or unfinished sentence to provide support to learning.
- ✓ An *example prompt* would give children a choice of ideas to develop their learning.

These practical approaches to marking and feedback link directly to advice given from SCAA in 1997 Teacher Assessment in Key Stage 2 which proposes that effective marking provides clear and focused feedback about strengths and weaknesses. Marking and feedback should recognise, encourage and reward effort where comments are a discussion between the teacher and the child that inform future learning. A constructivist view of the psychology of learning underpins these views where comments are designed to foster mental connections being made between new and prior learning, rather than a reward or mark being given set against imposed criteria, which may follow a behaviourist tradition, and not actively involve the pupil in his/her own learning.

Recording outcomes

Evaluation of plans

Recording outcomes of learning are vital to the teacher. They provide information to the teacher about whether whole classes, small groups or individuals have acquired concepts through the sharing and delivering of learning intentions. To be useful evaluations need to communicate this information clearly and be specific and focused to learning intentions planned and taught.

Information for evaluations can be gleaned in a number of ways. ***Systematic observation*** of children can provide a wealth of information about pupils' learning (Connor, 1991). ***Looking*** at the processes children are engaged in during completion of the task can provide information of their level of understanding of the planned and taught learning intention. ***Listening*** to pupils' responses from a variety of questions and their explanations of ideas gives the teacher insight into their level of reasoning. ***Discussing*** problems with the children can also reveal their methods and processes of thinking. However, classrooms are complex ecosystems and many teachers and researchers have acknowledged the difficulties in this systematic approach:

“Whilst all teachers would feel that they observe children all the time, it must be appreciated that in a busy classroom, time to stop and observe in-depth is limited.” (Harlen, 1977; cited in Connor, 1991, P.51).

Whilst recognising these difficulties, it must also be argued that focussed and systematic observation of pupil learning and understanding could be planned, and consequently it is not being carried out in an ad hoc fashion. Listening, looking and observing could be carried out during specific guided group times during a plenary session. It must also be noted that manageability of observations would be promoted if observation were focused and specifically linked to planned and taught learning

intentions. This idea also reflects back to previously discussed marking strategies, which are fixed against planned, shared and taught learning intentions.

Recording evaluation of learning could be done in a variety of ways, either on separate agreed pro-formas or as part of short-term planning. Codes could be used or short notes. However, it is essential that evaluations are user-friendly easily managed, rather than long-winded or onerous. In fact Clarke (1998) suggests an “assessment by omission” (p.37) approach, whereby the majority of the class achieve the taught learning intentions, making it unnecessary to write this bulk of information down. Evaluations should be specifically related to planned, shared and taught learning intentions and should communicate significant observations of groups or individual’s learning and understanding in relation to the learning intention where these children did not fulfil the learning intention or did achieve the learning intention but need to be extended in their learning. These evaluations could be used to inform future planning and teaching, and are therefore vital and integral to the Planning, Learning and Assessment Cycle described in Figure 2.

Analysing Outcomes.

Target setting and feed forward

Analysing outcomes from evaluation of plans and marking and feedback of work could provide us with invaluable information about individual or group learning outcomes. This information could be used to feed forward into subsequent short term planning for pupil learning. This type of target could be described as individual qualitative learning targets and non-recorded targets (Clarke, 2001; QCA, 1999;

DFEE, 1997), and is integral to the planning, teaching and learning cycle. Powell (1999) emphasises the need for such targets:

“Target setting approaches that are divorced from the process of day-to-day learning will do very little for school improvement and nowhere is this more true than in target setting in the classroom.” (P.61)

In contrast, quantitative numerical pupil targets are used in ‘high stakes’ testing to predict and analyse percentage of pupil performance against national norms. Sutton (1997) acknowledges the powerful nature of setting targets. Formative qualitative targets, as noted, can feed forward into planning, but also give a direction of learning, where progress goals can be measured over time (AAIA, 1997). Effective qualitative target setting can be centred on the acronym SMART (Sutton, 1997; DFEE, 1997; AAIA, 1997):

S is for specific. Targets hope to predict future learning, and specificity within targets could make this an easier job. Specific learning targets could be closely linked to shared learning intentions and therefore enable the teacher to become more specific about proposed future learning;

M is for measurable. This concept is very closely linked to specificity. Often specific targets have clear cut criteria for learning that are easily measurable against actual performance, they are ‘able to be found or checked by a reasonably simple process’ (Sutton, 1997 p.67) by using easily obtainable evidence;

A is for achievable. In order for targets to be effective children must also achieve them. However, difficulty here lies in teacher making targets unchallenging for learner, so that very little learning will need to take place for target achievement or too challenging for the learner thereby resulting in repeated failure of achievement.

Targets that are more effective need to be set ‘within our extended grasp’ (Sutton, 1997, p.68), so “enable children to increase the pace of improvement and increase motivation and self esteem” (Clarke, 1998, p.92). For this to take place targets must be informed accurately by formative and ipsative assessments. Therefore, feedback (marking) and feed forward (target setting) are co-dependent;

R is for relevant. In order that target setting has some meaning it must be relevant to the context of learning. One way to ensure this is to try to imagine what the desired future learning outcome might look like (Sutton, 1997). This could help in guiding the student in the direction of the target learning.

T is for time-related. This links very closely with measurability and specificity, because for targets to be achieved enough time must be allocated for learning to take place. Erroneous time scales for target setting could result in the learner underachieving, because the time scale was too short. Sutton (2000) feels strongly about appropriate target setting and stresses the need for SMART targets to be set:

“ We have learned a clear lesson from this experience: if targets are not specific and are not referred to they are probably not worth committing to paper, and too many targets are as unhelpful as none at all” (p.77)

Using target setting as an integral approach to teaching enables the teacher to plan specific focused learning intentions that build upon each other to promote target achievement. QCA (1999) identify positive factors in target setting that enable the teacher to plan clear teaching and learning objectives, with clear and shared explanations for children; and clearly identified assessment criteria. However, what

the QCA (1999) does not outline is the manageability of this task for teachers. Teachers are often overburdened by paper work and this approach, if inappropriately managed, could result in teachers’ energies being diverted to administration rather than teaching. In addition, warnings about over-compliance with targets emerge from a local small-scale study (Jones, 2002). Therefore, it is imperative that any approach used, includes key factors of effective target setting as well as manageability and purposefulness for teachers’ teaching.

Critical discussion of formative assessment strategies has highlighted that key features of formative assessment are intrinsically linked to theories of teaching. In fact, as noted earlier, OFSTED (1993) indicators of good quality teaching could be based within the Planning, Learning and Formative Assessment Cycle, which have been addressed in this thesis. Figure 3 illustrates this point, linking OFSTED’s (1993) indicators of good practice and formative assessment strategies:

FIGURE 3: Teaching Quality and Formative Assessment.

<u>OFSTED (1993) Questions</u>	<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Formative Assessment Strategies</u>
Is the teaching purposeful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are clear focussed and explain lesson objectives. Pupils are clear about what they have to learn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focussed planning Sharing learning intentions with pupils.
Does teaching create and sustain motivation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils are interested. Pupils’ work demonstrates effort, clear specific feedback from the teacher, and a link between feedback and the following work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marking and feedback for improvement. Evaluation of planning. Target setting (feed forward)
Does teaching cater for the abilities and needs of all pupils in the school/group? Are expectations appropriate for all pupils?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are aware of abilities and needs of all pupils, and use this to design learning tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marking and evaluations of previous learning. Use of questions to assess. Planning is specific to groups and differentiated activities are matched to learning intentions.
Is there effective interaction between teacher and pupils?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher and pupils talk to and listen to each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal and written feedback on learning.
Is evaluation of pupils’ progress used to support and encourage them, and to extend and challenge them appropriately?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher checks pupils work to ensure learning objectives have been met. Pupils receive feedback about next steps in learning. Plans are reviewed and flexible to respond to pupil learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning intentions are clear to teachers and pupils and learning is evaluated and fed back in relation to this. Target setting (feed forward) Teaching plans are altered and not oversubscribed with content.

Strategies and approaches within the planning, learning, and formative assessment cycle may relate directly back to theories of learning previously discussed. The cycle may dip into both behaviourist and constructivist views of learning. Formative assessment for learning enables the pupils to work towards clearly defined goals and targets with explicitly stated success criteria. This follows a behaviourist tradition of learning, where pupils learn through reward of target achievement. This can subsequently link to procedural independence where success and target acquisition is achieved through knowledge and understanding of success criteria and, thereby creating a danger of over-compliance 'to get through' the targets (Ecclestone, 2002).

From a constructivist standpoint, formative assessment could enable the teacher to build new knowledge upon existing knowledge that pupils have acquired. Through assessing and recording outcomes, the teacher may provide feedback that is both useful for both the teacher and learner to scaffold and extend learning. An ongoing assessment dialogue and negotiation is developed between teacher and pupil to construct new knowledge. It suggests that learning is more than a delivery and reward of procedural concepts; it is an interaction between the teacher and learner. The teacher acts as a facilitator through the assessment and subsequent managing of learning, thereby promoting not only procedural independence within the learner, but also enhancing personal independence of learning within the pupil. Current approaches in formative assessment, such as those advocated by Black *et al* (2004) Clarke (1998, 2001) and Sutton (1997, 2000) are based on constructivist theories of learning where formative assessment is used to assess a pupil's prior knowledge and so forms the basis to new learning and challenge.

A fundamental tension in this case study school is highlighted by the review of official views of formative assessment and academic analysis of formative assessment, motivation and autonomy. Tension arises over whether approaches adopted in the name of formative assessment are truly constructivist with active pupil involvement in learning, or whether they lack pupil involvement in learning and is externally imposed on the learner resulting in concept acquisition dominated by behaviourist techniques. That is, learning is not coming from within the learner, but from external sources.

In summary then, I aim to investigate teachers' opinions of particular formative assessment approaches and discuss whether these are teacher-led, target-centred approaches to formative assessment, rather than pupil led self-assessment strategies within writing. I will then critically evaluate how they impact upon teaching practice and where they draw from behaviourist and constructivist theories of learning, in relation to these areas:

- **Planning:** whether teachers view specific, flexible short term planning with differentiated learning activities matched to learning outcomes as valuable.
- **Sharing Learning Intentions:** how teachers view the value of sharing learning intentions in terms of motivating children and providing clarity and purpose to learning.
- **Marking, Feedback and Evaluation:** whether teachers view analysis and evaluation of work that has achieved and not achieved the shared learning intention as valuable, and the impact this has on future planning.

- **Target setting and Feed forward:** to what extent teachers view target setting as helpful for defining future learning intentions for planning.

CHAPTER 2:

DEVELOPING TEACHER EXPERTISE IN FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

A: Teacher value and beliefs.

Following ideas about school effectiveness, the competence of teachers in the education system as a whole has a vital bearing on the potential development of pupils in their charge. Tyrell (1991) describes the role and necessity of developing teacher competence:

“...they (teachers) are the most valuable resource available to Headteachers, governors and parents for the effective teaching to children in a variety of learning environments....Consequently, the continuing professional development of heads and teachers is to be a fundamental part of any strategy designed to meet the consequences and the challenges presented by change.” (P.10)

In this study, I aim to find out teachers’ values and beliefs about adopted techniques in formative assessment. In order to do this, I need to relate ideas about teacher beliefs to those about how to improve teaching competence.

Teaching competence

Models of teaching competence (for example, Leat, 1993) illustrate that competence in teaching comes from developing the teacher’s pedagogical subject knowledge, teaching behaviours, and beliefs of teaching and the subject taught (see Figure 4):

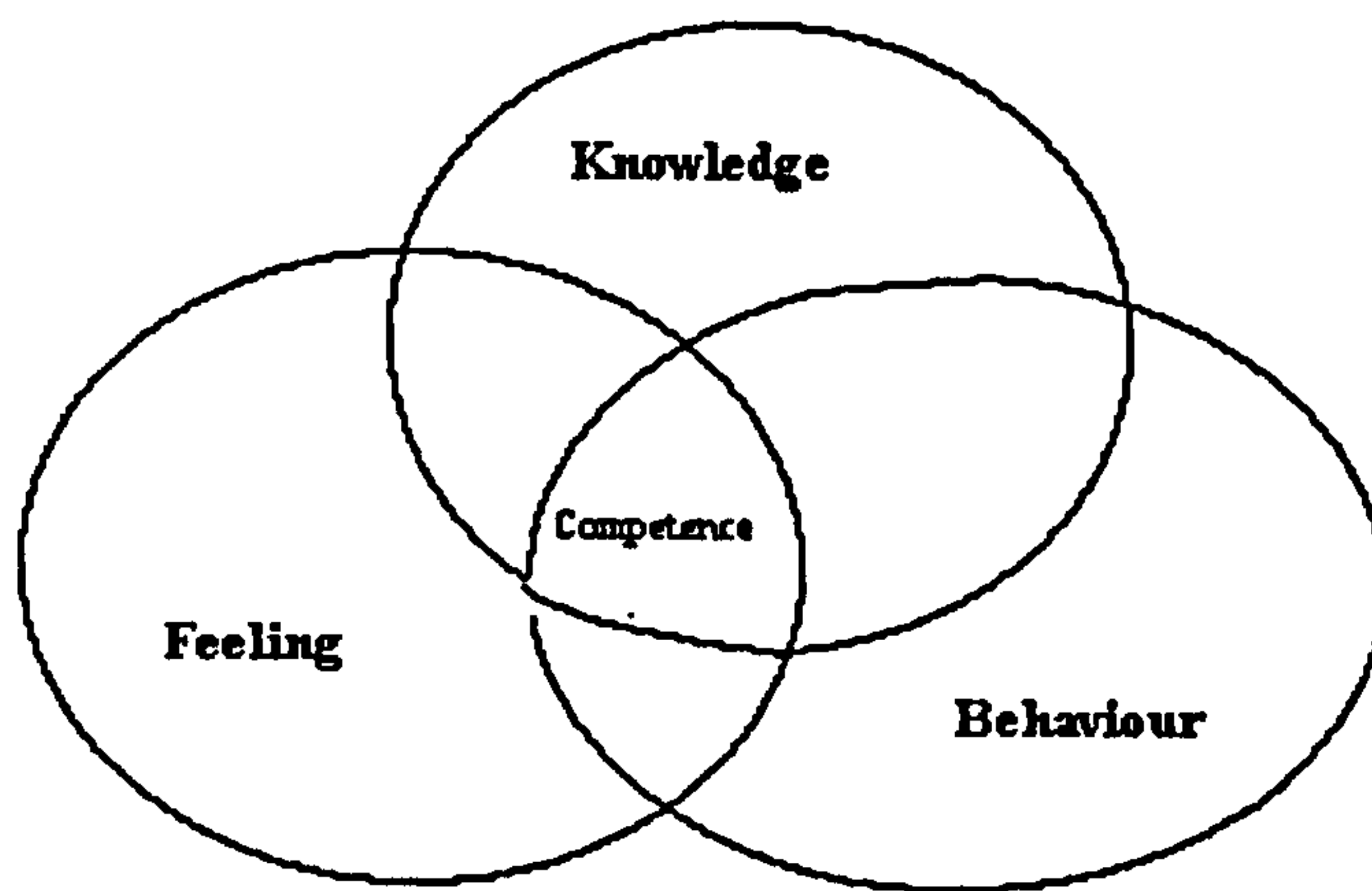


FIGURE 4: Leat's Conceptual Model of Competence (Leat, 1993).

The central segment of competence includes the competent teacher who has good subject knowledge and uses teaching behaviours and styles to inspire the content. The teacher is confident about content and how the subject is being taught, and uses appropriate teaching behaviours and styles to present it. The teacher who is less competent, however, may move out of this central segment because of, for example, a poor subject knowledge of the area being taught or through a lack of repertoire of teaching behaviours or styles and formative assessment strategies.

In this model, we must also recognise the importance of the **context** of teaching. A teacher may be competent in one scenario, but that competence may not transfer to another setting. For example, a primary teacher who is a proficient and confident teacher of Literacy may not be able to transfer these skills to a Numeracy lesson. This teacher may lack confidence in this area, or may not have good pedagogical knowledge to teach this particular subject.

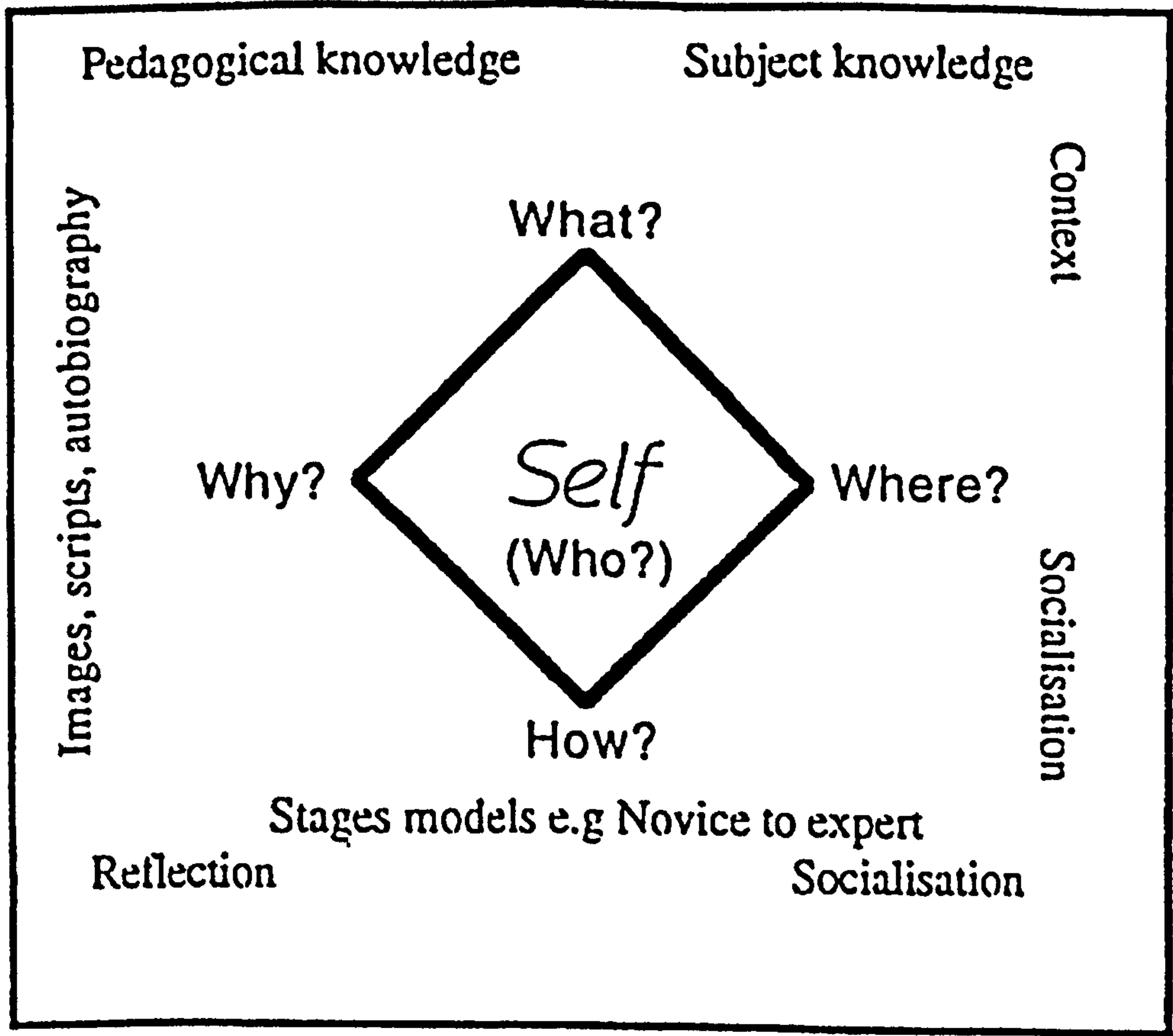
Learning and teaching experience may need to be considered in the context of the school, the classroom, and the lesson being taught. It may be considered in relation to

any significant individual, or environment that could hinder or facilitate effective teaching. Rich (1993) agrees with this argument suggesting that:

“Some teachers may display consistently high or low levels of expertise from one classroom situation to another. Others may show quite a dramatic change. Stability of expertise cannot be assumed” (p.142)

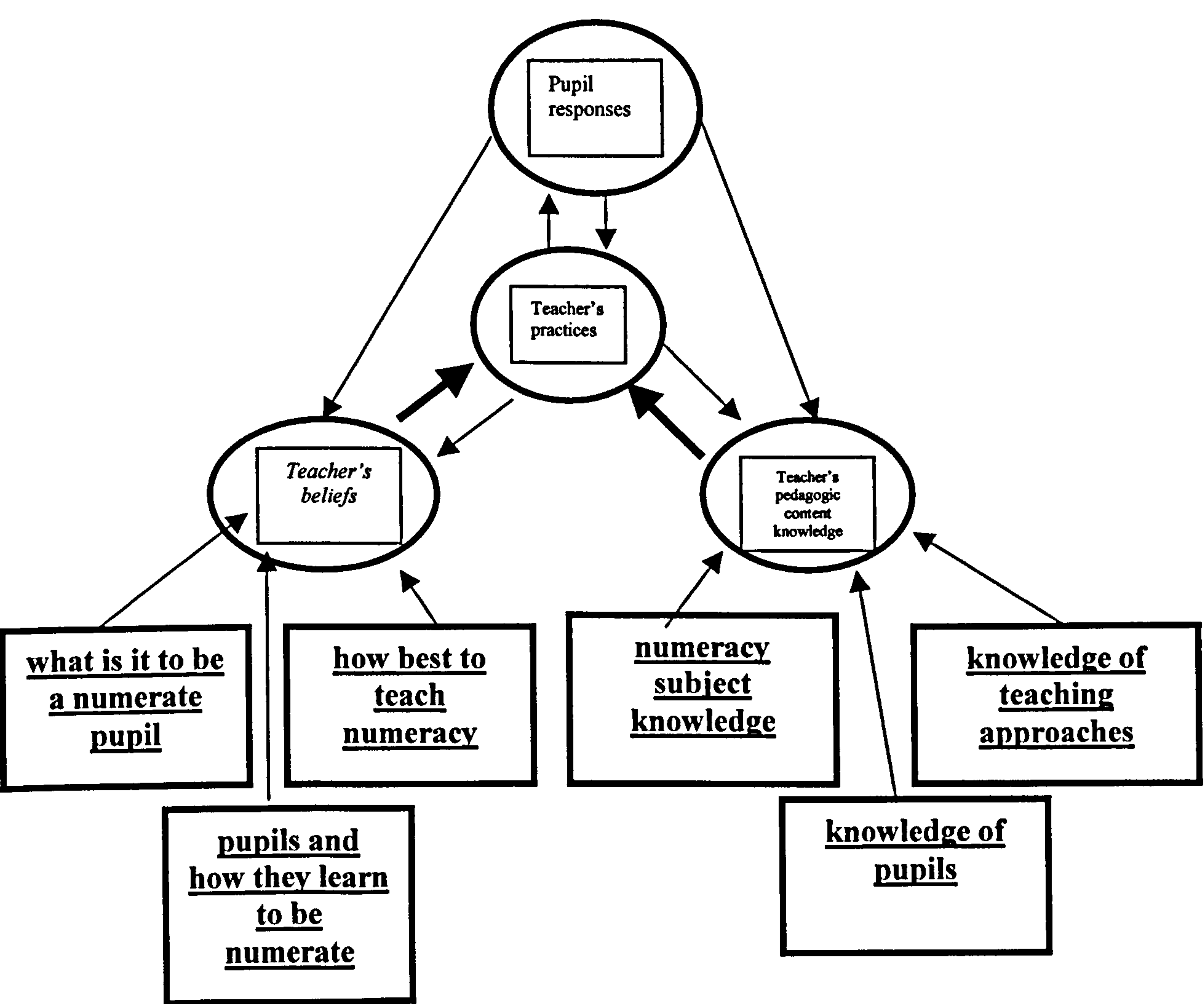
Higgins and Leat (1997) go further to argue that, central to this conviction, is the teacher. The teacher’s values, beliefs, and ability to reflect on practice are imperative to the impact of training on competence. Figure 5 illustrates the importance of the “Self” in developing teaching competence.

FIGURE 5: The importance of “self”. (Higgins and Leat 1997)



King’s College (1997) also offers a multifaceted approach to understanding teacher competence. They describe the need for a relationship between teachers’ beliefs, pedagogical knowledge, and classroom practices to become a competent teacher. The King’s College team (1997) also stress the need for teachers to be aware of the relationship between knowledge of their pupils, their own pedagogical knowledge, and craft skills and how these attributes can determine the nature of pupil responses. Figure 6 (King’s College, 1997) illustrates the multi-layered relationship of developing teaching competence.

FIGURE 6: King’s model of the multi-layered relationship between Knowledge of pupils, classroom practices, and pedagogical knowledge and teacher’s own beliefs.



In the light of these theories, we can address the place that the beliefs of the teacher have within strands of teaching competence, and, in particular, in relation to skills of formative assessment.

Subject Content Knowledge

In a study of Reception class teaching, Aubrey (1996) found that observations and interviews “served to emphasise the importance of subject content knowledge and the impact of this in practice”. (P.191). This study found that an increase in subject content knowledge increased teachers’ confidence in setting up a number of investigations and identifying relationships between concepts. In a similar vein, Wilson, Shulman and Richert (1993) argued that a teacher with a richer understanding of the content was more likely “...to detect student misconceptions...to deal effectively with general class difficulties...” (P.109).

Researchers (for example, Wilson et al, 1993) stress different types of subject knowledge that are “transformed” through critical inference, representations, adaptations, and tailoring before it is presented to pupils. Therefore, teachers who are confident in knowledge of the subject taught can tailor and adapt knowledge to the learner’s needs. Black and Dockrell (1986) found that different levels of teacher subject knowledge were related to the level of learning outcome required. For example, a modular unit of work requires less in-depth subject knowledge and therefore a non-specialist may only be adept at teaching subject knowledge at this level. A teacher with more competent subject knowledge, however, may be more likely to develop modular or longitudinal outcomes, where patterns, relationships and conclusions are drawn out from existing learning gains. Bennett and Carre (1993) also

found that student teachers with an increased pedagogical knowledge were able to draw out causal explanations from children.

Developing teachers' subject knowledge of Literacy is the main emphasis in Literacy In service Training (INSET). This was designed to overcome "gaps in teachers' own subject knowledge", that found in government inspections of Literacy (DFEE, 1998a, p160). Medwell *et al* (1998) also found that pedagogical subject knowledge was important in the teaching of Literacy, because it enabled teachers to "...help their pupils see connections between the text, sentence and word levels of language". (p.68). Teachers with a more competent pedagogical knowledge in Literacy could therefore be more accurate in diagnosing and analysing children's misconceptions (Medwell and Wray, 1998) as part of formative assessment strategies. Medwell and Wray (1998) also discovered that teachers with competent pedagogical knowledge in Literacy were able to identify why children exhibited particular types of writing behaviours. Conversely, those teachers with a poor pedagogical knowledge may not know the questions to ask to check and assess new knowledge. It is therefore important to recognise the crucial role that subject expertise in literacy plays in effective formative assessment.

Pedagogical Craft Knowledge.

Teaching is also based on the ability of the teacher to be able to present subject information to pupils. Wilson *et al* (1993) argues that student teachers need good subject knowledge but also a "...specialised understanding of the subject matter, one that permits them to foster understanding in most students" (p.104). That is, teachers must know *how* to "...communicate knowledge to others" (p.105). They need a good

repertoire of teaching styles, practices, and approaches to enhance content transfer to students coupled with sound management of classroom surroundings.

Knowledge can be represented to others by explanations, demonstrations, modelling learning strategies and success criteria and by the use of closed and open questions and responding to pupil questions, using analogies and visual aids within a variety of teaching styles, instruction, drawing out reasoning, discussion, imagining, feedback and encouraging divergent thinking (Cooper and McIntyre, 1997; DFEE, 1998b). Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore (1995) suggested that this repertoire available to the teacher could determine the desired learning outcome, and is dependent upon the type of students taught and the curriculum content it covers.

Formative assessment for learning, in any subject, requires that teachers use diagnostic information gleaned from marking and evaluation to plan and differentiate new learning for children. Sutton (1990) argues that differentiation takes into account different learning styles and starting points of students. The teacher, therefore, can use this information to present concepts in a variety of *teaching styles* that are more suited to the learner. In other words, formative assessment could be used to inform the teacher's judgment of a particular teaching style used. Therefore, it could match the learner's needs: As Sutton puts it

“...what you need to do is to use a wide range of teaching styles as you can manage, to ensure that you cover the preferred ways of learning for different children.” (Sutton, 1990, P.21).

Beliefs

Studies have shown that the beliefs of the individual teacher are central to conforming to whole school strategies. Calderhead, 1993; Calderhead and Robson, 1991; and Osborne and Gilbert, 1985 argued that teachers' images and beliefs play a vital role in guiding how, if or what level of classroom practice is to be changed. Dunne (1993) explained that teachers' belief systems provide a "...framework of reference for all interpretations and actions in the classroom". (Bennett and Carre, eds. 1993, p.73). Doyle (1977) reveals

“...innovations which have high practicality, which can be seen to be relevant and applicable by teachers to their own situation, are more likely to lead to classroom change”.

Johnston (1993) argues that if there is a “disparity” or a different perspective between teachers' theories about learning and practice, there may be a restriction on appropriate translation of professional training into practice. Medwell *et al* (1998) also found that “Effective teachers were more likely, and possibly more able...to make explicit links between their beliefs and their teaching practices”. (P.80). This is also recognised by Dunne (1993) who argues that if a training course is to be effective in influencing professional practice positively then analysis of teachers' beliefs is vital.

In recent years, statutory summative assessment has had an overbearing role in assessment within the primary classroom, noticeably in Year 2 and Year 6. This could have a profound effect upon teacher's views and beliefs about formative assessment ideas and practices. Surveys (Black, 1998) have found that formative assessment was given little focus in Science, mainly due to higher emphasis being placed upon external tests. Black (2000) also found that “oppressive external tests” (P.410) could

inhibit the development of new practices since the ownership of change is withdrawn from the teacher's locus of control. This belief also leads the teacher to see teaching and learning as separate issues from assessment rather than as integral to a planning, teaching and assessment cycle. Torrance and Pryor (1998) highlight how this view of assessment can inhibit formative assessment practices:

“Overall, then, the teachers we interviewed seemed to regard ‘assessment’ as a distinct activity from ‘teaching’ and one, furthermore, which they were being asked to conduct in order to gather data for third parties- for purposes of accountability- rather than to benefit themselves and/or their pupils.” (P.43).

Sutton (1997) reaffirms this point by explaining that, in order for teachers to value formative assessment, its specific and specialist purposes must be understood and respected by the teacher. Without this, the process of assessment could be overlooked and oversimplified by teachers, resulting in a negative impact on teaching and learning. The research summarised here therefore, suggests that it is imperative to change teachers' assumptions about assessment for improving learning rather than merely changing their practices.

Rudduck (1993) highlights the importance of “ownership of change” towards training. She goes further to say that “professional development may be most dynamic when personal commitment to change is strong and when its basis is understood by teachers concerned” (p.212). Nias (1987) supports this view and offers a “collegial approach to change” (p.137) where peer group support can help re-develop teachers' self image and serve to re-create “...the professional knowledge from which teaching grows”. (p.137). These injunctions about how to change teachers' beliefs about methods of teaching and formative assessment will become increasingly pertinent

throughout discussion within the methodology section of the thesis, and it will be important to find out the extent to which teachers in this study are fully engaged with formative assessment initiatives or merely adopting presented techniques. In other words, in a climate of many political initiatives in education, do the teaching staff in this case-study view the implementation of formative assessment strategies as a top-down vision that has been imposed upon them? Conversely, do formative assessment strategies match what teachers believe to be good practice? These questions emerge directly from my research questions outlined earlier in this thesis.

It appears, then, that formative assessment approaches may help to develop more accurate teacher knowledge of their pupils. Without this insight into pupils', learning teachers' judgements of pupils could be skewed. Shorrocks *et al* (1993) describe how inaccurate teachers' perceptions of learners can result in *stereotyping* and '*halo effects*' and so have a negative impact on pupils' true learning needs. For example, learners' socio-economic group, ethnic background, previous records and family history, as well as the name and physical characteristics of the child (Shorrocks *et al* 1993), all influence imprecise stereotyping, and therefore have an impact on teachers' behaviours towards the learner. Conversely, a positive stereotype or 'halo effect' could also result in teaching behaviours being influenced by perceived positive qualities of the 'clever' child where particular qualities affect teachers' assessment of other skills. As Shorrocks *et al* (1993) explain, "This 'halo' may, of course, be as inaccurate as negative stereotyping and just as illusory". (P.11).

However, if formative assessment works well, the teacher could become more accurate at building new learning and setting new targets based on prior knowledge

rather than planning and teaching based on presumption. This is not suggesting that the learner's knowledge is to be treated in isolation. Instead, it suggests that techniques of formative assessment provide the teacher with richer data of the learner's knowledge and understanding, taken within the context of teaching and learning. This links to a constructivist view of learning. New learning is built upon and linked to prior knowledge illuminated by formative assessment.

In spite of the improvement potential of formative assessment, illuminated by research cited above, there has been little government guidance on how the formative assessment of taught curriculum should be achieved and it has been left to the responsibility of the individual schools to put together assessment systems, including formative assessment. This means that Curriculum and Assessment subject leaders play a crucial role in managing and promoting formative assessment in schools. Subsequently, if formative assessment lacks direction or fails to help teachers develop adequate knowledge of pupil ability, then it could have a knock-on effect on teaching. In addition, without proper exploration of implicit underlying theories of learning embedded in different techniques, formative assessment takes on unnoticed characteristics. In turn, particular characteristics are transmitted through approaches to developing teachers' expertise. For example, top-down guidance on didactic INSET promotes implicit assumptions to teachers, such as a behaviourist approach to meeting targets (DFEE, 1998).

CHAPTER 2:

B: Monitoring and Coaching

In order to evaluate any positive or negative effects of how teachers use formative assessment strategies, it is important to highlight specific ideas about how teacher expertise is developed. Rich (1993) argued that teacher expertise may not be transferred to different contexts and the “expert” teacher may revert to a “novice” role involving new strategies and contexts. Development of teacher expertise in using formative assessment in school has been cultivated through staff INSET and monitoring teaching and planning in order to provide detailed feedback in areas of success and further development. Teachers, therefore, are fully informed about the development of their practice in the delivery of their subject and opportunities for formative assessment.

However, an excessively teacher-centred view of formative assessment, combined with a top-down implementation of prescriptive strategies could lead to an instrumental approach to formative assessment that overlooks the need to involve pupils actively in their own learning. In turn, these dangers could reinforce low levels of motivation and independence amongst pupils. (See discussion in Chapter 2, Part i)

These problems suggest that monitoring and coaching need to provide some balance between **support** and **challenge** for developing teaching. Cameron-Jones and O’Hara (1997) advocate “an affirming activity” (P.15) where learners’ teaching skills are reaffirmed. This builds teachers’ self esteem and confidence in delivery of a new approach. Nevertheless, challenge is also stressed, where the boundaries of affirmation are opened. This challenge provides a gateway to teacher development

and growth. Cameron-Jones and O’Hara (1997), Dunne and Bennet (1997) and Sampson and Yoemans (1994) emphasise, however, that for effective teacher development to take place, not only must challenge be high, but there must also be a high degree of support for the teacher. Figure 7 illustrates this view:

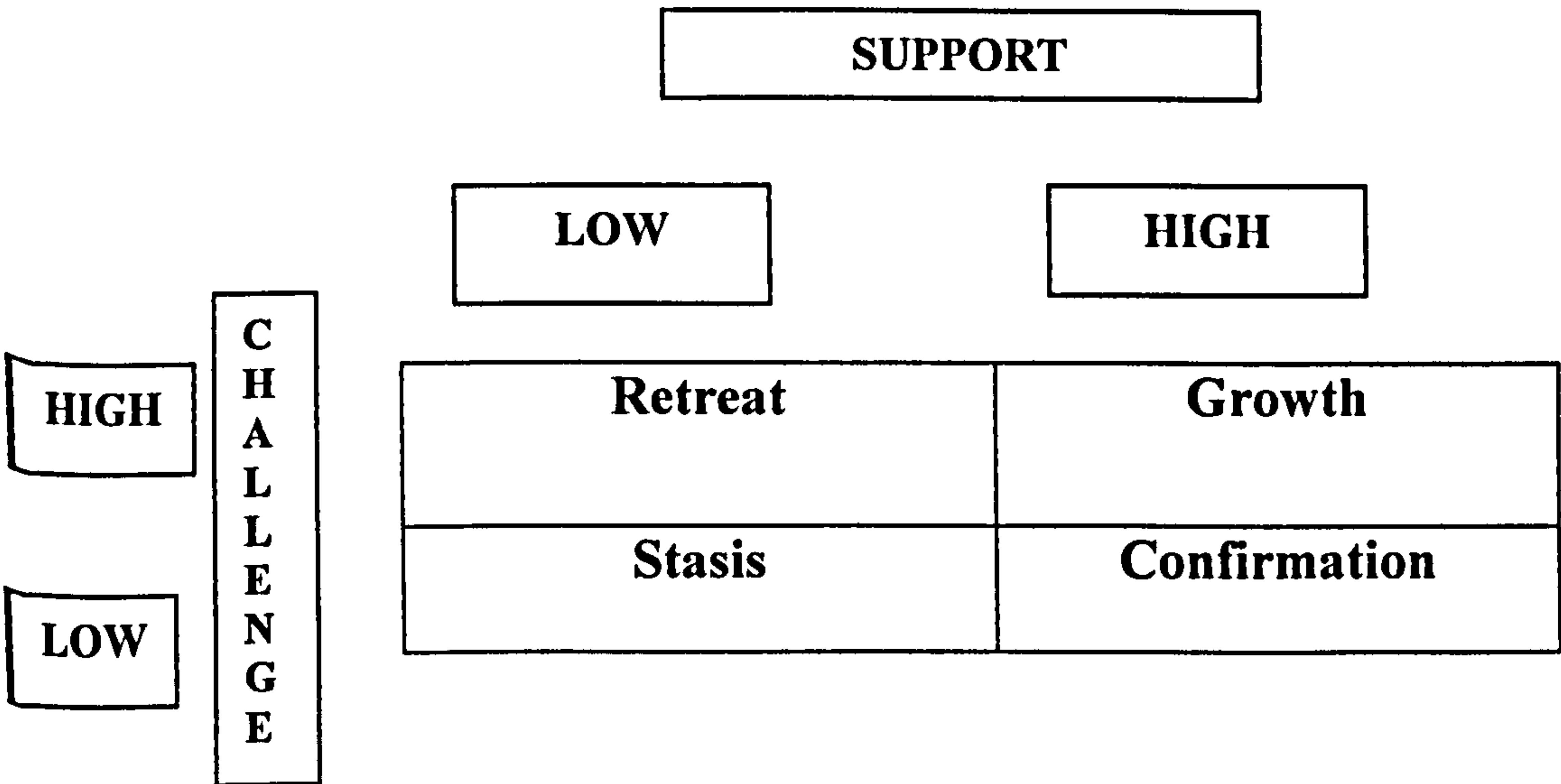


FIGURE 7: Cameron-Jones and O’Hara (1997), adapted from Daloz (1986)
Cameron-Jones and O’Hara (1997) stress that, “where both challenge and support are high, growth will occur, and the learner will make progress”(P.16). With this approach to staff development in mind, this study will describe and evaluate a system adopted in the name of formative assessment that has been used within the teaching of writing in this case study school. Formative Assessment INSET has provided structured support and development for planning and teaching of writing.

Whole staff school INSET was undertaken over five two-hour sessions in the Autumn Term of 2001. Theoretical underpinnings to the INSET were based upon research into formative assessment by Clarke (1998); Sutton (1997, 2000) and Black and Wiliam

(1998), which promoted the assessment cycle of planning, sharing learning outcomes, marking, feedback and planning. Staff training at this time did not include more recent work by Paul Black *et al* (2003) that emphasised the key role of the learner in pupil self-assessment.

Staff INSET was introduced to staff deemed to be 'novice' in relation to Clarke's (1998) theories of formative assessment and therefore training had to ensure that basic essential information was communicated concisely and clearly. Presentations were given by the researcher on methods of sharing learning intentions, marking and feedback and target setting. Following dissemination of information about each area, staff completed practical tasks to aid understanding. For example, staff used their own planning to devise simple learning intentions in child friendly language. After that, all staff collectively agreed upon a whole school approach on application of theory and tasks into the classroom. This, I felt, gave staff *some* ownership of training (Rudduck, 1993) as it ensured they had some say in a pre-disposed strategy. Next steps in training, based on more recent work by Black *et al* (2003), has been identified in the School Improvement Plan for pupil self-assessment (2004-2005). Therefore strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment in this case study, are based only on earlier theoretical foundations of formative assessment rather than on more recent work in pupil self-assessment.

Critical evaluation of staff INSET training could be twofold. Training delivered was limited in terms of theories about formative assessment. Firstly, it was based on Clarke's (1998) work which promotes a didactic, teacher-led approach to formative assessment, built on behaviourist theories of learning, where concept acquisition is

centred on achievement of externally imposed learning intentions; Secondly, staff INSET was not based upon Black *et al's* (2004) work in which pupil involvement is paramount, and learning takes place based on constructivist learning theories, where pupils are fully engaged in moving their own learning forward. Therefore, learning comes from within the learner, rather than externally motivated. Detailed training notes can be analysed in Appendix F.

This structure is crucial to reliability of data collected for this study, which will be discussed in detail in the methodology section of this thesis. Criteria for monitoring were both specific and clear to both the teacher and coach, and manageability was addressed by focussing only on specific targeted issues. Feedback given to the teacher was specific to the criteria for lesson monitoring; therefore areas for development were manageable.

Reflection

Monitoring and support allows teacher opportunities to reflect critically on practice. West-Burnham and O'Sullivan (1998) argue that, "...reflection and coaching are the keys to effective professional learning." (p.80). They go further to illustrate ways of developing critical reflection through observation of lessons, using journals, reading, shadowing and teaching learning through team processes. Although in theory these methods are highly valuable in the reflective process, in reality they can be costly in time and money for the school. Elbaz (1987) recognises the value of critical reflection on practice, but also raises practical concerns:

"Such reflection, we know, is not part of the occupational structure of teaching: there is no time for it, and teachers are seldom trained to reflect on their work. Yet teaching is both effective and worthwhile in large measure to the extent that the teacher is able to reflect critically on practice." (P.45-46).

This problem is reinforced if schools adopt an overly instrumental approach to new strategies defined externally and promoted in a prescriptive, uncritical way. It may be necessary to build reflection time into INSET in order that all stakeholders can reflect upon and share views about practice.

CHAPTER 3:

A: THE CASE STUDY

Descriptive Context of the Study:

A: Population Characteristics and Setting.

This study is set in East End View Primary School, an urban inner city school in a North East LEA. The school has 300 pupils and is set within a culturally mixed community of low socio-economic status and high social deprivation. 30% of pupils have English as an additional language (EAL) and 70% of pupils are registered on the special educational needs (SEN) Code of Practice Register. There is a 40-place Reception class taught by 2 teachers and a Nursery Nurse. Throughout Key stage 1 (KS1), children are taught in 3 classes of mixed Years 1 and 2 pupils. There are approximately 25 pupils in each of the three Years 1 and 2 classes. There is the same organisation in KS2. In Lower KS2, there are 3 classes of 26 Years 3 and 4 children, and in Upper KS2, there are 3 classes of 29 Years 5 and 6 children.

The staffing structure within the school consists of an all female staff: the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, 3 senior managers, and 2 middle managers. Eight teachers are on the common pay spine without responsibility points. There are also 2 full-time Nursery Nurses and 10 Non-teaching support assistants. 5 novice teachers had up to 2 years teaching experience; 2 teachers had between 2 and 10 years teaching experience and 8 teachers had over 11 years of teaching expertise. The average age of the teaching staff was 33 years, ranging from 23 years to 50 years.

Academic standards

Educational attainment at East End Primary is low. Children start school in Early Years with an extremely low baseline, especially in language development (which is assessed using the Durham Flying Start baseline Assessment), which may have a knock on effect in subsequent academic years. This is because children will begin each school year academically below other children and therefore the teacher has to address these issues before moving forward to age-appropriate learning. EAL children who start school with limited abilities in English also heighten poor attainment. Figure 8 below highlights the achievement of children in East End View Primary School in the KS1 and KS2 SAT tests.

FIGURE 8i: Children’s attainment in KS1 Writing Task.

YEAR	W	1	2C	2B	2A	3
1998	23%	48%	23%	5%	3%	0%
1999	21%	21%	40%	14%	5%	0%
2000	22%	37%	20%	22%	0%	0%
2001	7%	44%	36%	10%	5%	0%
2002	15%	47%	23%	10%	5%	0%

(The average child should attain Level 2c or above)

Figure 8ii: Children’s attainment in KS2 Writing Test.

YEAR	< level 3	Level 3	Level 4	5
1999	16%	61%	14%	7%
2000	5%	27%	19%	3%
2001	0%	33%	38%	17%
2002	15%	40%	40%	5%

(The average child should attain Level 4 or above)

Units of Analysis: Formative Assessment in Context:

FIGURE 9: Summary of Formative Assessment Strategies in Literacy.

<u>Place in The Planning, learning and assessment cycle.</u> (FIGURE 2: Sutton, 2000, p2)	<u>STRATEGY</u>	<u>IMPLEMENTATION</u>	<u>RESEARCH</u>
<u>Plans For Learning</u>	Long term planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the range of work covered in each term for each year group. Taken from National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching. (DFEE, 1998) 	Clarke, 2001
	Medium term planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details weekly broad teaching objectives for word, sentence and text level work. Objectives are matched to relevant texts that are closely linked to the range of work outlined in long term planning. • Completed half-termly for fiction and non-fiction. 	Clarke, 2001 DFEE, 1998
	Short term planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details specific learning intentions to be taught on a daily basis. • There is a balance of word, sentence and text learning intentions that can be tracked back to the corresponding medium term plans. • Learning intentions are organised into shared, guided and independent teaching times. • Differentiated tasks are matched to learning intentions and briefly described on plans. • Evaluations of learning are also included on short term plans (see below) 	Clarke, 2001 DFEE, 1998
<u>Managing Learning</u>	Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation strategies should be outlines on short-term planning. • Differentiation by task/ability: the teacher may plan a specific task that caters for the needs and abilities of a group of children to achieve the learning intention. A different task may be planned for a academically different group to achieve the same learning intention. • Differentiation by outcome: the teacher will give all children the same task but children's output of work may be different because of their ability 	Clarke, 2001 Sutton, 2000
	Sharing learning Intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning intentions are shared with the children both verbally and in written form. • At the beginning of each teaching session, the teacher relates the learning intention in child-speak. Reading to children and explaining the learning intention using a W.A.L.T (We Are Learning To...) system does this. • An A3 format is used with WALT being a common character throughout the whole school. His speech bubble illustrates the learning intention, written in simple terms appropriate for the level of children's understanding. • The learning intention is also written on children's work. • In KS2 the learning intention is displayed as part of a target title. • In KS1 the teacher writes the learning intention as part of a marking comment. • Success criteria are shared verbally with children. • This system is illustrated in the school's Teaching and Learning Policy. 	Clarke, 2001
<u>Assessing Outcomes</u>	Plenary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 to 10 minute sessions planned and structured for the end of each Literacy Hour. • The content of the plenary should relate directly back to the original learning intention shared at the beginning of the session. 	Clarke, 2001 DFEE, 1998
	Marking and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking is focused against the learning intention of the task. • Green highlights are used to indicate successful achievement of the learning outcome. • Orange highlights are used to indicate that more consolidation work is needed. • Positive comments will always be directed against the learning intention. • Closing the gap comments are used to re-focus and re-direct children's learning towards the learning intention. • This system is illustrated in the school's Marking and Feedback Policy. 	Clarke, 2001 DFEE, 1998 Sutton, 2000
<u>Recording Outcomes</u>	Traffic lights of achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning intentions on medium and short-term plans are highlighted to illustrate general achievement: • Green highlights indicate that the majority of the group or whole class has achieved the learning intention. • Orange highlights indicate that the majority of the group or whole class has nearly achieved the learning intention and some consolidation work is needed. • Red highlights indicate that the majority of the group or whole class has not achieved the learning intention. • Traffic light highlighting will serve to inform future planning of related learning intentions. 	Clarke, 2001
	Evaluation of Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher writes a brief description on significant observations of child(ren)'s achievement against planned learning intentions. • Observations will detail individuals or groups who have not reached or have exceeded the planned and taught learning intention. 	Clarke, 2001

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations will serve to inform future planning of related learning intentions. • This system is illustrated in the school's Assessment and Target Setting Policy. 	
<u>Analysing Outcomes</u>	Target setting and feed forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets are set, for children, by using information gleaned from marking strategies, and evaluations of plans. • Targets should be specific, manageable, achievable, realistic and time related. • Targets should be closely linked to subsequent learning intentions planned. • This system is illustrated in the school's Assessment and Target Setting Policy. 	Clarke, 2001 DFEE, 1997 Sutton, 1997 AAIA, 1997

Strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment are agreed parts of the Literacy, Assessment and Teaching and Learning policies within school and are based on early theories by Black and Wiliam (1998), Clarke (1998) and Sutton (1997, 2000). It is important to note that later views about pupil involvement and more sophisticated insights about formative assessment, such as those by Black *et al* (2004) were not considered at the time of creating these strategies. Figure 9 outlines the formative assessment systems in place; how they are being implemented and the research they are based upon. Critical analysis of strategies adopted in this case study school must, however, take into account the following:

- Strategies adopted were based upon a limited type of formative assessment. They are teacher led activities and therefore rather top-down approaches where subsequent teaching is based upon teacher evaluation rather than active involvement of the pupil in self-assessing her or his own work.
- The research base was similarly limited and strategies adopted are based mainly on early work by Black and Wiliam (1998), Clarke (1998) and Sutton (1997, 2000) and not current research into pupil self-assessment advocated by Black *et al* (2004).

This thesis therefore offers an important evaluation of the limitations of the school's strategies by being able to draw on later work on formative assessment.

The theoretical basis for particular formative assessment approaches that underpinned teacher training for the implementation of these strategies is detailed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, and INSET presentation slides can be analysed in Appendix F. Training was delivered in a positive climate for change. Most staff, I felt, were flexible and eager to adopt methods to develop their expertise. Only one older teacher had a more inflexible attitude towards the INSET training. Next steps in training were not introduced to staff until they had 'tried and tested' strategies introduced in previous INSET sessions. Methods to promote 'ownership of change' (Rudduck, 1993) worked well and teachers were willing to try new methods that they themselves were involved in devising.

Approaches adopted in the name of formative assessment were heavily based upon Clarke's (1998) work. Approaches were found to be practical and manageable and the school's leadership team found them easy to put into smaller bite sized pieces for implementation. In other words, this initiative was not too onerous to introduce to staff alongside other school priorities. However, an important thing to consider is that this approach adopted is highly teacher-led and operates in a top-down way, rather than actively engaging a fully involved learner. It is significant that this approach advocated by Shirley Clarke was recommended by the DfES and was heavily promoted by Shirley Clarke herself within a number of North East LEAs. This made such systems adopted in the name of formative assessment attractive to many schools.

CHAPTER 3:B: Curriculum Context of the Study: Writing

Why focus on Writing?

In this study, we are analysing primarily how formative assessment strategies affect teachers' values and beliefs in teaching writing. However, in order to restrict variables associated with different subject knowledge, I have restricted the context of this study within the teaching of writing.

Literacy is a vital basic and essential skill that children need for personal, academic, and economic success:

“Literacy is fundamental to thinking, to formal education, and to life-long learning. The link between high levels of Literacy and academic success occurs, initially, through allowing individuals access to the curriculum, and secondly, through enabling them to achieve success educationally. (McGaw, Long, Morgan and Rosier, 1989, P.12).

According to the DFEE (1998a) a literate child should exhibit learning features that are directly concerned with writing both within fiction and non-fiction writing, the key skill is that the child is able to “read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding” (1998a). In the context of the importance of Literacy, I will now discuss current issues, trends, and approaches in teaching writing.

Concerns in Literacy

Explicit in Notes For Conference Delegates (DFEE, 1998a) is the need to raise standards in Literacy in Primary schools. The DFEE highlights Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 performances in 1997 English SATs and, although some progress has been made since 1996, there are still features of “low attainment of pupils at KS2” a “long-tail of underachievement” and “...low attainment of boys, compared with girls” (DFEE 1998a, p.10). Inspection of Literacy (DFEE, 1998a) has emphasised that a

diversity of practises in English teaching, a lack of standardisation, coupled with problems in classroom management and gaps in teachers' knowledge may have contributed to underachievement in areas of Literacy, thus resulting in poor test performance. Wray and Lewis (1999) also highlight concerns about issues pertaining to teachers that "trace a continuous thread throughout successive reports" (Wray and Lewis, 1999, p.11). They pinpoint that a persistent problem was "Teachers' lack of subject knowledge and expertise" (Wray and Lewis, 1999, p.11), especially in relation to features of language and teaching of writing.

Concerns in children's ability in writing have been a particular issue. Beard (1998) found that recurring issues in OFSTED inspections from 1991 to 1998 found that standards in writing were weaker than other attainment targets in English. In fact, analysis of the results of the 2001 KS1 and KS2 English SATs found that "Achievement in writing still lags behind reading". (QCA, 2001). Implications for teaching and learning indicate that the use of capital letters and full stops are not firmly established. In narrative writing, there was a reliance on straightforward chronological organisation.

Furthermore, Wray and Lewis (1999) highlight "area(s) of particular concern" (Wray and Lewis, 1999, p.9) identified as early as 1978. They describe scrutiny from DES (1978), HMI (1989) and OFSTED (1995), found evidence that Literacy teaching in some primary schools lacked direct teaching of more advanced reading and writing skills, especially within non-fiction work. Wray and Lewis (1999) detail areas of specific concern as:

- A lack of range of writing.

- An over-emphasis on copying.
- A lack of sustained, independent and extended writing.

Wray and Lewis (1999) found a disparity in standards between KS1 and KS2, where KS1 had higher standards of writing. They also found that more advanced writing skills were only taught to more able older pupils. Wray and Lewis (1999) emphasise the need for an interactive, structured model of Literacy teaching that involved the pupils as well as the teacher.

The next section discusses recent approaches to Literacy teaching and government policy will be scrutinised.

Approaches to Teaching Writing.

The **National Literacy Strategy (NLS)** is a widely adopted approach to the teaching of reading and writing in Key Stages 1, 2 and recently Key Stage 3. It aims (DFEE, 1998a; Dean, 2000) to provide clear picture of a standardised, high quality instructional approach to teaching literacy that moves away from individualised teaching and claims to promote the effective use of time and classroom management.

Teaching of Writing within the NLS is founded on research-based models that promote a link between reading and writing (Beard, 1998). The Searchlights Model (DFEE, 1998a), based on theories by Adams and Bruck, (1993), Rumelhart and McClelland (1986) and Seidenberg and McClelland (1989) explains that learners actively use a range of strategies or cues to obtain understanding of the text. They

include the use of searching, problem solving, active prediction and the use of prior knowledge in order to gain comprehension of the text (Shorrocks et al, 1993).

The training materials (1998b) have attempted to increase teacher expertise in transferring pedagogical content to learning outcomes. INSET has advocated the use of a variety of teaching styles within the taught Literacy Hour session. Skills and approaches used include whole class teaching, in the first 15 minutes of the session, where the teacher is trained to use a range of questioning, discursive, modelling, and explanatory skills in Shared Writing. A whole class approach is continued in the second 15-minute session where instructional, explanatory and questioning skills are used to purvey and develop focused word or sentence level work. The third, a longer 20-minute session, uses a more directed small ability group teaching approach to teach skills to develop learner's writing via text, sentence or word level tasks. The rest of the class are involved in independent writing activities that are planned and presented by the teacher. The hour session ends with a whole class shorter 10-minute session. In this plenary session, the teacher is trained to conclude the lesson by

“Reviewing, reflecting, consolidating teaching points, and presenting work covered in the lesson”. (DFEE, 1998a, OHT 1.2)

Hayes and Flower (1980) and Hayes (1996) describe a model of writing that is also involves the learner actively using prior knowledge stored in long-term memory to plan writing that is influenced by a variety of linguistic, motivational and social limitations. The Framework for Teaching Literacy (DFEE, 1998) builds upon these models and aims to link models of reading and writing. Clay (1980; 1991; 1993) also found that building links between reading and writing could be effective in teaching

writing, for example, awareness of phonemes are used by children when they attempt to write words. Tierney et al (1989) found that teaching writing was more effective when it was combined with reading prompts.

Standardised practical approaches to the teaching of writing have been exemplified by the NLS; they have been widely disseminated across LEA with standardised INSET for teachers. Skills and approaches used include whole class teaching, in the first fifteen minutes of the Literacy Hour, where the teacher uses a range of questioning, discursive, modelling, and explanatory skills in Shared Text Reading and/or Writing. A whole class approach is continued in the second fifteen minutes of the Literacy Hour where instructional, explanatory, and questioning skills are used to purvey and develop focused word or sentence level work. The third, a longer twenty-minute session, uses a more directed small group teaching approach. In this session, the teacher has been trained to work with an ability group to focus on a sentence, word or text task in a guided reading and/or writing session. The Literacy Hour session ends with a whole class shorter ten-minute session. In this plenary session, the teacher is trained to conclude the lesson by “Reviewing, reflecting, consolidating teaching points, and presenting work covered in the lesson”. (DFEE, 1998a, OHT 1.2). Appendix A illustrates the structure of the Literacy Hour that teachers use as the vehicle to teach Literacy.

Further guidance by the DFFE (September, 2000; May, 2001) was published with the main intention to improve children’s writing, through focused teaching of sentence level activities. Practical approaches have been based on an adaptation of the

Searchlights model (DFEE, 1998a). Instead of the reader using a range of cues, the writer makes a range of decisions to produce text:

“A useful way to think about writing is to turn the National Literacy Strategy ‘searchlights’ model of reading inside out....For a writer each ‘searchlight’ represents a range of decisions, rather than cues, that have to be orchestrated to create a text.” (DFEE, September 2000).

Decisions about writing are demonstrated and explored explicitly to children at the point of writing. Within the structure of the Literacy Hour, writing is taught within three discrete levels: During whole class *Shared Writing*, the teacher works to model and explore the choices the writer has at the point of writing, rather than offering a corrective exercise. Links are made between reading and writing as written texts are used as models for writing. Particular aspects of the writing process, such as planning, composing, revising, editing, and drafting are modelled, demonstrated and scaffolded by the teacher and technical vocabulary is introduced to the children. The teacher uses demonstration, scribing and supported composition to deliver learning intentions during shared writing. Guidance for the teaching of shared writing also applies to the teaching of *Guided Writing*, which occurs within the third twenty-minute section of the Literacy Hour. During guided writing, the teacher will focus work with a small ability group to support children in planning and drafting their own work; to revise and edit work in progress and to provide differentiated support for particular groups. During *Independent Writing*, children make the transition from what has been demonstrated and modelled in shared writing to focused and challenged writing that is completed autonomously. These approaches are adhered to in the focus school.

Recent studies have, however, criticized both the evidence base for this government policy and its implementation into primary schools. Wyse (December, 2003) examines the empirical evidence base for The National Literacy Strategy. He argues that the NLS framework is based on evidence (from inspections, school effectiveness research and child development evidence) that cannot be used as a reliable resource base for educational aims and techniques. Wyse (December, 2003) advocates the need for a formal review of The National Literacy Strategy.

Earlier studies describe The NLS as a vision of autonomy, which David Blunkett aimed “To overcome economic and social disadvantage and to make equality of opportunity a reality...” (DfEE, 1997, p.3). This envisaged a Curriculum 2000 with a clear teaching curriculum that is open to minimum misinterpretation and the teacher is not expected to “...invent her own wheel...” (Barber, 1996, p.173), in order to deliver teaching objectives. There would be a compulsory core of defined age-specific framework of knowledge and skills that would hopefully “...free the frontline workers to do their job...” (Barber, 1996, p.264).

However, some researchers, for example, Tooley (1999) raise objections to this approach. He argues that rather than a professional autonomy, there would be centralised government autonomy and control over a highly prescriptive curriculum. Tooley (1999) also agrees with Wyse (December, 2003) and questions the reliability and validity of methods to obtain data in NLS research.

“...knowledge about educational needs cannot be found in the qualitative measures which government is forced to employ.” (p.31).

Robert Skidelsky, a prominent Tory peer, in *The Guardian* (09.12.97) and James Porter, author of *Pre-schooling and the Global Future*, 1999, in the *TES*, (17.09.99) discuss their fears over the “Command-and-control policies” (Porter, 1999) of the Labour government. They both contest that if a methodological approach approved by central control is to be implemented then it must be “defended at all costs” (Porter, 1999). That is, it is doomed to succeed, the government must show that it works.

Training in Literacy was delivered in a top-down approach of consultation, with limited school staff ownership. National advisers trained LEA consultants who in turn trained all the primary schools in their area. Some schools received ‘light-touch’ and others ‘intensive’ training and support depending on their school’s standards in Literacy. The Literacy subject leader disseminated national government training packs to teachers. Skidelsky (1997) argues that this could create a lack of curriculum choice, which would not be a panacea to defects, but rather create rigidity within the curriculum. Pring (1996) questioned whether this strict central control over curriculum objectives would still leave choice for parents. The only choice remaining would be the effectiveness of the institution to deliver the curriculum.

Furthermore, training and implementation of The NLS was not received uniformly. A survey into the effectiveness of NLS training by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) found that some teachers were still waiting to be trained four months after the introduction of The NLS in schools (Reported in *TES* by Karen Thornton 22.01.99). Although information obtained by The NASUWT was via ‘soundings from 400 members’ (Reported in *TES* by Karen Thornton 22.01.99) the union found that many members found the training either too

patronising while at times “...served only to confuse and irritate staff. At times, it seems as if we are doing a linguistics degree.” (Reported in *TES* by Karen Thornton 1999). Karen Thornton also highlights the weaknesses of a top-down approach to implementation: “ ‘Cascade’ training- where a co-ordinator disseminates what he or she has learned to school colleagues- is proving to be ineffective because of lack of time.” (Reported in *TES* by Karen Thornton 1999).

Such debate illuminates important questions about the translation of policy into practice. For example, Reynolds (1998) stresses contextual socio-economic factors that may influence effective practice. He discusses differences in effective practices within low socio-economic and middle socio-economic school contexts and highlights factors such as catchment area, trajectory effectiveness of the whole school, its region, the urban/rural status as well as cultural and religious influences that could affect implementation and delivery within the context of the school. Others such as Sarah Cassidy (*TES* 1999) suggest a mismatch of age-related teaching objectives to teaching *all* children. She reports that a key consultant believes The NLS is “failing the poorest readers it was designed to help”. Questions were also raised as to whether the framework was matched to more able pupils. Reynolds (1998) expresses concern in:

“...the danger in the present range of educational policies being ‘rolled out’ in the area of primary school children’s literacy is that they are predominately undifferentiated ones which are being introduced into very different local school contexts.” (p.158).

Reynolds stresses that without acknowledgement of the different contextual starting points and the possibilities for effective formative assessment within each school, differences in performance in Literacy will merely be enhanced.

Moseley (2000) highlights other concerns over children's standards in writing even since 1998 and the introduction of the NLS. He goes further to suggest that one approach that may improve standards is the type of feedback and targets children are receiving about their writing. Moreover, in 1996 an HMI noted that a characteristic of good Literacy teachers was their use of assessment to inform their short and medium term plans. This could highlight the need for an effective system of assessment for learning in order to develop effective teaching. In fact, Fox (2000) criticises current Key Stage 1 approaches to the assessment of writing, despite the production of examples of assessed children's work against National curriculum performance descriptors in order to promote reliability in assessments. Fox (2000) suggests that the current use of best fit descriptors are invalid due to their "muddled dimensions", "vagueness and inconsistency", including a "failure to discriminate within writing" and "missing features of writing". (Fox, 2000, P.24-26).

It is therefore crucial that teachers work towards some way of improving standards by using a manageable formative assessment for learning strategy. It is the aim of this study to analyse what factors might be involved in such a strategy. The following section will outline and discuss the context of the study and multiple methods used in order to gather descriptive data.

The nature and purpose of this study is to discover to what extent:

- Can the strategies adopted in the school be characterised formative assessment?
- Have the strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment, promoted the teaching of writing within the school? If so, in what ways?

- Do teachers' values and beliefs about adopted formative assessment affect their approach to teaching writing?
- What factors have a positive or negative effect on how teachers regard adopted strategies in teaching writing?
- Do the adopted strategies affect pupils' motivation and autonomy?
- What implications are there for improving formative assessment in the school?

CHAPTER 4:

A: METHODOLOGY

“The process of education, teaching and learning are so complex and multi-faceted, that to focus only upon product outcomes or correlation in school based research is of limited value” (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.25)

The above statement justifies the move in recent years towards qualitative approaches to school-based research, as opposed to an over-emphasis on quantitative measure of effectiveness. Quantitative research is founded upon the notions of replicability in order to formulate generalisations, with a view to informing a ‘wider audience’. As such, this can have little effect on the individual school or practitioner, as the generalised data does not offer a unique insight into their situation (unless the general implications are drawn out clearly for specific contexts). In contrast, qualitative research assumes an educational agenda, where the specific context of teaching and learning itself becomes the focus: this study embraces that notion. In order for qualitative research to engage authentically with the complexity of education practice in particular settings, a variety of interpretative research techniques need to be used.

This section of the study describes the different techniques of qualitative research methods that are to be used in this small-scale study, entwined within a justification of their application. As Kaplan (1973) says, it is the intention of this section to:

“Describe and analyse these methods, throwing light on their limitations and resources, clarifying their presuppositions and consequences, relating their potentialities to the twilight zone of the frontiers of knowledge” (Kaplan, in Cohen and Manion, 1980, p28).

In order to ensure that this aim is achieved effectively, the type of qualitative research that defines this study will be examined to provide a meaningful context.

In order to understand the direction of this research, it is important to determine the researcher's implicit and explicit beliefs about the nature of reality and to evaluate how those beliefs affect the research questions posed in the study and the methods used to explore them. This undertaking may be vital to a study since these beliefs ultimately guide his or her action throughout the duration of the research. Carr (1986) emphasizes this view:

“...ways of thinking and acting incorporate an interrelated set of beliefs and assumptions providing rules and maxims which operate both as instructions about how events and situations are to be interpreted and as prescriptions about how to proceed if one's practice is to be interpreted by others...” (Carr, 1986, p.178).

What the researcher believes about the nature of reality will affect how she defines the questions she is seeking to investigate.

A central question for this research is ‘to what extent is teaching effective’. In order to investigate this central component, it may be necessary for the researcher to accept that a rational and realistic approach to what makes teaching effective is prominent in government strategies. These assume that effectiveness can be measured objectively against different criteria and that, by and large, the ensuing injunctions for effective practice can be generalised across and between contexts. However, a critical stance on this positivist view of effectiveness needs to be maintained in this study, despite its strong influence over ideas about effective literacy teaching and formative assessment.

This study aims to explore and analyse the diverse and complex phenomena that underpin the research questions. Particular emphasis, therefore will be laid upon the diverse range of techniques in capturing and portraying the elements of what is intended to be studied, in order to give it meaning within a specific context, namely the NLS in the primary school describe above. These elements will be teachers' plans for learning (medium-term and short-term plans); strategies for managing learning (differentiation and sharing learning intentions); approaches to assessing outcomes (plenary, marking and feedback); approaches to recording outcomes (traffic light highlighting and evaluation of plans); and strategies for analysing outcomes (target setting and feed forward). The effectiveness of these approaches in relation to teaching writing will be revealed through analysis of documentation and teachers' answers and responses. Therefore, multiple sources of evidence will be used to determine specific influences upon teaching writing through better formative assessment strategies.

The Case Study approach.

To study such complex phenomena, a 'case study' approach will be used. Case studies, by definition, are concerned with, "one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale...interactional phenomena are studied in their own right and in their own territory" (Bell, 1993, p.8). Moreover, the data derived from such a study will be analysed from the perspective of inferring meanings and searching out modes of explanation and conclusions only in that specific context. Unlike a quantitative approach where the normative researcher manipulates variables to determine their causal significance, the case study researcher typically observes the individual unit s/he is investigating in order to assess how an innovation or

phenomenon affects the functioning of the 'case' in question (Bell, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Robson, 1997). In this instance, it is a study at a global level, a "holistic case study" (Yin, 1989) where a whole institution is investigated rather than individual sub-sections

Conversely, constructivist or interpretative approaches focus upon the uniqueness of the case in trying to gain a valid and authentic account, rather than a representation of a broader world (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998c). Rather than providing and building causal theory, the constructivists envisage that a case study is valuable in "...refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation...." world (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998c, p.104).

The question of internal validity in case study research is an important consideration (see for example, Burgess, 1985; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Deem and Brehony, 1994; Robson, 1997). Internal validity of an investigation aims to establish whether the data collected relates to and measures the research questions asked (Deem and Brehony, 1994; Robson, 1997) and whether the data offer an authentic and plausible account of a phenomenon or event. Therefore, the identification and analysis of validity in a multi-method approach may provide rich data about the particular phenomenon in context (Schofield, 1993). This is emphasised by Tsoukas (1989), who suggests that case studies are:

"...concerned with the clarification of structures and their associative generative mechanisms, which have been contingently capable of producing observed phenomena." (Tsoukas, 1989, p.556).

Bassey (1995) rejects claims that case studies can make universal declarations about education in England and Wales, but supports the idea that an investigation into

‘bounded systems’ (Bassey, 1995, p.112) enables enquiry to explore an issue or unit for increased knowledge and understanding of that particular unit or local issue.

Bassey (1978) saw such research as

“a ‘study of a singularity’ because there was a clear boundary in space and time for the project and its purpose was to inform other primary teachers of the different ways in which this group of teachers operated, not to draw general statements about primary education in England.” (Bassey, 1995, p112).

Deem and Brehony (1994) question the possibility of external (generalisability) validity. However, they argue that many qualitative researchers are interested in description and enlightenment of research questions rather than empirical generalisability. Deem and Brehony (1994) suggest that quantitative methods could be used if researchers wished to engage in such generalisations.

Although a multi method approach is used in this qualitative study, as the reader gets to the actual design methods, there is a strong positivist tone and set of assumptions about reliability and validity. However, constructivist aspects do begin to emerge when the research seeks to interpret and delve deeper into interpretation about cause and effect. For example, during the semi-structured interview, the researcher may seek to extrapolate detailed subjective interpretations of an issue raised during analysis of data from the questionnaire, which is based upon pre-defined assumptions. There could be, therefore, an interaction between two paradigms. A common thread of knowledge and reality is assumed to exist about particular approaches, but investigation of data may highlight individual differing views, beliefs and opinions which may reflect a variety of subjective perceptions and interpretations. I will discuss the design of each method and attempt to address questions of internal validity, reliability, and generalisability.

Generalisability and the Context of the Study

Schofield (1993) argues that the aim of generalising findings that apply globally is not a primary aspiration of interpretive qualitative research. In fact, Denzin and Lincoln (1998c) warn that generalisation is not applicable to all research. They argue that if a researcher continues a headstrong commitment to generalisability, it could divert important emphasis away from crucial issues within the case itself. Therefore, Schofield (1993) emphasises that findings from qualitative studies are largely context specific and findings from a particular study can therefore only be matched to the degree to which findings relate to other conditions:

“It is virtually impossible to imagine any human behaviour that is not heavily mediated by the context in which it occurs. One can easily conclude that generalisations that are intended to be context free will have little that is useful to say about human behaviour” (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.62)

Schofield draws upon the views of Guba and Lincoln (1981) and describes the relationship from one context to another as ‘fittingness’. Schofield (1993) also describes notions of ‘comparability’ and ‘translatability’ whereby elements of research translate and can be compared to other research situations:

“...the degree to which components of a study – including the units of analysis, concepts generated, population characteristics, and settings – are sufficiently well described and defined that other researchers can use the results of the study as a basis for comparison.” (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p.228).

Therefore, one study can be used to form an opinion about other research studies, or in the case of this research, to evaluate a particular strategy. It is therefore important to supply the reader and researcher with descriptions of the context in which the study

takes place. Consequently, vital components of the study, described by Goetz and LeCompte (1984) can be used for comparison. A description of the context of the case in question therefore need be addressed: I will do this later in the chapter.

Reflexivity

The researcher's involvement in this case must be highlighted. The researcher in this case study is the Deputy Headteacher in the school and objectivity is therefore impossible (Straus and Corbin, 1998). This position of participant would consequently be rejected by positivist approaches (Gall, Borg, Gall, 1996). A constructivist approach, however, can accommodate the subjective influence of the researcher in the study and define such influence as 'reflexivity', where, if she reflects critically on her role, the researcher is "...an integral constructor of the social reality being studied..." (Gall, Borg, Gall, 1996, p.20).

Bearing this view in mind, proactive strategies in this study aimed to reduce any possible negative effect of participation:

- All data was collected anonymously and therefore the subjects were aware that the researcher would not know the identities of specific individuals.
- Assurances were made to subjects that all information gleaned from any part of the investigation would be completely confidential.

In this study I aim to highlight pertinent issues of reflexivity throughout the design, data analysis and discussion chapters. This could enable the reader to draw conclusions and interpretations as to what effects of the professional position of the researcher had any effect upon data collected.

B: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Self-completed Questionnaire

In order to gain insights into teachers' views and attitudes about how valuable they have found formative assessment strategies, a self-completed questionnaire was administered. This enabled the researcher to collect data quickly and time need to code answers was kept to a minimum. (Bell, 1999; Denscombe, 1998; Mitchell and Jolley, 1988; Robson, 1997). The questionnaire was also used in order to illuminate any issues that could be explored in-depth during follow-up semi structured interviews (as discussed in the next section).

Bell, 1999; Denscombe, 1998; Mitchell and Jolley, 1988; Robson, 1997, all advise that attention to detail is needed to construct an effective questionnaire and warn about the adverse effects upon internal validity of the questionnaire if it is inadequately designed. Ambiguity, imprecision and assumption (Bell, 1999) in question design could result in misinterpretation or different interpretation by respondents resulting in an item on a questionnaire measuring different attitude and opinions. One effect is that subsequently, the questionnaire may be measuring different things to different people. This affects both the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Bell (1999) advises: "...word your questions sufficiently precisely to ensure that they mean the same to all respondents" (Bell, 1999, p.121). Therefore, double questions; leading questions, presuming and hypothetical questions are to be avoided (Bell, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1994). Bradburn and Sudman (1979) claim that the response effects of questionnaire items may also be dependent upon question structure and question length in threatening or sensitive questions. For these types of questions, Bradburn and Sudman (1979) advise using more questions that are open-

ended because they were less affected by social desirability factors. In other words, respondents could be less likely to provide a response that they consider to be socially acceptable rather than a reflection of true attitudes and opinions.

This mirrors Robson's (1997) view that a questionnaire should be constructed so that items have "...clear and unambiguous instructions, and careful wording..." (p.243). Respondents must be certain of how the questionnaire is to be completed. Vague instructions could lead to confused and incorrect completion of the questionnaire, again having an adverse affect upon validity and reliability of data collected.

Reliability of a self-completed questionnaire can also be affected by honesty and frankness of the respondent. If the respondents feel that his/her views and opinions may be used out of context, they may be reluctant to offer responses that reflect their true feelings (Mitchell and Jolley, 1988). Anonymous completion of the questionnaire may help to encourage truthfulness and candour, especially in sensitive or threatening questions, thereby having a positive effect upon the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire in this study was constructed bearing all these factors in mind. A copy of the questionnaire can be analysed in detail in Appendix C of this study.

Semi-structured Interviews

Cannell and Kahn (1968) describe an interview as

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

In this light, it is hoped that a semi-structured interview will help to find out:

- Have the strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment, promoted the teaching of writing within the school? If so, in what ways?
- Do teachers' values and beliefs about adopted formative assessment affect their approach to teaching writing?
- What factors have a positive or negative effect on how teachers regard adopted strategies in teaching writing?
- Do the adopted strategies affect pupils' motivation and autonomy?

In order to obtain information about teacher practice and how formative assessment may have affected it, a semi-structured interview was used. The semi-structured interview enabled the researcher to obtain in-depth statements of preferences, opinions, and experience (Bell, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Denscombe, 1998; Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997.) about the formative assessment system in place. The term semi-structured interview describes

“...a general structure by deciding in advance what ground is to be covered and what main questions are to be asked. This leaves the detailed structure to be worked out during the interview” (Drever, 1997, p.1).

Denscombe (1998) acknowledges that interviews go beyond informal causal conversation and interviews are often recorded. This issue leads into ethical considerations, which will be discussed later in the chapter. Using semi-structured interviews can lead the researcher directly to the particular values and beliefs that teachers attach to particular techniques of formative assessment.

The semi-structured interview was chosen, since a highly structured interview may have been too restrictive to obtain in-depth information. Conversely, a completely

unstructured interview could have lacked direction and focus, leading to a lack of depth of issues covered, but also to some issues not being addressed at all. In this study, the semi-structured interview was used to investigate motives behind interesting responses that the questionnaire could not have achieved; therefore some direction was needed within the interview structure but also allowed interviewees to explain their thinking in detail. Robson (1997) emphasises the advantage of semi-structured interviews as having "...the potential of providing rich and highly illuminating material". (p. 229).

The semi-structured interview could, therefore, be vital in peeling back the layers of attitude and opinion within subjects in this case study (Cohen and Manion, 1998). However, the construction and method of interviewing may be of prime importance to obtaining data that is both reliable and internally valid, thereby being objective.

Threats to Internal Validity.

In order for the semi-structured interview to gather data that measures what it intended to measure, particular attention has to be paid to the questions asked. The type and order of questions used as well as phrases, wording and various prompts and probes used for each question may have a significant bearing upon responses received from participants (Bell, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Denscombe, 1998; Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997). Primarily, for the interview to reveal thorough data surrounding the investigation, it is vital that the semi-structured interview schedule contains questions that are directly linked to the theoretical underpinnings of the research in question. I cited Cannel and Kahn (1968) in relation to this issue at the beginning of this section. However, Powney and Watts (1987) emphasise that the

interview schedule must be prepared with accuracy, with the researcher knowing precisely why the question needs to be addressed. The interview schedule then must structure questions that increase a logical flow from one issue to the next (Drever, 1997). Powney and Watts (1987) stress that this accuracy may lead to precise extrapolation of rich data, which is highly pertinent to the research questions.

Questions, Prompts and Probes.

As with questionnaire items, interview questions must be precise and clear, and mean the same for each participant. It is essential that each participant interpret each question in the same way, since misinterpretation of questions may result in data being invalid as the question during interview may not be measuring what the researcher intended to measure (Robson, 1997; Cohen and Manion, 1998). Powney and Watts (1987) and Robson (1997) highlight types of questions that should be avoided during interviews so to avoid interview situations where “...the same questions have different meanings for different people...” (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p.283).

Two-part questions and long questions should be avoided (Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997), since they can often confuse and mislead participants. These types of questions end up being answered because the interviewee finds it difficult to focus on or to remember all of the questions. This results in partial, inaccurate responses that do not reflect what the researcher intended to find out. Questions that include jargon can also have an effect upon the internal validity of interview questions (Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997) and thereby the nature of responses given by participants.

All participants may not understand technical jargon; some may have the confidence to ask for clarification, and this may add interviewer bias because all explanations may not be the same to all people; other participants may not ask for clarification and may give answers to questions without fully understanding their meaning. Leading questions, as they suggest, may guide participants inadvertently in a particular direction. Powney and Watts (1987) advise:

“Questions should not be phrased in such a way, as to suggest there is one socially acceptable answer, especially where certain biased words or phrases are used. “ (p.137).

Leading questions, therefore, could result in interview question responses being skewed into a particular direction and subsequently the interview question may not be a true or valid measure.

Interviewers use prompts to clarify questions without suggesting answers or to extend discussion when an interviewee seems to have finished or seem ready to expand their discussion further. It is recommended (Drever, 1997; Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997) that such prompts should be carefully planned into the interview schedule so that in-depth information can be retrieved even though the interviewee may not think the issue is important.

Issues of internal validity, within question wording and phrasing, highlight the importance and necessity of a pilot interview before conducting interviews formally. The researcher could spend countless hours on ensuring precise and correct wording, but however, will only know whether questions and analysis in practice after an interview has taken place. It is therefore important that interviews are piloted (Drever,

1997; Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997). Pilot interviews should take place with interviewees that are from the same population as the rest of the sample. The pilot interview should be timed and the interviewer on the schedule should note areas that the interviewee found difficult. After the interview, the interviewer could discuss whether there was enough time given to answer the questions, or whether wording had enough clarity for understanding. Pilot interviewees could also discuss whether they felt they were being led or coerced into particular avenues of response. These issues of interview reliability will now be discussed.

Threats to Reliability.

From a positivist standpoint, there may be a need to ascertain the trustworthiness of data collected from a semi-structured interview. Therefore, possible issues of unreliability will be identified so that this researcher can aim to minimise risks to the reliability of data.

Selection of interviewees may be an important factor in either minimising or introducing bias to interview data. Asking people to volunteer for interviews may ensure that you have co-operative participants (Drever, 1997). However, such volunteers may not be truly representative of the case study population. They may be individuals who are enthusiastic about the intended research or those who are vehemently opposed. Both groups may have something worthwhile to say, but data could be unreliable because it offers extreme viewpoints rather than opinions from a broad spectrum of the case study population. Drever (1997) suggests that random sampling of interviewees could be undertaken to overcome this potential bias. In this

case study, pilot interviews were volunteers whilst other interviewees were selected from the sample at random.

Robson (1997) suggests that the length of the semi-structured interview may have some effect upon the reliability of the data collected. He suggests the “Anything under half an hour is unlikely to be valuable” (p.229). In other words, a shorter interview of less than thirty minutes is unlikely to provide enough in-depth information because the time has been limited. Conversely, an overlong interview may result in busy interviewees becoming disheartened, thereby resulting in bias responses that are not necessarily true reflections of attitudes and opinions. In this case, study pilot interviews enabled the researcher to determine the approximate length of the interview. Both pilot interviews lasted over half an hour, but not more than 45 minutes, therefore aiming to detailed information without providing too much disruption in teachers’ highly busy lives.

Furthermore, Bell (1999) emphasises that there is always a danger of bias within interviewing and she highlights Selltitz *et al* (1962) view that “...interviewers are human beings and not machines” (p.583). Bias can steal into interviews from both the perspective of the interviewer and the interviewee (Bell, 1999; Denscombe, 1998; Mitchell and Jolley, 1988).

Interviewer Bias and Response Effect

Kitwood (1977) stresses that each interview is a separately defined personal interaction and a variety of biases will affect different respondents in different ways.

In other words, “each participant in an interview will define a situation in a particular way...”.

It could be argued that the interviewer may affect participant responses by verbally or non-verbally encouraging researchers’ perceptions of correct or appropriate answers (Bradburn, 1979; Mitchell and Jolley, 1988). This could be further influenced by whether the researcher is a ‘stakeholder’ in the project. Powney and Watts (1987) also outline this factor influencing interviewer effects and emphasise:

“...as a part of the self-fulfilling prophecy a respondent’s answer may reflect the expectations of the interviewer. Unintentionally interviewers may give clues to their own attitudes and values and even to the kinds of answers they would like to receive from their interviewees.” (p.36)

In this study, the interviewer is, simultaneously, research designer, and interview analyst and participants are part of the school hierarchy, and therefore the researcher’s own hypotheses could influence both the interaction with the interviewee and how the interview is analysed. Powney and Watts (1987) suggest this type of involvement may

“...make it harder for the interviewers to distance themselves from the informants and the research team than in interviewing where they remain detached from the project” (p.34).

This could promote bias during interview and therefore influence the reliability and validity of the data.

The background characteristics of the interviewer may also have some effect upon the reliability and validity of the data gleaned from an interview (Bradburn, 1979; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Drever, 1997; Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997). Age,

education, socio-economic status, race, religion, and gender of the interviewer may have some effect on how the interviewer presents herself and how interviewees respond to that presentation. In this study, the interviewer researcher is the same gender and roughly the same age as participants and broadly within the same socio-economic class. However, the interviewer/researcher is in a professionally senior management position to all participants. This could have some influence over their responses. Some interviewees may lack the confidence to give responses that reflect their exact opinion and attitudes about certain issues and only offer responses that they hope the interviewer would expect to hear. Borg (1981) summarises factors of bias that could affect the reliability of interview data: .

Eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between interviewer and respondent, or the tendency of the interviewer to seek out the answers that support his preconceived notions are but a few of the factors that may contribute to biasing of data obtained from the interview” (p.87)

Interview bias may have a major affect upon the reliability and validity of the data produced from a semi-structured interview in this case study. In the light of these potential biases, it may be imperative to conduct the semi-structured interview in a certain way in order to attempt to maximise impartiality and therefore reduce bias. In this study, efforts were made to reduce interviewer bias:

- The researcher’s role has been made explicit in this methodology and broad aims of the research were shared with participants. (Powney and Watts, 1987)

- The interviewer made every attempt to remain neutral and non-committal to comments and statements made by the interviewee (Denscombe, 1998).
- The interviewer kept to a structured interview schedule, which outlined questions as well as potential prompts and probes, which could be used to illuminate and extend opinion and attitude. (Denscombe, 1998; Drever, 1997; Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997; Cohen and Manion, 1998)
- An independent external researcher completed half of the interviews in order to overcome problems of the researcher's particular participant role in this case study.
- All interviews were recorded in order to obtain a true and permanent record of participants' attitude and opinions. An independent professional transcriber transcribed such recordings. Therefore, researcher bias in recording and transcription may have been kept to a minimum. (Bell, 1999; Denscombe, 1998; Drever, 1997; Powney and Watts, 1987; Robson, 1997; Cohen and Manion, 1998)

However, some threats to interview bias may have been very difficult to overcome in this study. Powney and Watts (1987) argue, "we can't avoid interviewer bias" (p.37). The power relationship between interviewer and interviewee would be very difficult to overcome. Gavron (1966) agrees that some bias effects cannot be eliminated in certain studies but points out that "...awareness of the problem plus constant self-control can help" (p159).

One factor that could not be avoided was my role as both researcher and Deputy Headteacher within the case study school. I felt that this created a certain amount of interview bias. Participants may have felt that they had to give a 'correct' or

‘appropriate’ response that is participants may assume a certain pressure to conform. Action to overcome such bias will be discussed later in this thesis.

It should be noted that efforts to achieve increased reliability could have some effect upon the validity of the semi-structured interview (Cohen and Manion, 1998). One view (Kitwood, 1977) is that increased reliability within a semi-structured interview may reduce validity. A rigidly controlled interview where an interviewer sticks strictly to the schedule will enhance reliability, but may result in attitudes and opinions of interviewees being suppressed thus having a negative effect upon validity because the question may not be truly measuring what it intended to, as expression may have been stifled. Conversely, human biases involved in interaction with interviewees may serve to increase social interaction and therefore put respondents at their ease. This could go some way to extend detailed in-depth and honest opinions. Therefore, validity may be increased at the cost of reliability. Cohen and Manion (1998) suggest that the researcher must find a compromise between validity and reliability. This compromise must be carefully planned into the interview schedule. A copy of the interview schedule can be analysed in Appendix D.

Pupil Response Templates

An important part of this study is to investigate the views and beliefs of pupils. Pupil participation in this study may provide insights into how they perceive particular approaches adopted in the name of formative assessment. Pupil perceptions will also help the researcher to ascertain whether:

- Strategies adopted in the school can be characterised as formative assessment.
- Adopted strategies affect pupils’ motivation and autonomy.

Tools used for collecting pupil views were closely based upon a 'semiotic tool' (Wall and Higgins, 2004; Wall, Higgins and Smith, under peer review; Wall, Higgins, Miller and Packard, 2004) constructed by Newcastle University. Permission was kindly given by Kate Wall of Newcastle University to adapt and use template ideas for the purpose of this study.

Templates were constructed to investigate what pupils thought about sharing learning intentions using the WALT technique (Template 1) and also traffic lights and teacher comments for marking work (Template 2). The templates were designed to fit these contexts, but the basic elements of design were consistent with the approach used by Wall *et al* (2004) at Newcastle University: In the centre of the template is a visual reminder of the learning or discussion context, in these cases an illustration of WALT (Template 1) and an illustration of marking strategies (Template 2). Speech and thought bubbles were then used alongside illustrations for pupils to record their views, beliefs and opinions. Speech and thought bubbles had different metacognitive roles within each template context:

"The thought bubble is intended to look at the internal processes...In contrast, the speech bubble looks at factors external to the individual: the learning and attitudes of other pupils, teachers and parents as well as the practicalities of learning in the specified context." (Wall and Higgins, 2004. p.43)

Wall and Higgins (2004) go on to say that there may be an overlap between the two dimensions therefore connecting speech to thought, external processes to internal processes and the concrete to the abstract.

Name:	
Age:	10

Walt helps to remember the Target of what they are doing. It is easier to learn with walt. If you can read it or understand it ask the teacher to read it out or explain. Walt helps children all over the school. Some people might not understand it.

W.a.l.t says
We are learning to...
Write a ghost story using paragraphs.

It keeps me on track of what I am doing. help me on what I am doing and not for get what I am doing. helps me to learn more things.

TEMPLATE 1: Pupil Response sheet about WALT

Traffic lights and teacher comments for marking your work.

Name: _____
Age: 10

I would tell another school that it helps you understand - Stand if you have got it right, they help me by understanding my work. It is good because it helps me. Sometimes it's bad because

I have worked hard and people get angry

Sometimes people don't like orange highlight because they get upset.

TARGET: To use adjectives in sentences.

The girl ate a sweet, sticky lolly.

The boy ate a juicy, red apple.

✓ Well done! You have used adjectives.

It told you if I have under stand and if you have got it write

TARGET: To use adjectives in sentences

The girl ate a lolly.

The boy ate an apple.

Next time you need to use describing adjectives in your sentences.
Eg: red, sweet, sticky to describe the nouns.

if I have done lots of planning and done your neatest you get upset.

TEMPLATE 2: Pupil Response sheet about marking strategies

Templates were presented by the researcher in focus groups of a maximum of six children. The researcher adhered to the following points during each focus group:

- A clear explanation of the purpose of each template was given to pupils.
- Illustrations of each template were explained to pupils.
- Pupils were reminded that they were not to worry about spelling, grammar or punctuation, and they could take as long as they wanted over the task.
- The researcher scribed for children if they wished.
- Extra speech/thought bubbles and illustrations could be added if pupils had extra ideas.
- The researcher started with the blue speech bubble and used prompt questions (see Appendix G) to discuss ideas about each context.
- Once blue speech bubbles were completed, the researcher used prompt questions (see Appendix G) to discuss internal ideas for each context.

Discussion and the use of design templates was used as a three-way interaction between the pupil, the researcher and the template (Wall and Higgins, 2004) where focussed discussion between the researcher and pupil promoted thoughts to be recorded on the template that acted as a stimulus for discussion. One drawback, however, was that issues discussed sometimes were not included in pupil notes and therefore the writing process may have acted as a barrier to recording of all pupil views. Scribing for some pupils did go some way to remedy this issue.

Direct Lesson Observations

It seems vital to a study about the effects of a system adopted in the name of formative assessment on teaching approaches to writing, to go directly to the

classroom context to observe teaching and formative assessment in action. The data collected from this method could “...usefully complement, information obtained by virtually any other technique.” (Robson, 1997, p.191). Therefore, in this case study direct classroom observation is one method in a multi-method approach that supplements documentary analysis, self-completed questionnaire, and semi-structured interviews. There are different methods and approaches to direct observation (Bell, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Robson, 1997) and may determine to what extent teaching is effective. Approaches used in this study will now be discussed and attempts will be made at their justification.

Participant or Non-participant Observation?

Participant observations involve the researcher engaging in the activities they are observing, and becoming affiliated with that group. Non-participant observers stand detached from the group being observed, having little interaction with them. In this study, participant observations will be avoided. The observer is also the researcher and is already known to the group of teachers and children observed. Further participation in that group could lead to threats of bias (Bell, 1999). Issues of subjectivity, for example potential preconceived notions about both teacher and children may go some way to threaten the objectivity of observational data obtained. With this view in mind, non-participant observation was decided upon. In this approach, observers “...stand aloof from the group activities they are investigating and eschew group membership...” (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p.107). Issues of reliability and validity of the non-participant observer will be discussed in later paragraphs.

Structured or Unstructured Observation?

Issues of subjectivity may also influence whether a structured or unstructured approach to observation is used (Bell, 1999). Unstructured descriptive data can produce a wealth of information for the researcher; it can produce a narrative account of all that is seen by the observer (Robson, 1997). The classroom, however, is a highly complex environment. There is a wealth of data to be collected about social interaction, teaching methods, behaviour modifications used as well as classroom organisation. Different observers could interpret all or some of these concepts subjectively. Bell (1999) advises that for classroom observation a more structured focussed approach be used. The focus of the observation should be based upon research questions and objectives. Descriptions could be written against such structured criteria. This approach may not eliminate all subjectivity in non-participant structured observations (Bell, 1999), but does reduce collection of irrelevant and subjective data. Factors affecting reliability and validity of observational data will now be discussed.

Reliability and Validity in Direct Observations.

- **Observer effects and subject bias:** When co-operation from the participant has been agreed both observer and participants should be well aware of when the direct observation will take place. This basic factor may produce some unreliability in data. During observation the participant may become reactive to the observer. They could have a knee-jerk reaction by eliciting behaviours that they think the observers want to see. Bogdan and Bilken (1998) refer to this as the “Heisenberg effect” (p.35) whereby “the heat of the electron microscope causes the electrons to move faster than they

would if they were not under the microscope” (p.35). Therefore, the presence of the observer could result in the participant behaving in ways that are not necessarily the norm. Robson (1997) suggests that this may be alleviated in two ways. Firstly, communication with the participants should be minimised, therefore the observer’s presence in the room is kept to a minimum. Secondly, the more frequently observations are undertaken with that participant, the more it may help to desensitise that individual to the presence of an observer in her classroom. However, the way in which each participant reacts to the presence of an observer will vary from individual to individual. Observer effects may only be minimised, and it may be impossible to completely eradicate these effects.

- **Instrumentation:** In structured observations, the instrumentation could be to the validity of the data collected (Robson, 1997). Vague criteria could lead to idiosyncratic interpretation by observers. This could result in the concept for observation not measuring what it intended to measure. One way to minimise this effect could be to make observations criteria clear, focused, and specific. This may promote correct interpretation of observation criteria by the observer.
- **Observer bias:** As noted the way the observer interprets participant behaviour could have an effect upon the reliability of data obtained. Observers could have atypical ways of interpreting both instrumentation and behaviours observed. Using only one observer in the study could result in atypical interpretation of collected data; this could be confounded by the fact that idiosyncratic interpretation may not be identified because the observation cannot be compared against anything else. In other words, there is minimal identified consistency in observations. Robson (1997) suggests that using more than one observer could promote inter-observer agreement,

whereby “two or more observers obtain the same results when measuring the same behaviour” (p.221).

- **Observer drift:** Inter-observer agreement may also be used to marginalize observer drift. Where the observer changes the way in which she used the schedule of observation. (Robson, 1997).

In this study, direct lesson observations using the following methodological design in order to attempt to minimise threats to validity and reliability:

- Lesson observations were focused and behaviours observed related directly back to research questions.
- The lesson observation schedule was designed in a way that was simple and easy to interpret by observers. Descriptive statements were specific, and descriptive comments made by observers linked closely to them. Observers also supplied practical examples of behaviours to match concept on the schedule. An example of observation schedules can be found in Appendix E.
- Two observers were used in each observation. After the joint observation discussion of each item on the schedule attempted to increase potential inter-observer agreement and observer drift (Robson, 1997).
- Observers avoided interaction with both the teacher and children during the observation in order to minimise the effects of the observers’ presence.
- An external independent observer observed four lessons in an attempt to overcome the researcher’s particular participant role in this case study.
- Two issues affecting lesson observations may result in data becoming skewed. The researcher, in this study, is also the Deputy Headteacher and lesson observations were also to be used as part of regular monitoring procedures in school. Participants

may have felt threatened by a member of the leadership team ‘inspecting’ their lesson, the results of which may have been used in school improvement planning. This may make participants feel anxious and the lesson observed may or may not have been a true reflection of teaching. However, the researcher’s role as Deputy Headteacher in the school could have been offset by the fact that school monitoring is carried out regularly every half-term and teachers were used to the researcher being in the classroom. The researcher as Deputy Headteacher was familiar with the nature of the research and would be very aware of pertinent data within each lesson that an independent researcher may not be aware of.

Documentary Analysis

Documentary or ‘content’ analysis (Cohen and Manion, 1998; Robson, 1997) is an unobtrusive or indirect observation measurement that can be used to complement other measures. Content analysis does not involve interviewing participants or indeed using a questionnaire with respondents to obtain data, but allows the researcher to indirectly obtain measures of a research theory from documentation that has been contracted for an alternative purpose. It involves the analysis of documentation to describe trends in the content of the documents. It can also be used to audit communication content against given standards and to describe patterns of communication (Cohen and Manion, 1998). Moreover, because the documentation analysed may be inherent in systems researched it can stress “...the relationship between content and context” (Robson, 1997, p.272). Therefore, elements of data can be related to their particular purpose within the case or institution investigated.

During this investigation, there were three types of documents were analysed in order to investigate teaching:

- **Teaching plans:** Teacher's short-term Literacy plans.
- **Learning Targets:** Group and Individual writing targets for children written by teachers on a termly basis.
- **Children's Writing:** samples of books in a range of abilities.

The content analysis of each type of document will now be discussed in detail. It must be noted that all documents were analysed over 3 terms: Autumn Term 2001, Spring Term 2002, and Summer Term 2002 and therefore were longitudinal in nature (Robson, 1997). There was no need to reduce the content of this analysis by sampling. Since this investigation is a small-scale case study only 9 sets of documents over 3 terms needed to be analysed for each type of document.

Teacher's short-term Literacy plans:

This type of documentary evidence was chosen in order to illuminate whether teachers were using key elements of planning (Clarke, 2000; Sutton, 1997, 2000) as discussed in earlier sections. Analysis was recorded using the written word and categories were described in detail to reduce the amount of inference the researcher used during analysis (Robson, 1997).

Writing targets for children written by teachers on a termly basis.

This type of analysis was chosen to clarify whether teachers were using key elements of target setting and feed forward (AAIA, 1997; Clarke, 2001; DFEE, 1997; Sutton,

1997; QCA, 1999) discussed in earlier sections of this study. Criteria for analysis of target setting documentation centred on the need for S.M.A.R.T targets (Clarke 1998, 2001; Sutton 1997, 2000; DFEE, 1997). A low inference tally method of recording data was used to manifest items present and to promote pace in analysis. Criteria for categories were also made explicit to promote an accurate tally of results.

Samples of Books in a Range of Abilities.

This type of content analysis was chosen in order to determine whether teachers were using key elements of managing learning and feeding back achievement to children (Clarke, 1998, 2001) as discussed in earlier sections of this study. Once again, a low inference tally method of recording data was used to manifest items present and to promote pace in analysis. Criteria for categories were also made explicit to promote accurate tally of results. All work available in each book was analysed.

In this study, documentary analysis was used because it is inconspicuous in nature. Documents were analysed without invasion into subjects' time or personal space. Additionally, because documents were in hard copy form, they allowed the researcher to revisit to check for validity. There are, however, disadvantages to the uses of content analysis. In some cases, documents could be limited or incomplete. Validity may also be fostered through bias in that the documentation has been produced for other purposes, which have little to do with the research question. This could produce distortions in results.

This study has attempted to address these issues. Primarily, the documentation analysed is part of the teaching and learning of the whole school systems of planning,

teaching, learning, and strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment and therefore have a major bearing upon the research questions discussed. Additionally, elements of unreliability due to bias have been addressed. Analysis of teacher and children documentation within this case study is also carried out as a part of the Headteacher's monitoring of teaching and learning. After the document analysis had taken place feedback may be given to the Headteacher in order to determine whether similar issues were illuminated. Again, this may highlight the problem that participants may feel under pressure to conform to a top-down approach of imposed guidelines for documentation creating a potential bias. Participants may or may not be producing documents for the benefit of external managerial analysis rather than for themselves or the learner. Inter-observer agreement of analysis may improve the reliability of findings. Advice of Robson (1997), suggests that this method of collection would have "serious drawbacks, when they are used as sole method of investigation" (Robson, 1997, p.269). In this study, therefore, content analysis was used alongside other methods of data collection in order to decrease "inappropriate certainty" (Robson, 1997, p.290) and may promote triangulation of results, which will be discussed in later sections.

Triangulation

In this study, a multi-method approach was used (Bell, 1999; Bogdan and Bilken, 1998; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Robson, 1997). In other words, two or more methods of data collection were used to investigate teachers' values, beliefs and practices:

- Self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to obtain the views, attitudes, and opinions of teachers.

- Group interviews with 1 group of 6 Year 2 children and 1 group of 6 Year 6 children.
- Direct lesson observations and documentary analysis hoped to collect data that indicated how teachers were using such strategies.

Such methodological triangulation using different methods, hopes to utilise a variety of methods in order to validate the aims and objectives of the study, and in so doing may promote both the reliability and validity of data (McFee, 1992).

C: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

General Issues

Researchers should endeavour to regard as paramount the obligations they have to those who are concerned and affected by their work (Bell, 1999; Bogdan and Bilken, 1998; Burgess, 1989; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Robson, 1997). Wellington (1996) notes “Concern for ethics should start at the outset of any project and continue through the write-up and dissemination stages.” (p.7).

However, Cohen and Manion (1998) point out, this is not a simple undertaking:

“...different kinds of data will demand different roles and these in turn result in varying ethical principles being applied to the various negotiating stances.” (p.376).

In fact they go further to say that the nature, context and procedures of data collection could also illuminate possible sources of ethical problems. This coupled with the nature of participants involved and the type of data to be collected means that the researcher may have to be rigorous in taking into account ethical matters for all concerned.

Cohen and Manion (1998) BERA (1992) suggest that the researcher has both a responsibility to the research profession and participants involved:

Responsibility to the research profession

The former suggests that researcher should make every effort to avoid reporting false or fabricated evidence, findings, or conclusions. Theoretical concepts and findings should also be published in enough detail in order that other researchers can examine

and make deductions from them. In order to satisfy these criteria, in this study the following procedures were undertaken to promote the respect of the quality of this piece of educational research:

- Detailed evidence of questionnaire returns is provided in the appendix C and then summarised in the results section.
- Transcriptions of recorded interviews are available in the appendix D. An independent professional transcription secretary transcribed the recordings, and therefore this could reduce the potential of misrepresented evidence. Quotes from these transcriptions are used to support data analysis.
- Notes made during lesson observations are also in the Appendix E for scrutiny.

Responsibility to Participants:

Robson (1997) stresses that:

“In all circumstances, investigators must consider the ethical implications and psychological consequences for the participants in their research.” (p471)

The British Psychological Society’s (1991) guidelines for Ethical Principles for Conducting Research with Human Participants suggest that ethical principles regarding research should centre around the following areas: Consent; Deception; Debriefing; Withdrawal from the Investigation; Confidentiality and Protection of Participants. The general theoretical principles (Robson, 1997) of these areas will now be briefly discussed and related to the practice of this study.

Consent

The researcher must ensure that consent is received from all participants involved in the study (Bell, 1999; Bogdan and Bilken, 1998; Burgess, 1989; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Robson, 1997). This is defined by Diener and Crandall (1978) as

“...the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of the facts that would likely to influence their decisions.”

This belief encompasses the idea that the participants are competent individuals who are capable of making informed judgements as to their best interests. They are willing volunteers to a study to which they are fully informed and understand about the nature of the research (Cohen and Manion, 1998). Participants should also not feel under undue pressure to take part in the research because of any professional relationship with the researcher (British Psychological Society, 1991). In this study informed consent was sought by the following means:

- The Headteacher of East End View Primary School was approached. The details and purpose of the study were outlined to her. Her permission was given to use documentary evidence and to approach members of teaching staff within the school to acquire informed consent for their involvement. Confirmation of the research followed a further formal letter of permission to the Headteacher and chair of governors (Cohen and Manion, 1998). Copies of these letters can be found in Appendix B.
- Teaching staff for the subject samples were approached. Aims of the research were outlined to them verbally and in writing. Permission was given by willing participants to be included in self-completed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and lesson observations.

- Permission was also obtained from interviewees to use quotes from recorded interviews within the data analysis section of this study.
- It must be noted that in this study the researcher was also a member of the Leadership Team of the school. It must be stressed that participants were verbally assured that they were under no circumstances pressurised to take part in the study (BPS, 1991). This assurance was also repeated in writing to the participant. It was emphasised to participants that they were under no obligation to take part in the research and it was the personal choice of the participants to be involved. This was also outlined both verbally and in writing to the prospective participants. However, I must acknowledge that my role as both researcher and Deputy Headteacher meant that despite all assurances explicitly made, participants may have found it difficult to say that they would not like to be involved in the investigation.

Hart and Bond (1995), suggest that this should go further. The participant must be given time to respond. They cannot be expected to read and have insufficient time to think about the implications of the research. Enough time should be given in order that participant's consent is truly informed:

“In my view, subjects should never be expected to sign any protocol form unless they have time to read and consider the implications” (Bell, 1999, p.39).

In this study, participants were given written consent forms and their decision to take part was received one week later.

Deception

The British Psychological Society (1991) highlights that: “The withholding of information or the misleading of participants is unacceptable if the participants are typically likely to object or show unease once debriefed” (Robson, 472). In other

words, all participants must be fully aware of the nature of the study, its aims and data it hopes to extrapolate to satisfy the research questions. In this study, outlines of the broad aims of the study were given to participants verbally and in writing. During each stage of data collection the research aim of the method of collection was reiterated. It must be noted however, that for reasons of observer effects (Robson, 1997) and therefore the reliability of the data collected during lesson observations participants were not given access to detailed lesson observation criteria. Participants were informed of general areas of teaching to be observed, however the researcher felt that if teachers were given the specific areas of teacher effectiveness observations it could alter teacher behaviours.

Debriefing

Cohen and Manion (1998) and The British Psychological Society (1991) advise that participants should be debriefed once their involvement in all aspects of research has been completed. The reasons for this are three-fold. Firstly, it would heighten the participants' awareness and understanding of the research they have taken part in and would therefore ensure that they have been fully informed at all stages of data collection; secondly, the researcher could discuss any positive or negative effects or misconceptions participants experienced throughout the research. The researcher may therefore act upon this information and re-address particular approaches during the study; finally, research in education may be regarded as a two-way process of learning, described as "...benefit maximisation and the principle of equal respect..." (Cohen and Manion, 1998, p.377) where data collected may benefit the researcher, but feedback to the participant may also provide professional developments in teacher

effectiveness for the participant. In this study, feedback was given to participants in the following ways:

- Written descriptive narrative taken during direct lesson observations was fed back verbally to the participant. Copies of notes taken were also given to each participant involved.
- Copies of typed transcriptions of recorded semi-structured interviews were given to interviewees.

Withdrawal from the Investigation

As recommended, (Bell, 1999; Bogdan and Bilken, 1998; Burgess, 1989; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Robson, 1997) participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. This right was made clear verbally and in writing at the very onset of the investigation.

Confidentiality and Protection of Participants.

In investigative educational research, it may be of prime importance to ensure the privacy of participants (Bell, 1999). Participants should be informed that in all areas of research their identities would not be revealed. Further to this there may be no way that identities from data can be traced back to individuals, for example, by revealing class numbers and the like (Cohen and Manion, 1998). Privacy of participants may be seen via three different standpoints (Cohen and Manion, 1998). The researcher should maintain privacy of participants when the information is of a sensitive nature within the setting of the data to be collected. Privacy of individual participants should be

maintained when that information is disseminated or reported. Cohen and Manion describe sensitive information as “...how personal or potentially threatening the information is that is being collected by the researcher.” (p.365).

This concept links to the protection of participants. The British Psychological Society (1991) advises that participants should encounter no physical or mental harm. Protection of participants could be promoted by an assurance of confidentiality by the researcher so that if there is any sensitive data collected the content of such data will not be disclosed with any other parties.

In this study several methods were used to ensure participants were protected from any undue pressure:

- The name of the primary school was changed to ensure that data might not be traced back to a particular school.
- Individual identities of participants were not revealed during any method of data collection: self-completed questionnaires were completed anonymously and there were no individual identities recorded on direct lesson observations or semi-structured interview transcripts.
- All participants were made aware of these issues and were given the right to withdraw at any stage of the investigation. As noted earlier, the right to withdrawal was made to participants both verbally and in writing.
- It must be acknowledged, by the researcher, that when working with children in research it is extremely difficult to have true fully informed consent. The researcher made every attempt to make pupil involvement voluntary. Pupils were given the

choice verbally whether they would like to take part. However, as noted earlier in this chapter, I think pupil participants may have found it difficult to say no.

CHAPTER 5:

RESULTS:

REDUCTION AND ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

Methodology of Data Analysis

Data collection instruments reflected a ‘critical view of reality’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). This assumes that some sort of objective reality exists, since the respondents and I (the researcher) have a pre-existing knowledge of formative assessment strategies reflected in each item. Items in all methods of data collection related directly back to theories, critically evaluated, within the Planning, Learning, and Formative Assessment Cycle (Sutton, 1997, Figure 2). However, critical analysis of all methods of data collection illuminate that they do not encompass new understanding in theories of formative assessment. They are based on a top-down, teacher-led and directed approach imposed upon pupils, rather than a bottom-up approach of active involvement in pupils self assessing based on more recent theories by Black *et al* (2004) and advocated by AAIA in 2003.

Semi Structured Questionnaire

For each section on the questionnaire I will describe, explore and explain teachers’ views and attitudes on the value of formative assessment strategies and how often they are used to promote the effective teaching of writing. With this aim firmly in mind, data from 16 returned questionnaires was reduced, displayed and analysed in the following ways:

- ✓ Graphs to illustrate the cluster of responses for each item in each section of the questionnaire.

- ✓ Cluster analysis matrices of raw scores (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p132) to demonstrate any differences in teachers' opinions between Early Years, Key stage One, and Key Stage two teaching phases.
- ✓ Open Response matrices illuminate the types of responses each teacher gave to the open question at the end of each section.

Therefore, data gleaned from the questionnaire is based only on early theories by Black and Wiliam (1998), Clarke (1998) and Sutton (1997, 2000) before the shift in focus from teacher evaluation to inform subsequent planning and teaching to a process of active involvement of the learner.

Closer analysis of the semi-structured questionnaire reveals its limitations as a research tool in this study. As noted, individual items focus mainly upon theories centred on the teacher role within this adopted approach to formative assessment, and limited investigation into pupils' active involvement in formative assessment. Based on Black *et al's* (2004) theoretical standpoint further questionnaire items could focus on:

- Practical methods pupils can use to assess themselves.
- How pupils gain an understandable picture of their progress and future learning.
- How a culture of constructivist internal personal success is achieved, rather than achievement based on external performance.

Documentary Analysis

Information gleaned from the content analysis of teacher's planning, target setting and the marking of children's writing will complement and provide further evidence to

link teachers' practice to current trends in research theories of formative assessment and to illustrate some of the gaps between this practice and ideas about formative assessment as 'assessment for learning'. This evidence may then help to determine whether formative assessment strategies, as currently practised, have had an effect upon teachers' values and beliefs about teaching of writing within the school and what changes would be needed for the use of formative assessment as more explicitly 'assessment for learning'.

My practical approaches to documentary analysis were based on storing, processing and reducing data and have provided me with a descriptive analytical illustration using checklist matrices (Miles and Huberman, 1994, Robson, 1997, 2002) with specific criteria that can be linked to certain theories of formative assessment discussed in chapter 1.

I analysed the content of the following documents:

- Teachers' weekly plans for Literacy.
- Teachers' target setting for writing.
- Marking of children's' writing samples.

I observed one document for each teacher. The document was chosen at random from all teachers' relevant documentation. For analysis of teachers' weekly plans for Literacy and target setting for writing, I made descriptive comments against the aforementioned coding criteria. To analyse how teachers marked children's writing, I made a tally of the frequency of specific strategies teachers used to mark work. These approaches enable me to describe, investigate, and explore (Miles and Huberman,

1994) whether teachers are using strategies of effective planning, feedback and feed forward as part of formative assessment (Clarke, 2000, 2002; Sutton, 2000, 2001;).

Lesson Observations

To investigate whether formative assessment strategies were being used as part of teaching, I undertook direct non-participant observations (Robson, 1997, 2002) of Literacy lessons. This aims to offer first hand contextual experience about teachers' practice in teaching writing and using particular formative assessment techniques.

Lessons were observed and I noted significant events against specific criteria. Criteria for the observation were directly related to theories of formative assessment strategies that offer a Planning, Learning and Formative Assessment Cycle (Figure 2, from Sutton, 2000). However, this approach contravenes Carr's (1986) discussion that human behaviour in education cannot be governed by technical rules. However, it was felt for the purpose of this study, the investigation of specific criteria enabled the researcher to focus on particular rudimentary lesson details. Additionally, both the researcher and the participants have a pre-existing knowledge of the strategies under observation. Such pre-existing knowledge could influence the way in which both I as the researcher and the participants interpret and implement practical formative assessment strategies. It must be noted, therefore, that linear objective interpretation is not assumed to exist, because teachers could have different subjective interpretations of formative assessment strategies. Bearing this view in mind, objective acquisition of concepts is not assumed to exist in this study.

Seven lessons were observed: four by the researcher and three by the internal independent researcher. A teacher from each teaching team was randomly selected. An independent external researcher was used in an attempt to diminish the effect of a feeling of 'inspection' because of the particular role of the researcher within the school. Descriptive narrative comments were made against each criterion and supported with examples where relevant.

Data collected from these observations were categorised according to the approach Atkins (1984) advocated, which will be justified later in this chapter.

Semi Structured Interview

As outlined in the methodological design chapter of this thesis, pre-defined semi-structured interviews were carried out with seven randomly sampled participants. Four interviews were completed by the researcher, three by the external independent researcher. All participants were given clarification as to the aims of the research and the researcher made assurances of anonymity. All interviews lasted thirty minutes or more and were recorded using audiotape. Permission for tape recording was requested by the researcher, and was given from each participant. An independent professional transcriber transcribed interviews, this may have gone some way to improve the impartiality of interviews, rather than by an individual who may have pre-conceived theoretical foundations about the subject matter of the semi-structured interview.

With interviews transcribed, processing of lengthy transcripts involved sorting, grouping and then response coding of data. Initial basic sorting involved me in grouping responses to each section of the interview together (Drever, 1997; Miles and

Huberman, 1994; Powney and Watts, 1987). Each section of the transcript was then colour coded according to the teaching phases each participant belonged to: Transcriptions from the Early Years participant were coded red, the Key stage 1 participant blue and the Key Stage 2 participant green. This allowed me to analyse at a glance the type of responses given from each participant and made it easier to ascertain any differences in the content of responses between teaching phases.

Preliminary grouping of transcript data allowed me to then categorise data for each section of the interview. Categorisation of responses for each section of the semi-structured interview centred around a system advocated by Atkins (1984), which is examined and justified in detail in the next section of this chapter. For each category extrapolated from the data I quoted transcription evidence. Once again transcription evidence was colour coded to ascertain from which teaching phases the data was derived.

Pupil Response Templates

To investigate pupil motivation and autonomy and whether approaches adopted can be characterised as formative assessment, data on pupil views and opinions were collected using pupil response templates. This data analysed pupils' views and beliefs about sharing learning intentions using WALT (Template 1) and traffic lights and teacher comment techniques for marking (Template 2). As noted, using templates designed by Newcastle University I hoped to discover what pupils thought the positive and negative aspects of these approaches were.

The researcher collected data from pupils in focus groups. One focus group was collected from the reception class (three boys and three girls); one focus group was collected from KS1 pupils (three boys and three girls). In KS2 information was collected from three focus groups of six pupils and 1 focus group of five pupils (a total of 23 pupils, eleven boys and twelve girls). In summary then, there were 35 responses collected for each template.

On each response template a code was given to each response statement. P denoted a positive response, N a negative response and Neut if the response was a neutral statement. A tally was then made for the number of responses for each category. Key themes were then extrapolated from each category and the numbers of responses for each theme were tallied. Graphs were used to illustrate all tallied data.

Justification of Methods

- Graphs: all graphs are a simple descriptive approach that shows the percentage of responses of all teachers to each category on every item of the self-completed questionnaire. The graphs are used to describe both cluster of opinions and the frequency with which each strategy is used (Robson, 1997 p.318). They give a clear and simple portrayal of the analysis of data collected. As noted, graphs were also used to describe category responses from pupil response templates (Wall, Higgins and Smith, under peer review).
- Cluster Analysis Matrices are used to analyse differences between teaching groups of how valuable teachers think the formative assessment strategies are and how often they are used. Questionnaires were grouped according to teaching group and the number of teachers within each teaching group for each category was calculated. This

enabled me to reduce bulky data and illustrate it in such a way that each teaching groups' opinions and utilisation of the formative assessment strategies could be compared (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.129). This same approach was also used to group the response criteria in documentary analysis of teachers' planning for Literacy, Target Setting for Literacy and analysis of marked writing.

- The content of open items on the questionnaire, lesson observation data and data from transcripts of semi-structured interviews were analysed using the following approach: responses were categorised in turn. As each response was read a suggested category was written down. If the next response was read and it suggested a new category, then that category was recorded. If, however, the new response fitted with the previous category, it was recorded as part of the former category. Madeleine Atkins (1984) explains this approach clearly:

“Each subsequent response is read with the existing categories in mind and a new category added if no previous category seems correct. In this way a complete set of categories for a question is built up and all responses are coded according to them.” (Atkins, 1984, p.254).

This approach enabled data to be categorised and the frequency of response for each category illustrated. It provided me with a deeper analysis into why respondents favoured particular strategies. This approach did not, however, highlight responses that were not made. In other words, it may be significant to note what subjects *did not* say. For example, omitted data about active pupil involvement may have been pertinent in this case. Omitted data could provide the researcher with some insight into teachers' views about instrumental strategies used and deeper formative assessment strategies. This method could be reliant upon predefined organisation of categories, which was not used in this methodology.

Methods of data collection and analysis have enabled me to retrieve, describe and explore data. Presentation and discussion of results will now focus on issues extrapolated from data that centre on the research questions of this study:

Questions centre on how particular methods of formative assessment has helped the development of teaching writing. Emphasis focuses on how teachers believe that particular methods of formative assessment have improved the quality of teaching. Discussion also aims to illuminate how formative assessment strategies in the school reflect particular ideas about the links between formative assessment and learning as opposed to formative assessment as a simple adjunct to hitting summative targets. The following data will illustrate and explore these concepts.

As discussed in Chapter 2, models of teaching competence (Leat, 1993; Rich, 1993; Higgins and Leat, 1997) are multi-faceted and contain the following elements:

- ✓ Pedagogical Craft Knowledge
- ✓ Teacher's Knowledge of Pupils
- ✓ Beliefs of the Teacher
- ✓ Teacher's Subject content Knowledge

I will now present and explore results to explain how adopted formative assessment strategies specifically contribute to each area of teaching competence, and how they address the investigative questions of this research.

Pedagogical Craft Knowledge

Discussion about specific adopted approaches may help to determine whether:

- Adopted strategies can be characterised as formative assessment.

- The adopted formative assessment strategies have promoted the teaching of writing.
- Teachers' values and beliefs about adopted strategies affect their approach to teaching writing.
- Factors have had a positive or negative effect on how teachers' regard adopted formative assessment strategies.
- Adopted strategies have had an effect on pupils' motivation and autonomy.

Sharing Learning Intentions

In all four lessons observed, clear learning intentions were shared with the children at the beginning of each session using WALT (We Are Learning To...) (Clarke, 1998; 2002). The learning intention was shared both verbally and in writing:

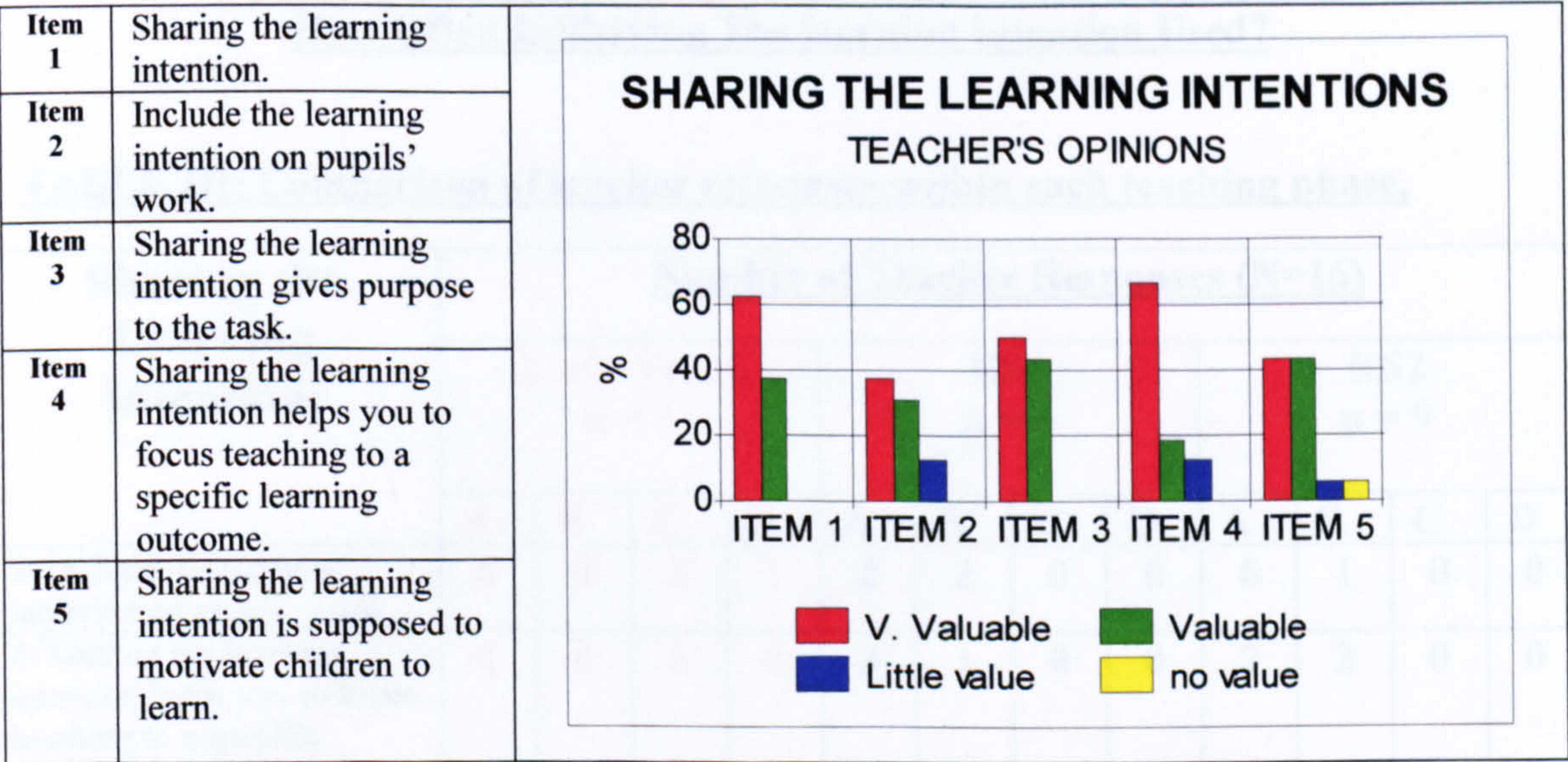
- ✓ **Lesson 1:** We Are Learning To know the letter 'm' sound.
- ✓ **Lesson 2:** We Are Learning To use 'when I had finished' and 'after that' to sequence our writing.
- ✓ **Lesson 3:** We Are Learning To find words rhyming with 'at' in the text.
- ✓ **Lesson 4:** We Are Learning To use ! and ? correctly in our writing.
- ✓ **Lesson 5 (external researcher):** See if you can recognise any of the words.
- ✓ **Lesson 6 (external researcher):** We're all going to do one article together today.

Analysis of the questionnaire results reveal interesting insights about how valuable teachers consider adopted formative assessment strategies in teaching writing.

GRAPH (I) shows that all teachers thought that sharing the learning intention was valuable and gave the teaching task purpose. The majority of teachers also thought

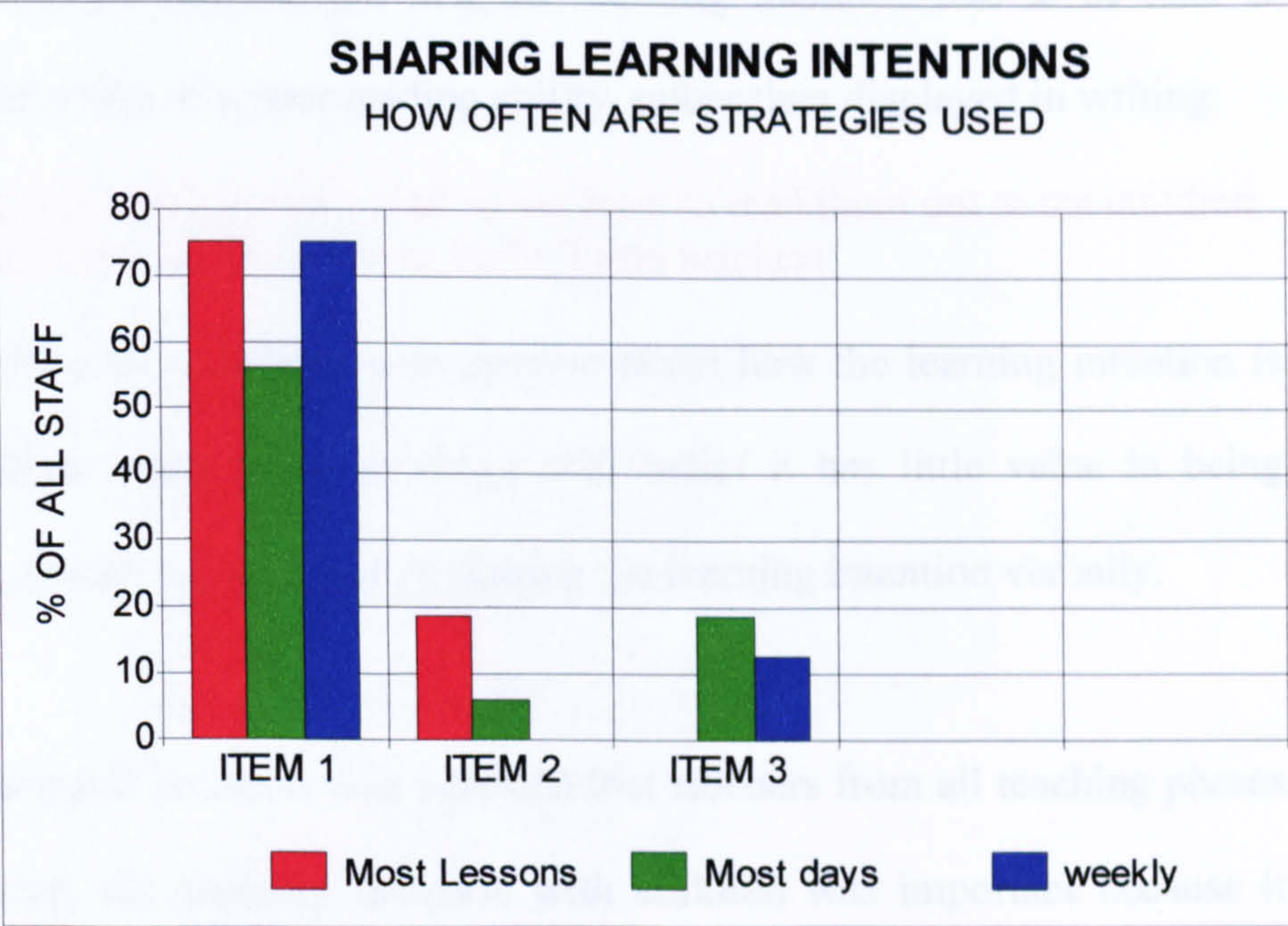
that including the learning intention on pupils’ work were valuable since it not only motivates children, but also helps to focus teaching to a specific target outcome. However, some teachers (three teachers, two teachers and one teacher for Items two, four and five respectively) found that these formative assessment strategies were of little value to promote teaching writing. These results may be explained by the fact that a proportion of teachers from the Early Years teaching phase considered these strategies of little or no value to their teaching practice, because pupils within this age range may have found them difficult to read and understand.

GRAPH I : Cluster of Questionnaire Responses of all Staff.
How Valuable is Sharing The Learning Intention?



Graph II (below) shows that teachers share the learning intention with pupils on a lesson-by-lesson, daily or weekly basis. There were, however, fewer responses from teachers who said that they included the learning intentions on pupils’ work.

Item 1	Sharing the learning intention.
Item 2	Include the learning intention on pupils' work.
Item 3	Sharing the learning intention gives purpose to the task.



GRAPH II: Cluster of Questionnaire Responses of all Staff.
How Often Is Sharing The learning Intention Used?

TABLE III: Comparison of teacher responses within each teaching phase.

Sharing the Learning Intention:	Number of Teacher Responses (N=16)											
	Early Years n = 3				KS1 n = 4				KS2 n = 9			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
2: Include the learning intention on pupils' work.	0	0	2	1	2	2	0	0	6	1	0	0
4: Sharing the learning intention helps you to focus teaching to a specific learning outcome.	1	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	7	2	0	0
5: Sharing the learning intention is supposed to motivate children to learn.	2	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	5	3	1	0

A=very valuable; B=valuable; C=little value; D=no value

This table (III) above illustrates that the Early Years teaching phases consider sharing the learning outcome on pupils' work to be of little or no value. A proportion of this team also found it of little value for it to focus teachers or motivate the children. Furthermore, analysis of children's samples of writing the learning intention was not displayed in any books. Data retrieved from Semi-structured interview with an Early

Years teacher indicated that she felt that the learning intention had to be read to children because of children's poor reading ability, rather than displayed in writing:

“...But obviously our children can't read so we have to read them out to the children each session.” (Interview Response from Early Years teacher)

There may, therefore, be a difference in opinion about how the learning intention is shared with children. Early Years teaching staff belief it has little value in being shared in writing, but do see the value of sharing the learning intention verbally.

Further semi-structured interview data revealed that teachers from all teaching phases thought that sharing the learning intention with children was important because it allowed teaching to be focused:

EY Teacher: Because it makes you focus on your teaching totally.

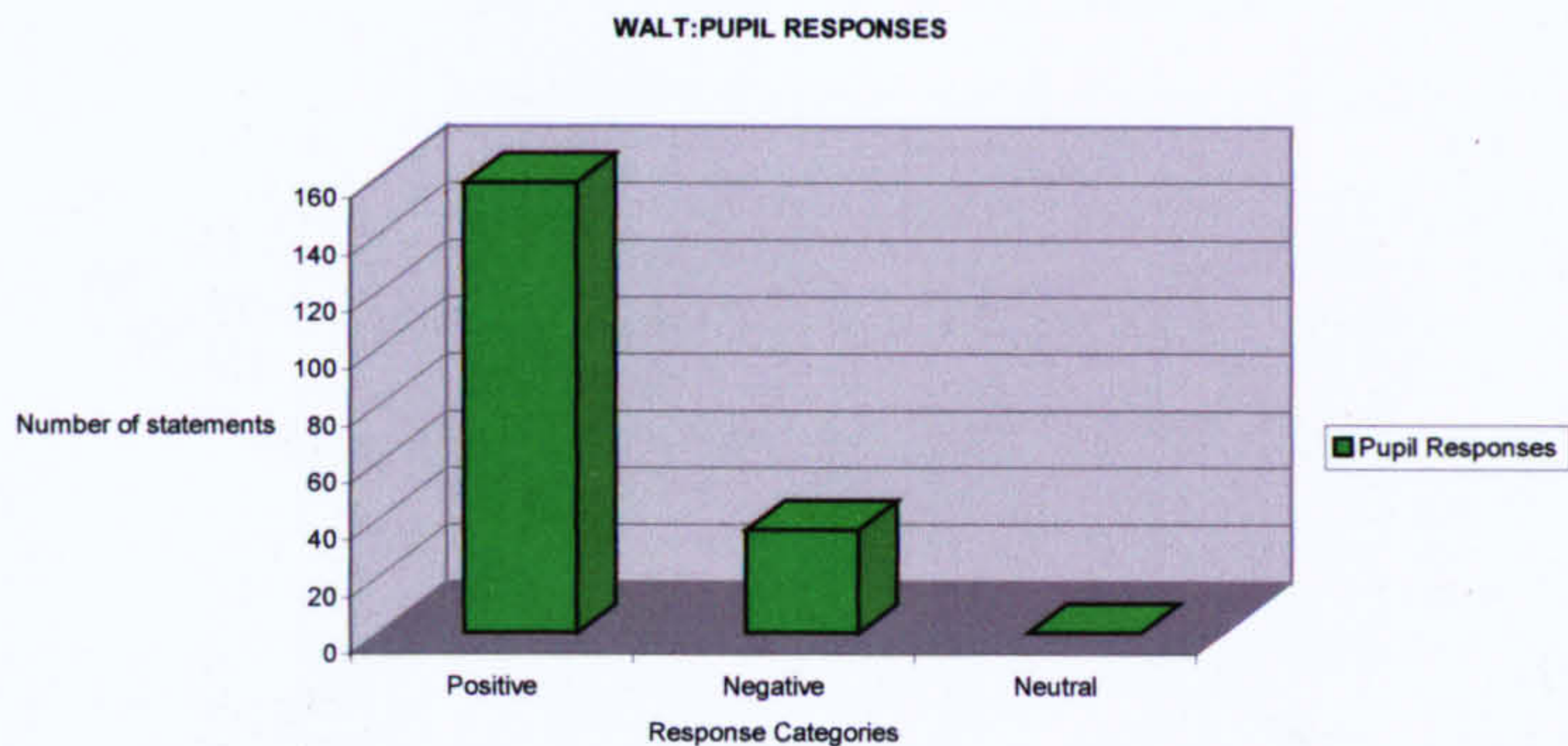
EY Teacher (external researcher): ...in my group the kids go mad if they haven't had WALT because they like to know what we're going to be learning about.

KS1 TEACHER: *Because I suppose at the end of the day, you can focus in on what you're trying to teach them.*

KS2 TEACHER: *It's just that you're now being more focused on what you're doing and it really helps you think about what you're going to do, what's the way forward for next steps in teaching.*

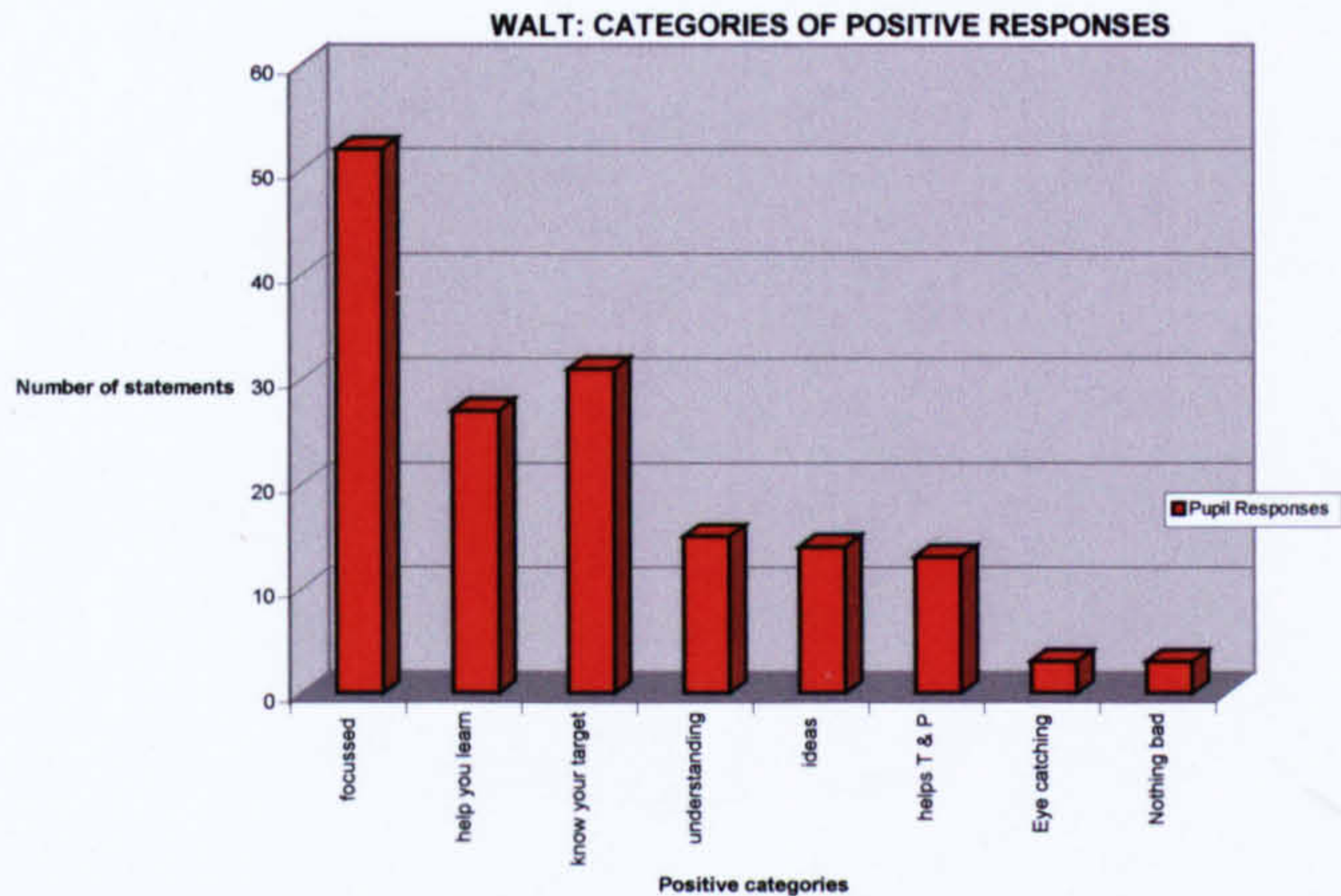
Results from data collected using pupil response templates illustrated that in the majority of responses pupils viewed the use of WALT positively. Graph A illustrates the spread of positive, negative and neutral pupil responses about WALT:

GRAPH A: PUPIL RESPONSES ABOUT WALT



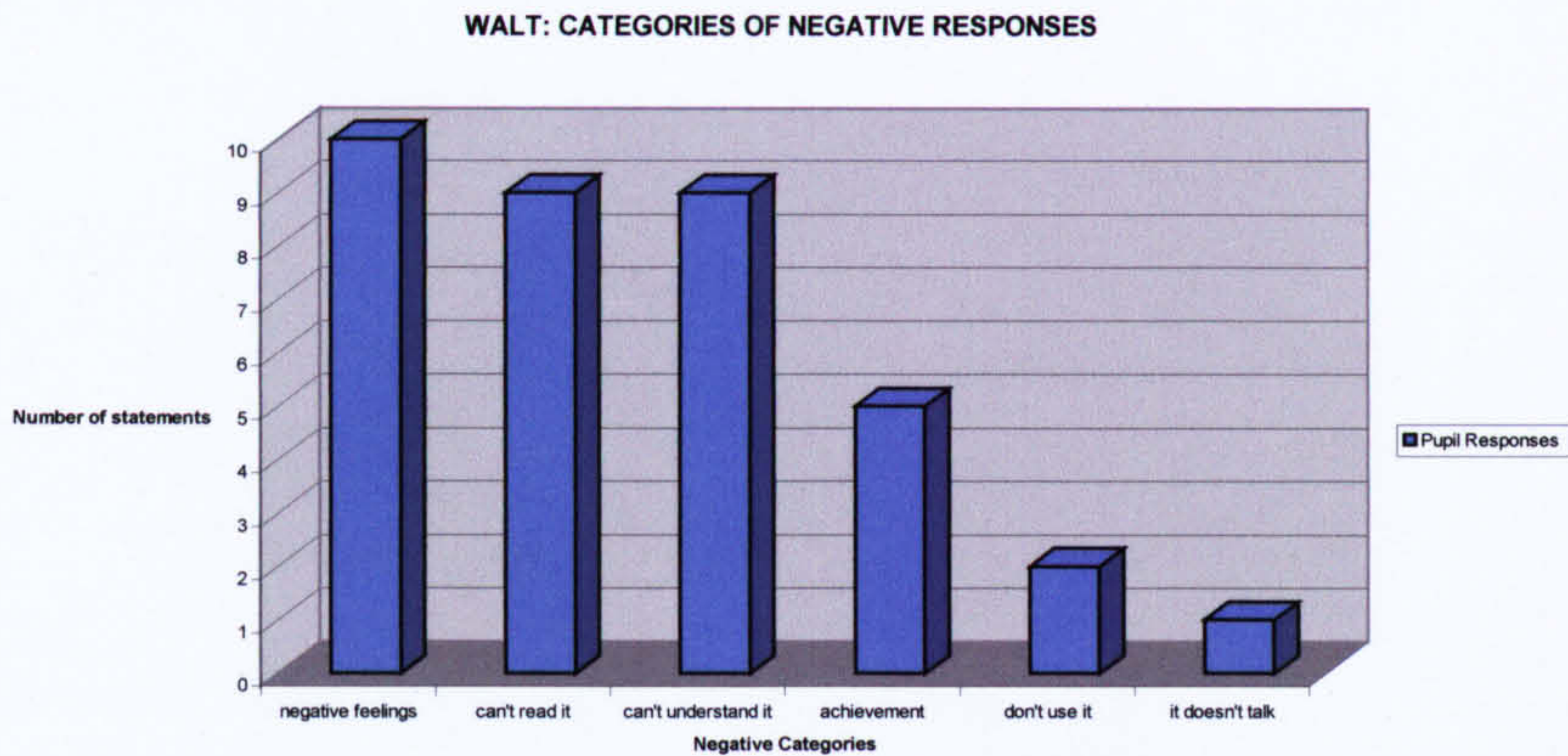
Categorisation of positive pupil responses mirrored some of the teachers’ viewpoints. Pupils thought that WALT helped them focus on their work, help them learn, understand and know their target, giving them ideas what to do. Thirteen responses indicated that some pupils thought that WALT helped both teachers and pupils.

GRAPH B: CATEGORIES OF POSITIVE PUPIL RESPONSES ABOUT WALT



Negative pupil responses centred on pupil’ ability to access WALT and negative personal feelings about not achieving the WALT. Learning intention. Nine responses indicated that they couldn’t read WALT and a further nine pupils said that sometimes didn’t understand the learning intention of WALT. Ten pupils indicated negative feelings because of WALT, for example they were worried they could not do it. A further five pupils specifically noted their anxiety in not achieving WALT. These factors may link to de-motivational aspects of advertising failure and will be discussed in later sections. Graph C illustrates the type of negative responses from pupils about WALT:

GRAPH C: CATEGORIES OF NEGATIVE PUPIL RESPONSES ABOUT WALT



Critical evaluation of results in the next chapter will explore these issues in detail.

Planning

As noted in the Strategies of Formative Assessment section of chapter 1, elements of effective planning include explicit specific and focused learning outcomes that are clear and easy to interpret (Clarke, 1998, 2000; Sutton, 1997) with evidence that the teacher is drawing upon the National Literacy Strategy document (OFSTED, 2001; DFES, 2002). Observation of plans during lesson observations of the four teacher indicated that all teachers sampled used such effective elements of planning. Analysis of all teachers plans in the school further substantiated this evidence, plans illustrated that in all but 1 of the 10 plans analysed learning outcomes were clear, specific and linked to NLS objectives. Planning documentation also illustrated that learning tasks were matched to learning outcomes with resource issues, such as texts used and teaching assistants were identified where appropriate (Clarke, 2000; Sutton, 1997).

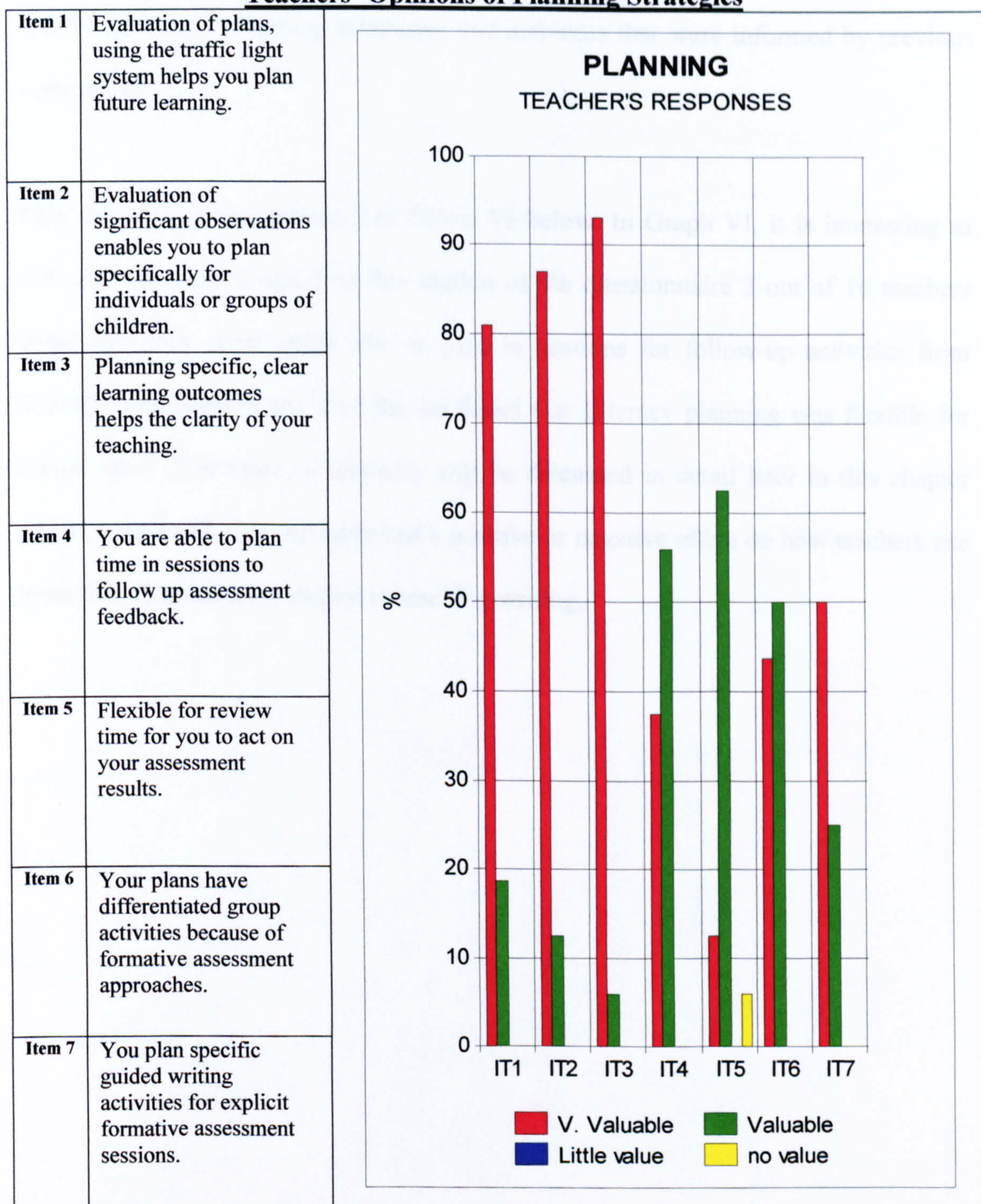
Table IV below illustrates these results

TABLE IV:
Checklist Matrix to Illustrate Key Features of Teachers' Weekly Plans for Writing

Learning Outcomes: (Sutton, 1997; Clarke, 2000)	Clear and specific	Not clear and specific	Linked to NLS
	R; Y2; Y1/2; Y3; Y4; Y3/4; Y5; Y6; Y5/6	Y1	R; Y1; Y2; Y1/2; Y3; Y4; Y3/4; Y5; Y6; Y5/6
Task (Sutton, 1997; Clarke, 2000)	Matched to learning intention	Texts Referenced	Teaching Assistants identified
	R; Y1; Y2; Y1/2; Y3; Y4; Y3/4; Y5; Y6; Y5/6	R; Y1; Y2; Y1/2; Y3; Y4; Y3/4; Y5; Y6; Y5/6	R; Y1; Y2; Y1/2; Y3; Y3/4; Y5; Y6; Y5/6

Analysis of results from the semi-structured questionnaire may provide us with insight into teachers' opinions of planning for writing and how often planning strategies are used

GRAPH V: Cluster of Questionnaire Responses from All Staff:
Teachers' Opinions of Planning Strategies

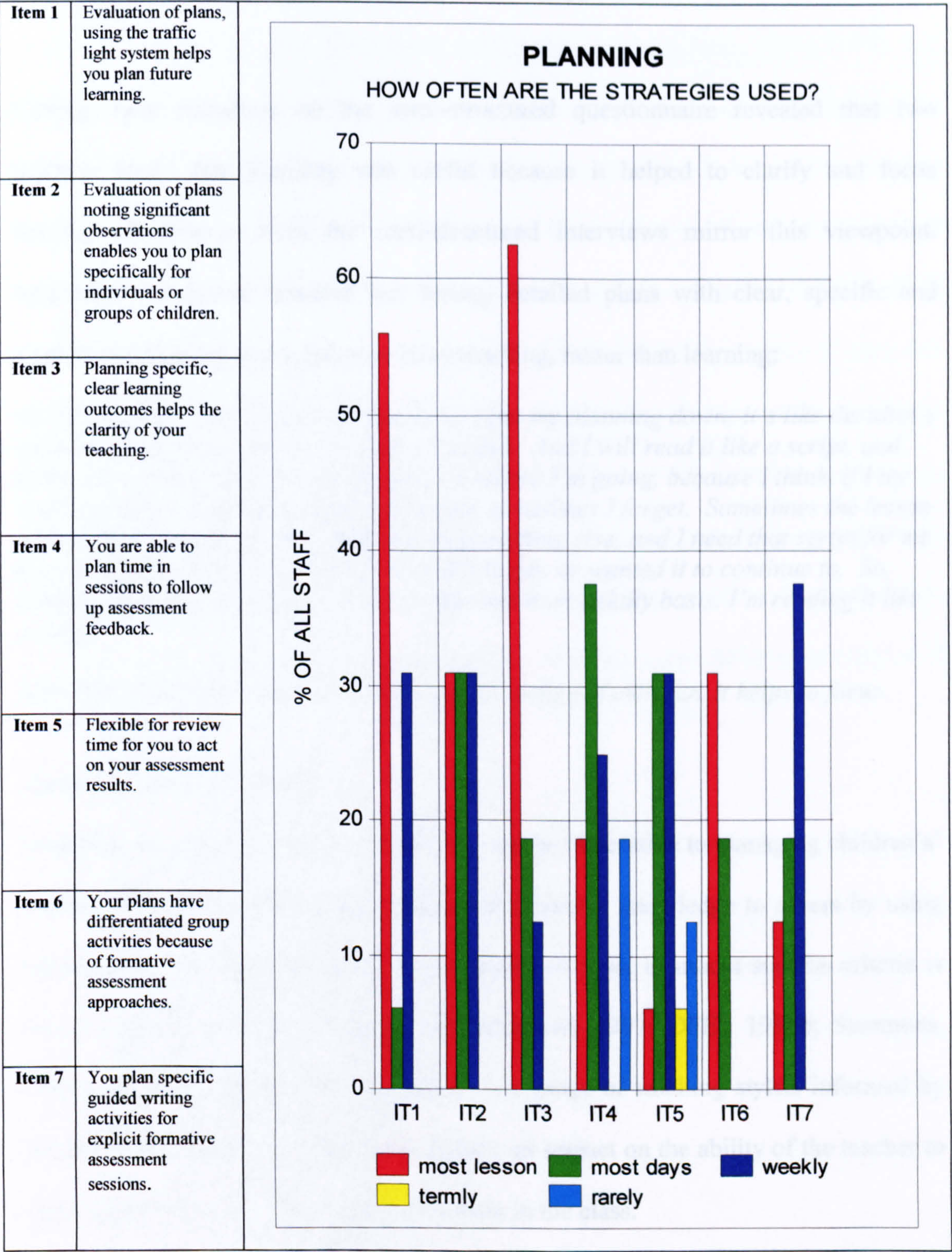


Graph V above illustrates that most teachers find strategies of planning, as discussed by Clarke (1998, 2000, 2002) and Sutton (1997, 2000) valuable or very valuable for teaching writing. An issue of flexibility of plans, however, was raised by 1 of the teachers in the cohort. This indicates an interesting disparity where some teachers

thought that Literacy short-term plans were inflexible and did not allow time for teachers to plan in learning intentions and activities that were informed by previous assessment.

This disparity is also mirrored in Graph VI below. In Graph VI, it is interesting to note that on Items 4 and 5 of this section of the questionnaire 3 out of 16 teachers found that they were rarely able to plan in sessions for follow-up activities from formative assessment and 2 of the 16 found that Literacy planning was flexible for review time. This issue of disparity will be discussed in detail later in this chapter when I explore factors that have had a positive or negative effect on how teachers use formative assessment strategies in teaching writing.

**GRAPH VI: Cluster of Questionnaire Responses from All Staff:
How Often Are Planning Strategies Used?**



Graph VI may demonstrate that teachers value planning using specific learning outcomes, evaluating plans using traffic lights and significant observational notes on a lesson-by-lesson, daily and weekly basis. Teachers’ responses may also indicate that

they differentiate tasks when planning on a lesson-by-lesson and daily basis as a result of information gleaned from formative assessment approaches.

Coding open responses on the semi-structured questionnaire revealed that two teachers found that planning was useful because it helped to clarify and focus teaching. Responses from the semi-structured interviews mirror this viewpoint. Interview participants describe that having detailed plans with clear, specific and explicit learning outcomes helps to focus teaching, rather than learning:

KS1 TEACHER: As I'm actually teaching, I put my planning down; it's like the idiot's guide to teaching my lesson. It's very detailed. And I will read it like a script, and think, right, this is where I start and this is where I'm going, because I think, if I try and internalise it and then teach the lesson, sometimes I forget. Sometimes the lesson will go off on a tangent, if a child's done something else, and I need that script for me to actually pull it back to where I wanted it to get, or wanted it to continue to. So, actually using the planning, I would rather use it on a daily basis. I'm reading it like a script.

KS2 TEACHER: Because there is such a wide range of children, it helps to focus.

Modelling Success Criteria

Modelling success, as noted in Chapter 1, may be imperative to managing children's learning effectively. The teacher's ability to represent knowledge to others by using explanations and demonstrations and examples of work to model success criteria is vital to effective teaching (Cooper and McIntyre, 1997; DFES 1998b; Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore, 1995). Using a wide range of teaching styles, informed by formative assessment techniques, could have an impact on the ability of the teacher to cater extensively to a wide variety of learners in the class.

In direct lesson observation of seven Literacy lessons a range of different teaching styles was observed (NLS, 1998b; Sutton, 1997; Wilson, 1993). All lessons used

group work and individual work during the session. In two lessons paired work was observed and in six sessions whole class shared work was observed. In all lessons clear and high expectations were made explicit to children (Clarke, 1998, 2000). For example in lesson one the teacher modelled correct formation of the letter 'm'. In lesson two the teacher modelled writing sequences to the class. In lesson 3 the teacher demonstrated the 'at' sound and in lesson four the teacher discussed and explained expectations orally. In lesson five (external researcher) the teacher modelled writing of sentences. In lesson six (external researcher) the teacher used a variety of open and closed questions to make learning clear. For example the teacher asked: "and how were they on the skin?" and "What could we put?" to clarify learning. All lessons were well paced in line with the structure of the Literacy hour as advocated by the National Literacy Strategy (1998b). Analysis of the semi-structured questionnaire highlights an inconsistency in results about how teachers value different techniques of modelling success:

TABLE VII: Comparison of teacher responses within each teaching phase.

Modelling quality and success criteria	Number of Teacher Responses N=16											
	Early Years n = 3				KS1 n = 4				KS2 n = 9			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Choosing and showing pupils examples of pupils work for learning purposes.	0	0	2	1	2	2	0	0	5	2	1	0
Getting a pupil to show you how s/he has gone about something so you can diagnose error.	0	1	1	1	3	0	1	0	5	4	0	0
Getting a pupil to demonstrate to the class how s/he did something.	0	2	1	0	2	2	0	0	7	2	0	0
Getting pupil to suggest ways something can be improved.	0	1	2	0	2	2	0	0	5	4	0	0
Providing formats and structures for writing.	0	2	0	1	1	3	0	0	6	3	0	0
Showing pupils a range of other pupils' work to make a judgement about their own progress.	0	0	2	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	7	1
Showing pupils a range of other pupils' work to model success criteria.	0	0	2	1	1	3	0	0	1	8	0	0

A = Very Valuable; B = Valuable; C = Little Value; D = No Value

Analysis of table VII conveys to us that overall; the majority of teachers in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 found strategies listed in each item were valuable or very valuable in promoting teaching writing. However, teachers in the Early Years teaching phase found modelling success strategies of little or no value. This is particularly unanimous for the strategy of showing children examples of other pupils' work for learning purposes or to make a judgement about their own progress. For children in Early Years (ages 3-5) it maybe that showing a range of other pupils' work may be inappropriate for them. In fact, semi-structured interview transcript evidence, from the Early Years participant, illuminates the very precise nature of modelling success criteria for these very young children in primary school.

“ We use the whiteboard, and actually model our writing for the children to then practise.”

“ You have to be very clear about what you’re doing and make sure that they, the children, understand exactly what you’re doing, so you have to be very clear about what they are to model.”

These transcript quotations highlight that, in the view of the participant teacher modelling for children of this age, has to be very clear, practical and explicit. In fact, lesson observed in Reception by the external researcher found that the majority of teaching was based on simple modelling activities (refer to Appendix E). However, using other pupils’ work to model success may not provide such hands-on clarity for these particular children. I will discuss this issue further when I use results from data analysis to ascertain what factors have a positive or negative effect on how teachers value formative assessment in teaching writing. It is important to note that the range of teaching styles described in this section may be informed by adopted formative assessment strategies. I will expand and clarify this issue in the following section.

Teacher’s Knowledge of Pupils

Teacher knowledge of pupil acquisition of concepts could promote well-informed planned lessons and activities that match children’s learning potential (Torrance and Pryor, 1998) and it may also ensure that teaching styles and strategies are used to maximum effect. This next section aims to discover how teachers believe specific adopted formative assessment techniques to promote their knowledge of pupils contributes to teaching writing, and whether they can be characterised as formative assessment.

The Plenary

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, a number of researchers believe that the plenary session of the Literacy Hour is of vital importance in reflection of learning against the learning intention for the session (Beard, 1998; Clarke, 2001). In direct non-participant observation of all seven lessons a plenary session of ten minutes was observed. This plenary occurred in the last session of the Literacy Hour. In each of the plenaries, the teacher re-visited the shared learning intention, which was displayed in writing using 'WALT' and therefore questions and discussions in that session were centred on the planned learning outcome (Beard, 1998; Clarke, 1998, 2000; Sutton, 1997). Furthermore, the plenary not only reinforced concepts taught in that session but allowed the teacher to assess individuals and groups of children. Analysis of teachers' short-term weekly planning for Literacy revealed that plans for Year 1, Year 2, Years 1 and 2 (mixed SEN), Year 3, Year 4, Years 3 and 4 (mixed SEN) Year 5 and Year 6 all had plenary sessions planned and specifically linked to the main learning outcome of the lesson. For Reception and Years 5 and 6 (mixed SEN) plans, the plenary session was planned but was not specifically linked to the main learning outcome of the session.

Marking and Feedback

Marking and feedback, as noted in chapter 1, could have a positive effect upon teachers' knowledge of their pupils and methods of teaching and learning needed to close the gap between prior and new learning (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Clarke, 1998; Sadler, 1989). However, we also need to ascertain whether formative assessment as assessment for learning suggests more subtle aspects of feedback than many teachers believe. In this section I will now analyse data that explored teacher's

views, opinions and practice about marking and feedback systems used in the primary school featured in this case study. These systems are described in full in the descriptive context chapter of this case study.

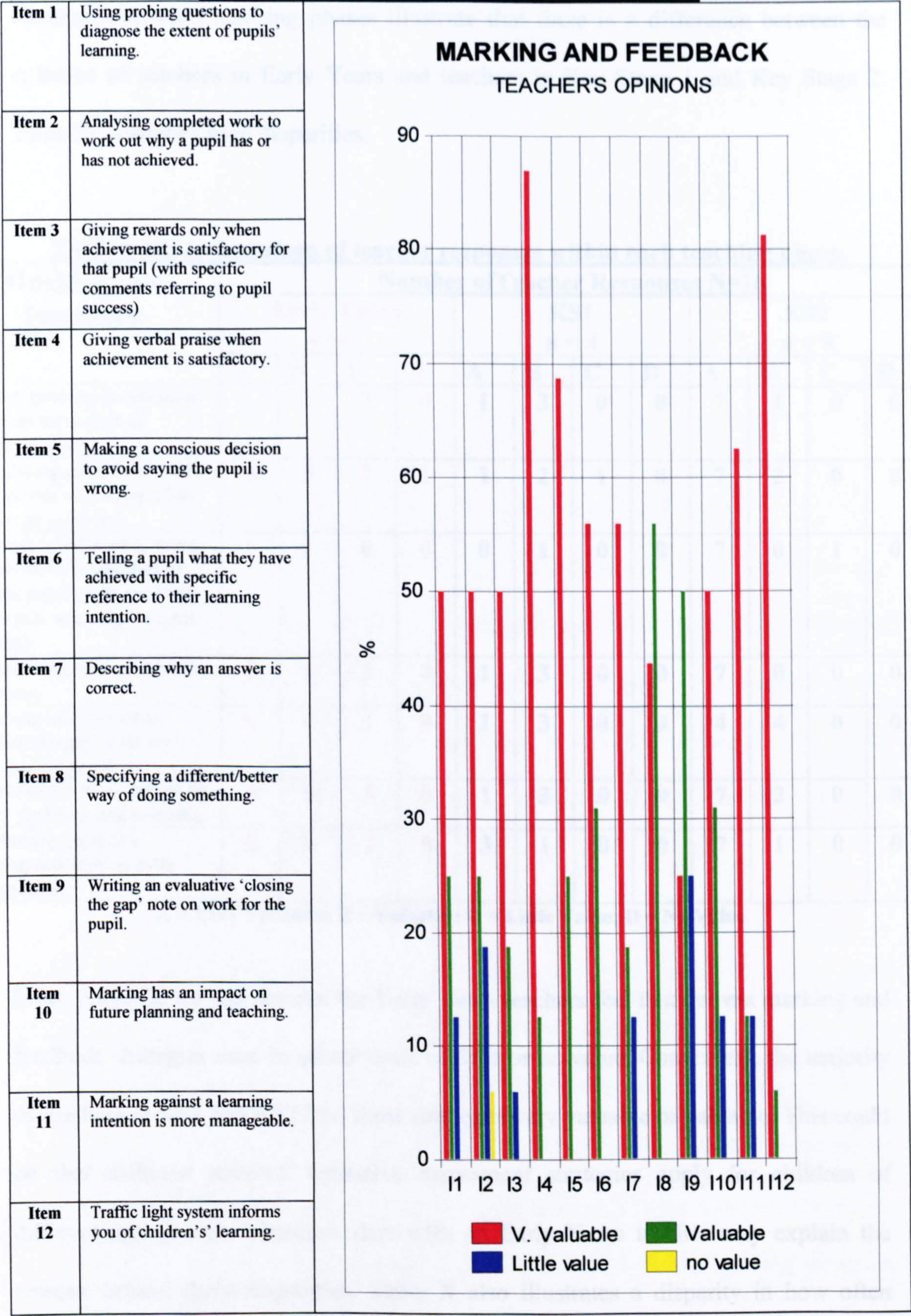
Initial analysis of results obtained from the self-completed questionnaire indicates some disparities in teachers' opinions on their views about marking and feedback.

Graph VIII indicates that in this cohort all teachers believed that giving verbal praise, avoiding saying the pupil is wrong, telling the pupils how they have achieved against specific learning intentions and explaining a better way of doing something were very valuable or valuable strategies to promote teaching. All teachers also thought that the traffic light system of marking informed them of children's learning. Responses on items 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10 and 11 illustrate that some teachers found that these strategies were of little value in promoting the teaching of writing.

Observations of lessons by both researchers reflect this opinion and the value that teachers place upon certain marking and feedback techniques. Feedback given to children in all lessons observed centred on verbal praise linked to the learning intention, rather than using questions to analyse with the learner why things went wrong, therefore coaching pupils to support the teachers' own techniques, not constructing them together. This suggests that what is missing from the techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment in this case study school is active pupil involvement, which AAIA (2003), SRG (2002) and Black *et al* (2004) suggest is the key to formative assessment as 'assessment for learning'. Evidence from these lessons suggests a lack of active pupil involvement, where pupils are central to constructing

their own learning. Lesson observations may demonstrate that pupils are reacting to imposed teacher-led directed learning, that is achievement based on external performance dominated by techniques based on behaviourist theories of learning.

**GRAPH VIII: Cluster of Questionnaire Responses from All Staff:
Teachers' Opinions of Marking and Feedback**



Further between groups analyses of results may be interesting. Comparisons of responses between teaching phases illustrate that there is a difference between the opinions of teachers in Early Years and teachers in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Table IX describes such disparities.

TABLE IX: Comparison of teacher responses within each teaching phase.

Marking and Feedback	Number ofTeacher Responses N=16											
	Early Years n = 3				KS1 n = 4				KS2 n = 9			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
1:Using probing questions to diagnose the extent of pupils’ learning.	1	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	7	1	0	0
2:Analysing completed work to work out why a pupil has or has not achieved.	0	0	2	1	1	2	1	0	7	2	0	0
3:Giving rewards only when achievement is satisfactory for that pupil (with specific comments referring to pupil success)	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	7	0	1	0
7:Describing why an answer is correct.	1	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	7	0	0	0
9:Writing an evaluative ‘closing the gap’ note on work for the pupil.	0	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	4	4	0	0
10:Marking has an impact on future planning and teaching.	0	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	7	2	0	0
11:Marking against a learning intention is more manageable.	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	7	1	0	0

A = Very Valuable; B = Valuable; C = Little Value; D = No Value

From Table IX we can see that the Early Years teachers feel that current marking and feedback strategies used in school were of little or no value. Conversely, the majority of teachers in KS1 and KS2 find these strategies very valuable or valuable. This could be that different adopted formative assessment strategies apply for children of different age groups. Interview data with an Early Years teacher may explain the reasons behind these disparities. Table X also illustrates a disparity in how often marking and feedback strategies are used:

TABLE X: Comparison of teacher responses within each teaching phase.

Marking and Feedback	Number of Teacher Responses N=16														
	Early Years n = 3					KS1 n = 4					KS2 n = 9				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2:Analysing completed work to work out why a pupil has or has not achieved.	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	5	3	0	0	0
8:Specifying a different/better way of doing something.	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	1	0	0	3	3	1	0	0
9:Writing an evaluative ‘closing the gap’ note on work for the pupil.	0	0	2	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0
10:Marking has an impact on future planning and teaching.	0	0	2	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	5	0	3	0	0
11:Marking against a learning intention is more manageable.	0	0	2	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0

1 = most lessons; 2 = most days; 3 = weekly; 4 = termly; 5 = rarely

Marking and feedback of children’s work also differed in the Early Years teaching phase. In KS1 and KS2 all teachers responded that they used the marking strategies indicated, either most lessons or most days. However, Early Years teachers rarely specified an alternative way of doing something, and used other approaches noted only on a weekly or termly basis, rather than a more regular, lesson or daily basis as indicated by results from KS1 and KS2 teachers.

Such disparities in results prompted me to analyse the frequency of marking and feedback strategies in children’s samples of writing. Table XI below describes that samples of Reception children’s work in Early Years rarely used any strategies listed. The only strategy that seemed to be used regularly was that of a general comment by the teacher related to the learning intention of the activity. During lesson observations verbal feedback to children also centred on praise linked to the learning intention rather than technical feedback that focussed on improvement or on engaging pupils with progress or strengths or weaknesses.

There is also a difference of strategies used by KS1 and KS2 teachers. Analysis of Table XI indicates that more marking and feedback prompts tend to be used by teachers teaching older children. This may provide further credence to the idea that different adopted formative assessment techniques do not globally apply to all age groups of children. Furthermore, marking is set against imposed teacher-led learning intentions thereby reducing the amount of active pupil involvement in constructing their own learning

TABLE XI : A Checklist Matrix to Illustrate the Frequency of Marking and Feedback Strategies (Clarke, 1998, 2002) used in Samples of Children’s Writing.

YEAR GROUP	Learning Intention is displayed on work	Traffic lights of achievement	Marking and feedback prompts			General comment by teacher related to learning intention.
			Reminder prompt	Scaffolding prompt	Example prompt	
R	0	0	0	0	0	6
1	0	6	0	0	0	5
2	7	7	0	0	2	6
1 & 2 SEN	0	8	0	0	3	8
3	8	8	1	0	2	3
4	15	15	0	0	0	3
3&4 SEN	10	10	4	0	3	10
5	45	43	3	3	0	2
6	25	25	0	2	0	15
5&6 SEN	22	22	3	0	3	14

Data retrieved from interview transcriptions does go some way to highlight differences between teaching phases in marking and feedback strategies used. The Early Years teacher explains that for children in her Reception class feedback is verbal as children may be unable to read comments provided by the teacher:

“Obviously a lot of it is verbal.”

"We always try and write a comment for them, a constructive comment for them. But you have to read it for them, obviously, so that they know exactly what you've written"

The KS1 teacher, who teaches writing to Year 1 children, also supports this view.

"I think the only negative thing with mine is, it's very difficult to phrase comments, because a lot of the children can't read them".

Lessons observed in Reception and in Year 1 by the external independent researcher, illustrated that again, verbal feedback was focussed upon praise linked to the learning intention and key questions to motivate and engage the learner and also to clarify understanding.

Analysis of interview transcripts also gave me insights into teachers' views about how they thought marking affected their knowledge of pupils. Some responses indicated that teachers found marking and feedback formative assessment strategies useful because it allowed subsequent planning to become more informed by previous learning. In Early Years planning for writing maybe followed up by another teacher the next week, so it was felt important that the subsequent teacher had a good knowledge of pupil learning in writing.

"... Because it's not always going to be you that follows that up, it's the way we move round within the room, it's going to be somebody else who comes and does that next, the next week, so it's important to know what's gone on before." (EY Teacher)

A KS1 and also a KS2 teacher also explains that it helps to inform evaluations of plans so that she knows when to move learning on in future planning.

"The way I mark is to highlight it for the child, but also for myself. And I usually put comments on for myself" (KS1 Teacher)

"From your marking, it tells me where to focus in on next or the things that I have to drum home and drum home. Capital letters, finger spaces. And if it's down to

spelling, then it tells me which spelling patterns that they're finding difficult" (KS1 Teacher)

"Marking, identifying and matching it up with the plan. I think, what I do is at the end of every week when I'm evaluating the weekly plan, well, I evaluate the strand I'm doing every day, the guided, and I do it. So I traffic light that. At the end of the week, every strand I've done is traffic lighted. And then I evaluate at the end what was good and what was bad about it, to inform me for the next time. And it might be something simple as the outcome to be revisited" (KS2 Teacher)

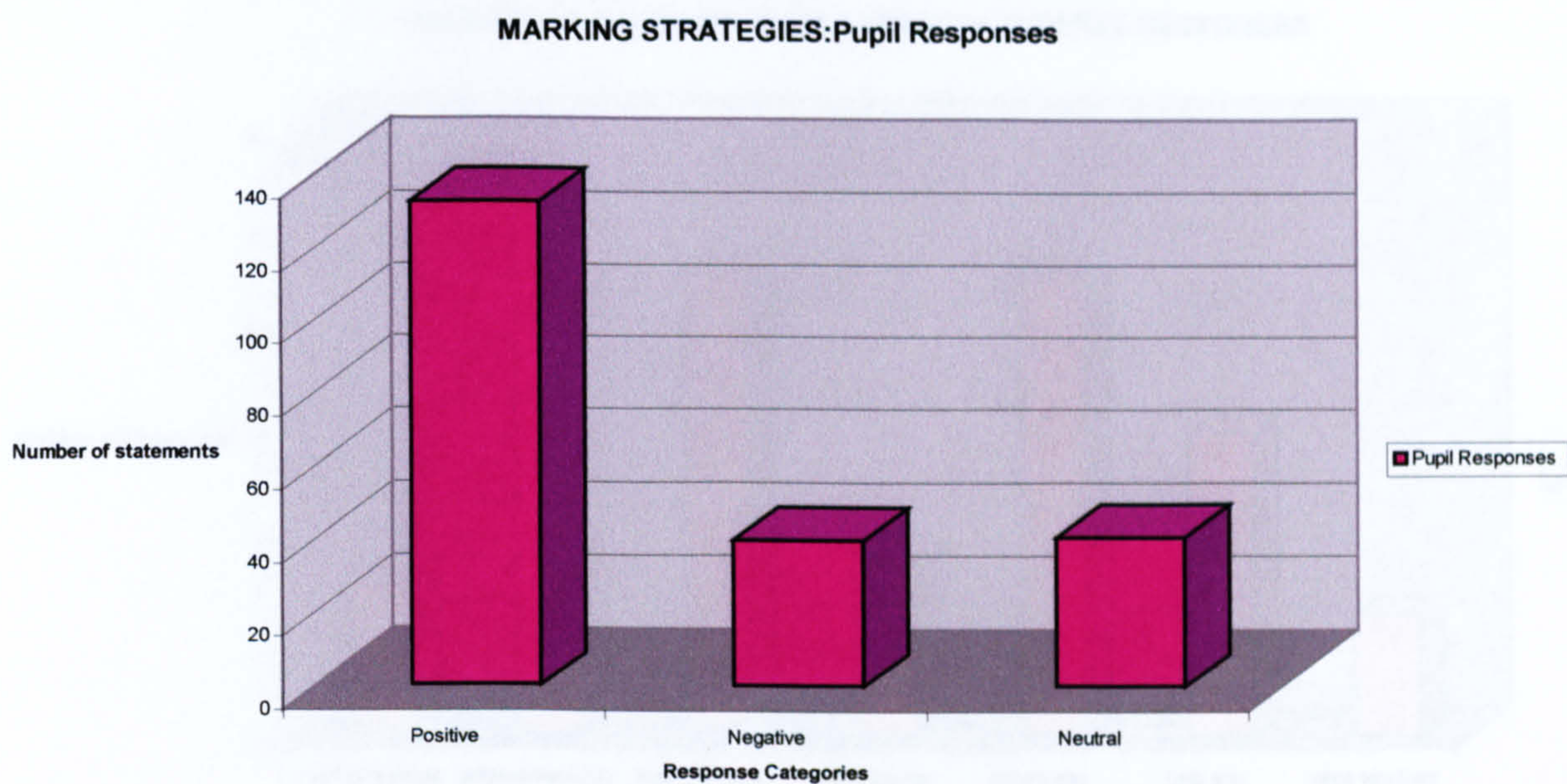
KS1 and KS2 teachers also describe the motivational benefits of traffic light marking for the children. The instant feedback children get from seeing a green achievement highlight on the learning intention of their work, gives the children immediate feedback about success. However, the KS2 teacher does stress that a comment is needed if the feedback traffic light is orange. That is, 'a closing the learning gap' comment may communicate with the child how to achieve the learning outcome, if it not achieved initially.

"We use highlighting, and the children know that if it's green, as long as they're aware of what they were supposed to do, what the aim was, then they can say yes, I've done that." (KS1 Teacher)

"We have the traffic light system, so children know instantly, as soon as they open their books. I think the secret of that is making sure you keep on top of your marking, anything the children have on a daily basis, they've got their colour, with a comment, especially if it's orange". (KS2 Teacher).

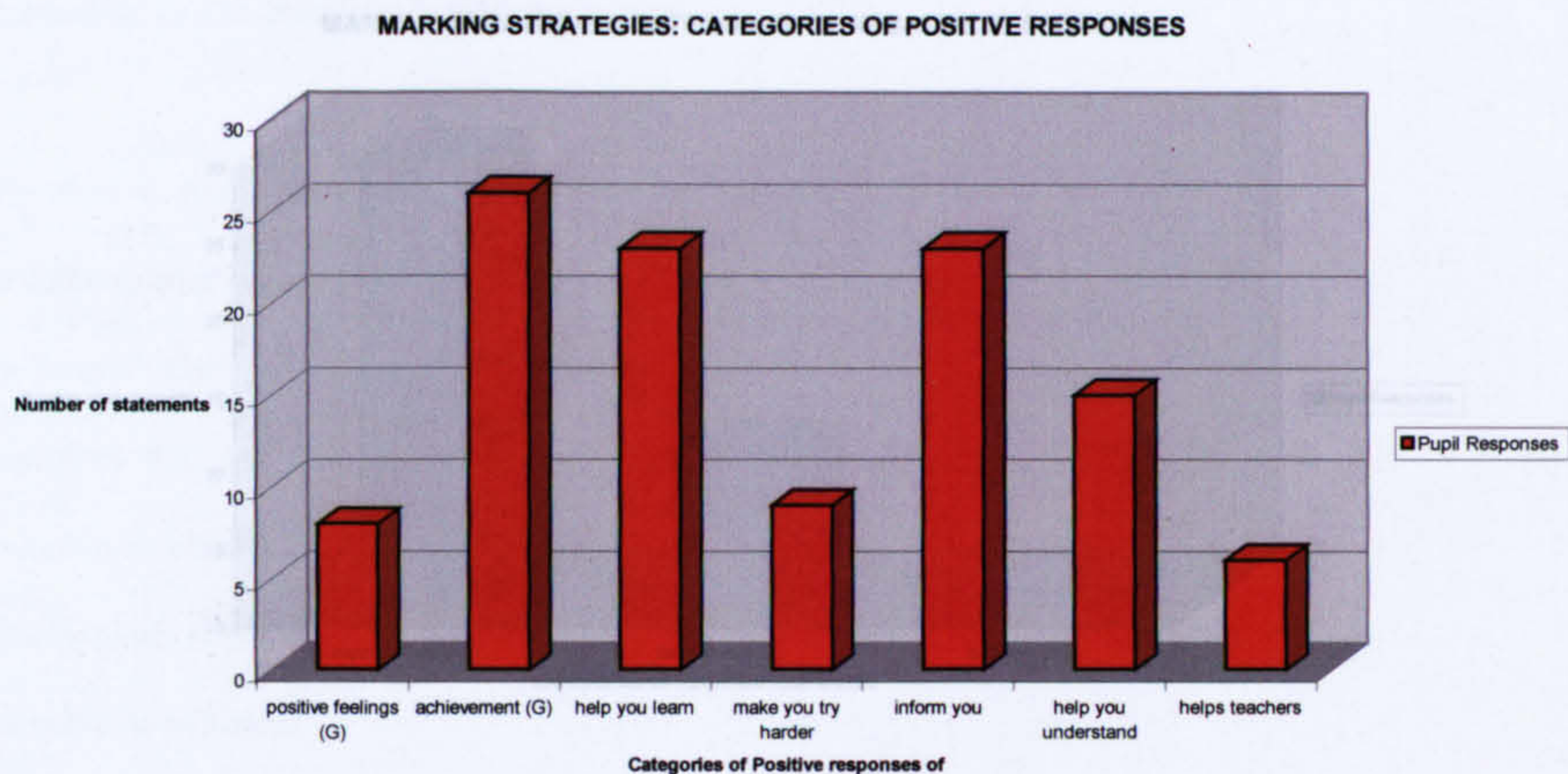
Results from pupil response templates both confirm and add additional perspectives to these results about marking and feedback. Results indicate that in the majority of responses pupils viewed using traffic lights and teacher comments for marking positively. Graph D illustrates the spread of positive, negative and neutral pupil responses about traffic lights and teacher comments about marking.

GRAPH D: PUPIL RESPONSES ABOUT ADOPTED MARKING STRATEGIES



All neutral responses explained what traffic lights and teacher comments meant. Categorisation of positive pupil responses indicated that receiving a green traffic light filled pupils with positive feelings of achievement. Nine pupils said that the traffic lights and teacher comments make you ‘try harder’ which could have motivational connotations. A high proportion of positive comments indicated that pupils thought that traffic lights and teacher comments helped pupils learn and informed pupils about their work. Graph E illustrates positive categories about traffic lights and teacher comments for marking.

GRAPH E: CATEGORIES OF POSITIVE COMMENTS ABOUT MARKING STRATEGIES

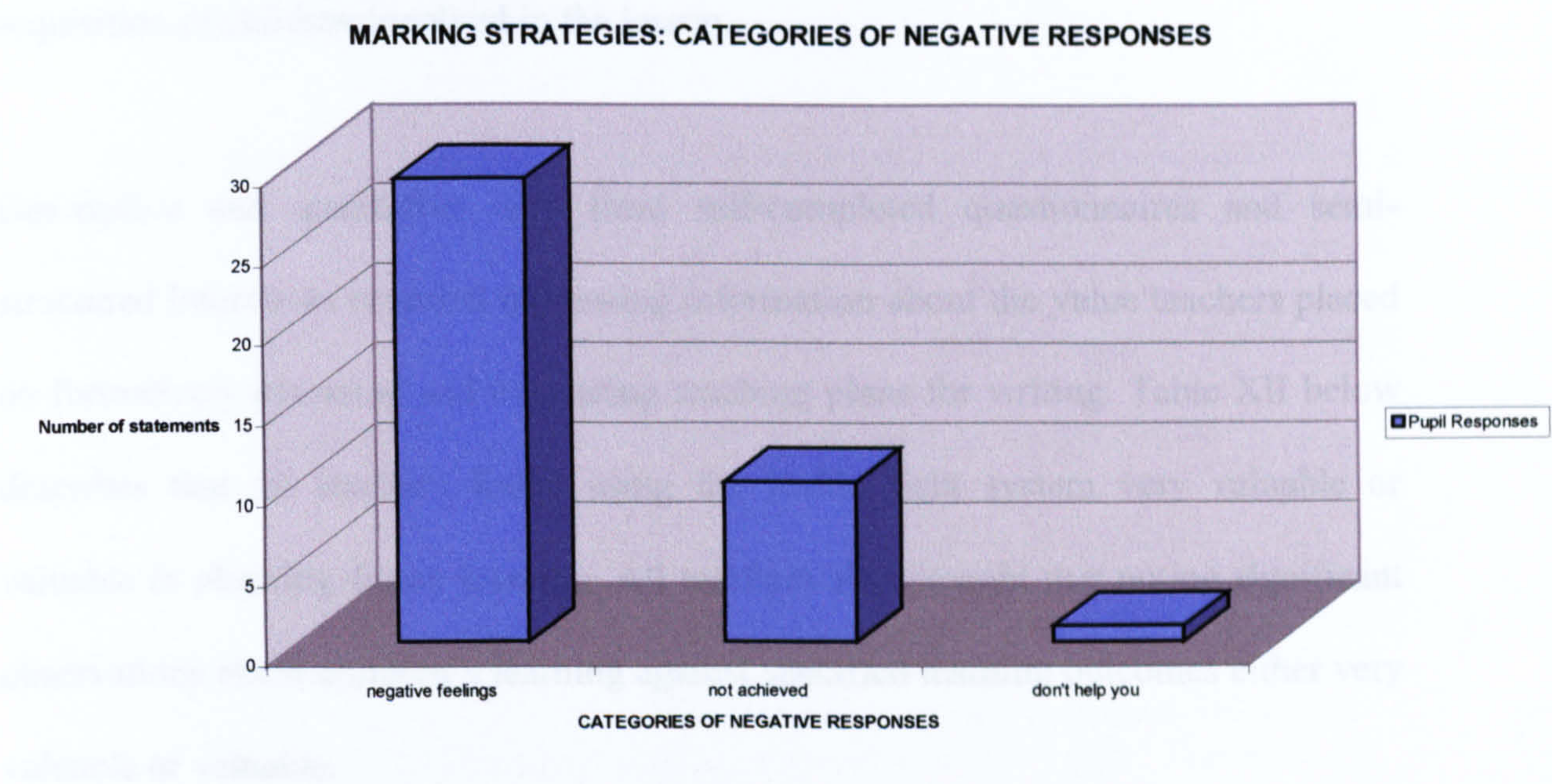


Critical evaluation of results in the next chapter will explore these issues in detail.

Negative feelings about adopted marking strategies were highly illuminating and illustrated that these adopted approaches to formative assessment could have potentially de-motivational effects on pupil learning. The majority of negative responses centred on negative feelings of not achieving, for example, ‘embarrassment’, ‘sadness’ and ‘worry’. Further comments explained that traffic lights and teacher comments ‘don’t help you’ and means that you didn’t achieve or understand the learning intention. Graph F illustrates the categories of negative responses for teacher marking strategies.

conclude notes to indicate those children who have exceeded or not reached the learning outcome of the lesson. Some written evaluations may also note next steps needed in learning. These techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment (Clarke, 2000; Sutton, 1997) were a key feature of teachers’ weekly plans analysed in this small-scale case study. In all plans observed (10 sets of Literacy plans) it was evident that the teacher used the traffic light system to indicate achievement. In 8 out

GRAPH F: CATEGORIES OF NEGATIVE COMMENTS ABOUT MARKING STRATEGIES



Critical evaluation of results in the next chapter will explore these issues in detail.

Evaluations of Short-term Plans

The traffic light code of highlighting is also an adopted formative assessment technique used to evaluate short-term teaching plans for writing. After a lesson is taught, learning outcomes on short-term plans are highlighted to indicate whether the learning outcome has been achieved (highlighted in green), more consolidation work is needed (highlighted in orange) or the learning outcome was not achieved or understood by any of the children (highlighted in red). The teacher also writes short concise notes to indicate those children who have exceeded or not reached the learning outcome of the lesson. Some written evaluations may also note next steps needed in learning. These techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment (Clarke, 2000; Sutton, 1997) were a key feature of teachers' weekly plans analysed in this small-scale case study. In all plans observed (10 sets of Literacy plans) it was evident that the teacher used the traffic light system to indicate achievement. In 8 out

of 10 of the plans teachers had also written informative notes to describe learning acquisition of children involved in the lesson.

Descriptive and qualitative data from self-completed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews revealed interesting information about the value teachers placed on formatively assessing and evaluating teaching plans for writing. Table XII below describes that all teachers found using the traffic light system very valuable or valuable in planning future learning. All teachers also thought that noting significant observations about children’s learning against specified learning outcomes either very valuable or valuable.

TABLE XII: Comparison of teacher responses within each teaching phase.

Planning	Number of Teacher Responses N=16											
	Early Years n = 3				KS1 n = 4				KS2 n = 9			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
1:Evaluation of plans, using the traffic light system helps you plan future learning.	2	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	8	1	0	0
2:Evaluation of significant observations enables you to plan specifically for individuals or groups of children.	3	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	8	1	0	0

A = Very Valuable; B = Valuable; C = Little Value; D = No Value

During semi-structured interviews, with the external independent researcher and myself, the interviewees described evaluation as a necessary part of the planning, teaching and assessment cycle (Sutton, 2000) (as described in Chapter 1), where evaluation of short-term teaching plans is happening all the time in order to provide the effective teacher with in-depth knowledge about children’s learning, so that future planning is informed and accurately focussed towards the learning needs of the child:

“You’re evaluating the children all the time” (Early Years Teacher)

When a KS1 teacher was asked about which aspects of short-term planning she found most useful, she replied:

“Assessment, the highlighting, of outcomes. As a teacher, it’s got to be the assessment part of what they’ve already done, so you can move on when you’re planning your next week.” (KS1 Teacher)

A KS2 teacher who was interviewed also described at length the value of traffic lights and written evaluations in improving teachers’ knowledge of children’s learning.

“... We also traffic light in the planning, so I can say what we’ve done, you’ve given it notes on your planning of individual children who perhaps haven’t made the target. Perhaps things that have been done very well and that you can move on, you don’t need to revisit. The traffic light system that I’ve used for the assessment helps you inform the next thing, like whether you need to revisit a target.” (KS2 Teacher)

And

“Well, your, your evaluation helps you. And it can also, it can help you change your plan, for something that hasn’t worked well, or something that’s worked really well and you can move the next step on.” (KS2 Teacher)

A key issue that has arisen from this is that these particular assessment techniques do not involve the pupils in their learning, a central theory of formative assessment (AAIA, 2003, Black *et al*, 2002). The techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment in this school are used solely for the benefit of the teacher:

“When we evaluate at the end of the week, we look at what’s happened, that kind of informs us what we’re doing next.” (EY teacher, external researcher)

Further exemplification of this suggests traffic light feedback in marking is used to inform teachers of pupils’ learning rather than as for feedback for pupils to inform them of their level of understanding in a moment of time (Black *et al*, 2004). Pupils are also not involved in devising their own learning intentions. Learning intentions are teacher-led and imposed on the learner via WALT. These examples highlight the lack of active pupil involvement in adopted assessment strategies.

Target setting and feed forward

Qualitative learning 'SMART' (AAIA, 1997; DFEE, 1997; Sutton, 1997) targets, which are set by teachers who are informed by evaluations of taught short-term plans and marking, enable teachers to plan future focussed learning intentions (QCA, 1999). Teachers therefore could use formative assessment strategies to review plans and respond more effectively to pupil learning, as described in Chapter 1 of this thesis (Ofsted, 1993). Data collection aimed to gather information about how teachers used target setting in this school and their views and opinions on how valuable they thought the techniques were.

Documentary analysis of how each teacher in the school set Literacy targets for writing indicated there were no anomalies in how each teacher set targets. All targets set by teachers for writing had specific learning outcomes and were measurable, achievable and relevant to National Curriculum, National Literacy Strategy and Early Learning Goals. Targets were also time related for that term. Targets were standardised across the school. This could indicate that teachers were well trained in the requirements of target setting procedures and approaches used are consistent and standardised across the school. Table XIII below describes how all teacher from every teaching phase viewed formative assessment strategies for target setting either valuable or very valuable:

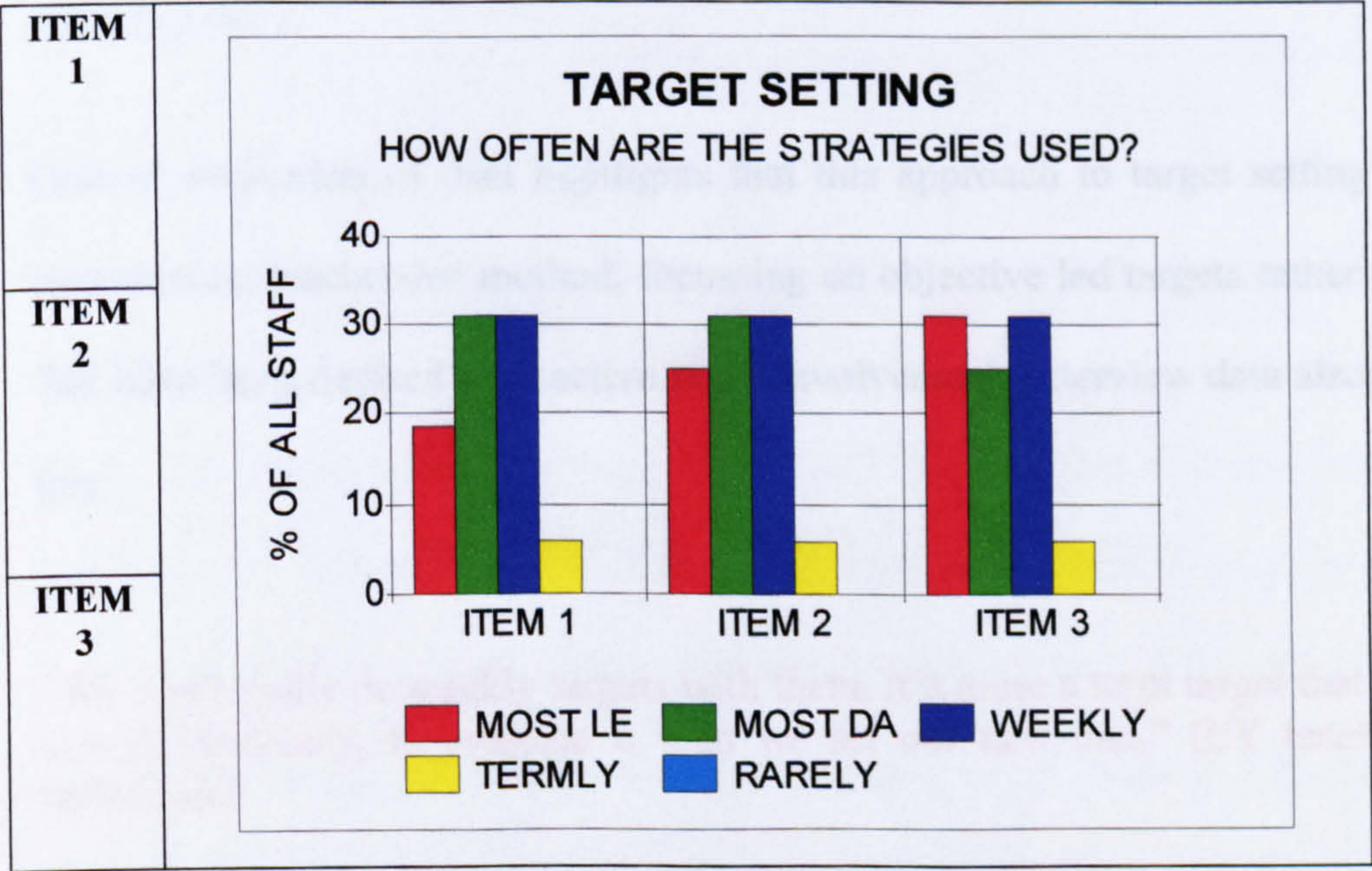
TABLE XIII: Comparison of teacher responses within each teaching phase.

Target Setting	Number of Teacher Responses N=16											
	Early Years n = 3				KS1 n = 4				KS2 n = 9			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
ITEM 1: Target Setting informs future planning.	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	6	2	0	0
ITEM 2: Target setting helps you define specific learning intentions.	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	7	2	0	0
ITEM 3: Targets are informed by lesson evaluations, marking and feedback.	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	6	1	0	0

A = Very Valuable; B = Valuable; C = Little Value; D = No Value

Graph XIV (below) indicates that teachers use target-setting strategies described in chapter 1 either most lessons, daily or on a weekly or termly basis. No one said that they rarely used the strategies.

**Graph XIV: Cluster of Questionnaire Responses from All Staff:
How Often Are Target Setting Strategies Used?**



These analyses are substantiated by discussions during semi-structured interviews, which point towards the view that target settings promotes teaching of writing as it aids and informs future planning, keeping the teacher focused on the relevant directed learning needs of the individual.

“Target setting is incorporated in our, in our weekly planning. We make sure that the target is included in the week’s planning or what you were doing daily.” (Early Years Teacher)

“If you know you’ve got a target to meet, you’ve got to make sure that you are teaching what need to be taught for the children to meet that. I think it focuses you more on what you need to do and what we need to teach.” (Early Years Teacher)

“I would look at where the child is at, look at the objectives I’m supposed to cover, and see if I can match up where I think the child is going to get to, taking into consideration the ability. At the end of the period of time, check to see whether I think they have reached that target. If you refer back to your targets, and match them to the objectives, then you’re building on what they know, you’re not sort of jumping and missing things out. You’re going through in stages. You plan, according to the objective you’re supposed to be teaching but with a view to the targets that you’ve set at that level that the child can reach. I think it focuses you in on the children as well, the level they’re at, otherwise you may not differentiate as well as, you know, you could. I do think that it makes you focus more on where the child is.” (KS 1 Teacher)

“Target setting is just so informative, because you know what to move on to next.” (KS2 Teacher)

Critical evaluation of data highlights that this approach to target setting may be an instrumental teacher-led method, focussing on objective led targets rather than targets that have been devised with active pupil involvement. Interview data also emphasises this:

“We don’t really do weekly targets with them, it’s more a term target that we set once a term obviously, to evaluate it then we set our new one.” (EY teacher, external researcher)

“We have overall targets and then you just react, on the ground, to what the kids need to get them there. Making it clear to them, where you have to be and where you could be.” (KS2 teacher, external researcher)

Differentiation

Differentiation of tasks in teaching may ensure that the teacher is adapting particular tasks to the particular needs and learning styles of individuals or specific groups of children (Sutton, 2000). In order for this approach to be used accurately, it has been argued that teachers need to know their pupils' capabilities so they can match differentiated tasks appropriately (Torrance and Pryor, 1998). Accurate formative assessment approaches may, therefore, equip the teacher with informed specific information of their pupils' learning styles and abilities, thereby increasing the precision of teacher differentiation.

Self-completed questionnaires asked staff whether they used formative assessment techniques to inform their teaching plans for writing. Their responses are illustrated in table XV below:

TABLE XV: Comparison of teacher responses within each teaching phase.

Planning	Number of Teacher Responses N=16											
	Early Years n = 3				KS1 n = 4				KS2 n = 9			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Your plans have differentiated group activities because of formative assessment approaches.	1	2	0	0	1	3	0	0	5	3	0	0

A = Very Valuable; B = Valuable; C = Little Value; D = No Value

In non-participant lesson observations it was identified that all lessons used different techniques to differentiate activities for children. In two KS2 lessons, activities were differentiated to the needs of the children. In Early Years, KS1 and KS2 less able groups were assigned teaching assistants to support their learning. This differentiation of teaching resources was indicated on short term planning. Further analysis of all teachers' short-term planning documents for Literacy provided evidence that tasks

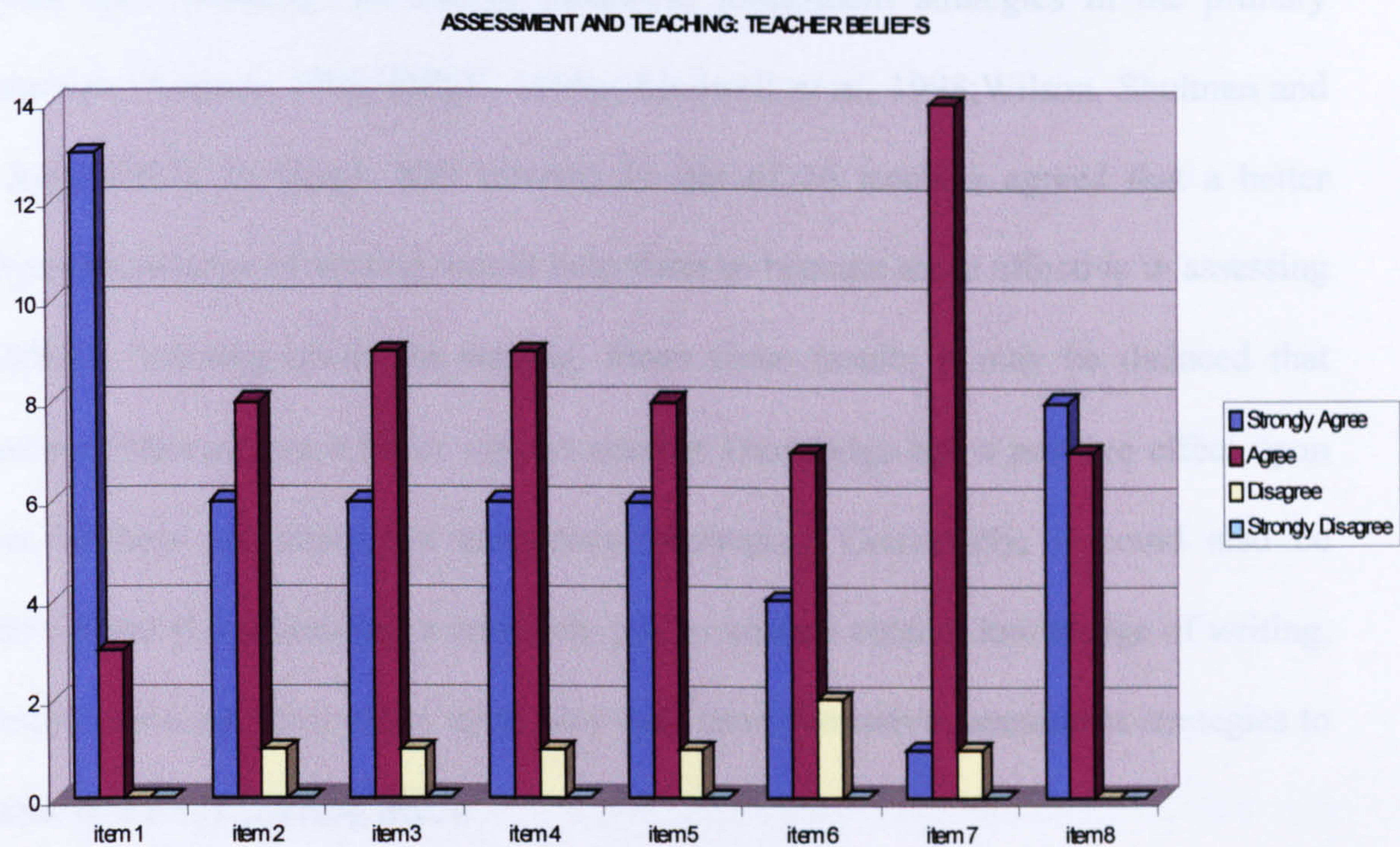
were differentiated. 9 out of 10 of plans used differentiation by ability, by task and by outcome. All plans also outlined differentiated texts used and identified where teaching assistants were to be used to support and challenge specific groups or individuals.

In the preceding sections of this data analysis chapter, I have explored and illustrated the processes and quality of how strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment have promoted teaching of writing and what value and opinion teacher have of these techniques. In the following sections I will use collected data from documentary analyses, lesson observations, self-completed questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to ascertain if there are any factors that have had a positive or negative effect on how teachers use adopted techniques of formative assessment in teaching writing.

Teacher Beliefs

Analysis of all data collected illustrated consistency in approaches in how adopted techniques of formative assessment are perceived and used by teachers. Analysis of documents was particularly enlightening. Analysis indicates that teachers write short-term plans for Literacy and set targets for literacy in a consistent and standardised way. Differences in particular strategies of implementation of formative assessment strategies were noted between different teaching phases. This was particularly notable in marking and feedback strategies used. Differences in opinions of staff were matched by the analysis of practice in children's samples of writing. Graph XVI illustrates teachers' beliefs about formative assessment and teaching. Consistencies and discrepancies in results will be discussed later in this thesis

**GRAPH XVI: Cluster of Questionnaire Responses from All Staff:
Teachers' Opinions of Formative Assessment and Teaching**



It must be noted that a key question missing from this section of the questionnaire may focus on active pupil involvement. Further questions could be used to retrieve data about how pupils are encouraged to become actively involved in their own learning, for example setting their own learning targets.

The following section of this chapter seek to analyse what factors have had a positive or negative effect on how teachers regard adopted formative assessment strategies in teaching writing.

Teachers' Subject Content Knowledge

As noted in Chapter 2, teachers' subject content knowledge may have important effects upon teaching and use of formative assessment strategies in the primary classroom (Aubrey, 1996; DFEE, 1998a; Medwell *et al*, 1998; Wilson, Shulman and Rickert, 1993). In Graph XVI (above) 14 out of 16 teachers agreed that a better subject knowledge of writing would help them to become more effective in assessing children's learning needs for writing. From these results it may be deduced that teachers believed that a better subject content knowledge has a positive effect upon how teachers use formative assessment strategies. Conversely, it could also be inferred that if teachers had a relatively poorer subject content knowledge of writing, it may have a negative effect upon how they used formative assessment strategies to assess children's learning needs.

Teachers' subject content knowledge may also refer to formative assessment. In this study, teachers had a limited subject knowledge base of formative assessment that was based on Clarke's (198) theories and delivered within a prescriptive Literacy Strategy. This approach may have acted as a barrier to active pupil involvement, as it did not encourage strategies of pupil self-assessment using: reflection time, questioning skills, peer partners and active pupil involvement in feedback from marking as advocated by Black *et al* (2004).

The following sections will attempt to explore data that may have had a positive or negative effect on how teachers use formative assessment strategies in teaching writing:

Planning Issues

Analysis of data has raised an issue about Literacy planning that could have an effect upon how formative assessment strategies are used in the effective teaching of writing. Close scrutiny of self-completed questionnaires revealed that some teachers found Literacy planning quite constraining. Graph V illustrated earlier in this chapter, describes that 1 teacher found that short-term planning in Literacy had no value in being flexible for review time for teachers to act upon their assessment results. Later Graph VI illustrates that three teachers felt that they rarely are able to plan time in sessions to follow up assessment feedback. Two teachers also thought that short-term Literacy planning was rarely flexible for review time to act upon assessment. Graph XIV (above) also highlights that 1 teacher disagreed with the statement that they revise plans due to informed marking and feedback (item 7). In fact during semi-structured interviews with teachers, one participant from KS2 felt that Literacy planning was too constraining due to the content of the National Literacy Strategy curriculum:

“It’s [planning] a bit restrictive sometimes, but then that’s just the nature of the curriculum and the Literacy Hour.” (KS2 Teacher)

“There are so many objectives- to cover them in any depth.” (KS2 teacher, external researcher)

This issue links back to the ‘tight-loose dilemma’ (Sutton, 1997, 2000) discussed in Chapter 1 and this issue will be discussed in depth during the discussion chapter of this thesis.

Formative Assessment and Teaching Phases

A common theme that runs throughout this data analysis chapter is the differences in opinion and practices between teaching phases. Differences in practices are most evident between the Early Years and the rest of the teaching phases within the school. For example, Table III earlier in this chapter illustrates that the majority of early Years teachers find no value in including learning intentions on pupils' work. The rest of the teachers in the case study school do not share this view. Later in Table VII the majority of teachers in Early Years found little or no value in choosing and showing examples of pupils' work for learning purposes; getting a pupil to show you how s/he has gone about something so you can diagnose error; getting a pupil to suggest ways something can be improved; showing pupils a range of other pupils' work to make a judgement about their own progress and showing pupils a range of other pupils' work to model success criteria. Once again, the rest of the teachers throughout the school did not mirror these views. Discussions earlier in this chapter also emphasised that formative assessment marking and feedback strategies used in the Early Years teaching phases did not reflect what was going on throughout the rest of the school and in fact there were also some differences in practices between KS1 and KS2 teachers.

Advertisement of Failure

Some semi-structured interviews with teachers in this case study have indicated that a few teachers do have reservations about some adopted formative assessment techniques because they feel that these approaches could de-motivate children by advertising their own personal failure in achievement. For example a KS1 teacher

describes how she feels that sharing learning intentions has many positive qualities but it does emphasise the lack of achievement in the public domain for the individual.

“Sharing learning intentions can make failure, not failure, but the fact that they haven’t reached it, more obvious, because you’re saying to them, have you learned this. So you’ve got to be careful there.” (KS1 Teacher)

In this case, I feel that the KS1 teacher is concerned that the child, rather than gaining a motivational sense of achievement, will feel a growing sense of failure that has been shared by all the class.

The Early Years and KS2 teachers also warn of highlighting failure in formative target setting strategies. The Early Years teacher stresses that targets have to be realistic; otherwise some children could become embroiled in a perpetual cycle of never achieving their target.

“You’re always going to have some children who don’t meet their targets, so you know, it could be that you’re teaching them to fail for those particular children.” (Early Years Teacher).

The KS2 teacher interviewed describes how targets have to be set that are realistic and adaptable according to unforeseen circumstances. There is a suggestion for a review of targets in writing if a child had missed some work or has progressed more or less than expected in learning.

“Unfortunately, it doesn’t take into account children who are absent a lot, you know, so sometimes it’s unrealistic to target with certain children, and they’re just not going to reach it, for unforeseen circumstances. And also sometimes you can group children together who have peaks and troughs, and one could be having a peak time and just fly ahead and one could be sort of stuck and I think that’s not applicable to target setting either, because they could be going through a trough.” (KS2 Teacher).

I will examine this issue in closely in the next chapter of this thesis.

In this analysis of data chapter, I have attempted to briefly justify data collection methods used in this study. I have then reduced and organised data into categories and

groups that have allowed me to address the research questions of this study. In the following chapter I will discuss thoroughly the themes illuminated by collected data and link them to data, concepts and arguments discussed in early chapters of this thesis.

CHAPTER 6: CRITICAL EVALUATION OF RESULTS

The nature and purpose of this study was to discover:

- Can the strategies adopted in the school be characterised as formative assessment?
- Have the strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment, promoted the teaching of writing within the school? If so, in what ways?
- Do teachers' values and beliefs about adopted formative assessment affect their approach to teaching writing?
- What factors have a positive or negative effect on how teachers regard adopted strategies in teaching writing?
- Do the adopted strategies affect pupils' motivation and autonomy?
- What implications are there for improving formative assessment in the school?

In this small-scale case study, I have investigated teachers' values and beliefs about techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment in teaching writing. Initially, I discussed theories and models of teacher understanding, values and beliefs by the DFEE (1998a), Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986), Higgins and Leat (1997), King's College (1997), Leat (1993), and Medwell (1998). Central to these theories is the multi-dimensional expertise of the teacher:

- Pedagogical craft knowledge of the teacher;
- The knowledge teachers have of their pupils;
- Images and beliefs teachers have in their institutions, strategies and practice.
- The teacher's subject content knowledge of the curriculum area being taught;

Following this discussion, I outlined theories and strategies of formative assessment that were fundamental to teaching as supported by Clarke (1998, 2000, 2002) and Sutton (1994, 1997, 2000), but challenged by other theories that see these particular

strategies as somewhat instrumental, formulaic and teacher-centred (Black *et al*, 2002). In this discussion I will outline specific strategies within each stage The Planning, Learning and Formative Assessment Cycle (Sutton, 2000):

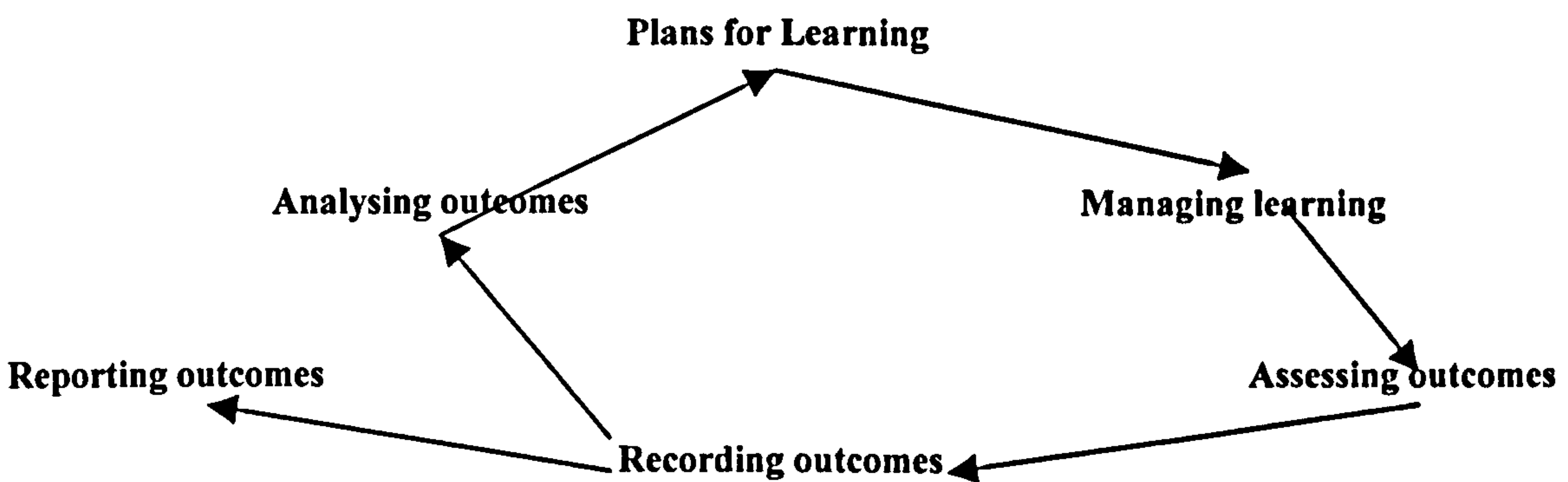


FIGURE 2:
The Planning, Learning and Formative Assessment cycle.
(Sutton, 2000, p.2)

In order for me to discuss these research questions fully, I will attempt to evaluate how specific adopted strategies of formative assessment promote particular aspects of teachers’ beliefs and values. I will then endeavour to draw conclusions about possible factors of formative assessment that may affect beliefs both positively or negatively. To add a further dimension to this discussion I will also link theories of learning, motivation and autonomy (as discussed in Chapter 1) in an effort to offer additional justification as to how formative assessment affects teacher values and beliefs in teaching writing.

Pedagogical Craft Knowledge

This section attempts to address whether:

- Strategies adopted in the name of formative assessment promoted the teaching of writing within the school? If so, in what ways?

- Teachers' values and beliefs about adopted formative assessment affect their approach to teaching writing?
- Factors have a positive or negative effect on how teachers regard adopted strategies in teaching writing?
- Adopted strategies affect pupils' motivation and autonomy?

These questions will be addressed in particular reference to the following specific elements of teaching.

Planning

The Assessment Reform Group (2002) stress that planning should be an effective part of the assessment for learning process and is essential for teachers' practical use. Teachers' opinions of planning strategies from the self-completed questionnaire (Graph V) overwhelmingly illustrate that all teachers believe that planning specific, clear learning outcomes helped the clarity of their teaching. Data retrieved from analysis of teacher's plans in this study illustrated that nine out of ten participants ensured that learning intentions were specific and clear and linked to NLS objectives, a key factor in official views of formative assessment, where tasks are matched to the learning outcome and resources are clearly identified. This is further substantiated by semi-structured interview transcript data that highlights that teachers find short term planning valuable in keeping them focussed upon the learning outcome to be taught, so that teaching is purposeful (OFSTED, 1993). These results could indicate that planning could have a positive effect upon the delivery of subject information to pupils. In other words, having a clear plan of learning outcomes and related tasks that are to be delivered and assessed against could provide a pedagogical craft knowledge

frame of reference that enhances teacher's organisational skill in delivery (Clarke and Yinger, 1993, in Calderhead, 1993). In fact, OFSTED (2001) support the view that effective planning is essential to teaching:

“Without exception, the good teaching described in this report derived from good planning. The teachers had a very clear sense of what needed to be taught and how the tasks planned for pupils would help them to meet the objectives during a lesson....” (OFSTED, 2001, p.23)

The effect of using plans to assess outcomes and the effect of curriculum content on short-term teaching plans will be discussed later in this chapter.

Sharing Learning Intentions

As noted in the data analysis chapter, all teachers in the lessons observed shared learning intentions with children in their class using the W.A.L.T. approach advocated by Clarke (1998, 2001). As with the Gillingham Project (Clarke, 2001) discussed in an earlier chapter, teachers in this study thought that this formative assessment technique had both beneficial effect on a their own teaching and pupils' learning. 52 positive pupil responses thought that WALT helped them focus on their work. 14 out of 16 teachers in this study thought that this vital ingredient to the Planning, Learning and Formative Assessment Cycle focussed their teaching on a specific learning outcome and therefore gave their teaching purpose (OFSTED, 1993). This view is also justified by semi-structured interview transcript evidence quoted in the previous chapter. Teaching may be more focussed upon the quality of what is to be learned and therefore taught, rather than the quantity of work to be produced.

The Assessment and Reform Group (2002) also acknowledge the benefits of teachers communicating learning goals to pupils, explaining the necessity of sharing learning intentions as enabling the learner to comprehend what is trying to be achieved and to

be clear about what they have to learn. In fact 27 pupil responses indicated that pupils thought WALT helped them learn and 31 responses explained that WALT ‘helped you know your target’. For the ARG, this should make pupils more motivated and dedicated to achieving the end-learning outcome:

“Assessment for learning should promote commitment to learning goals and a shared understanding of criteria ...” (ARG, 2002, p3.).

This suggests active involvement with pupils.

Furthermore, the DfES (2002) emphasise that the teacher can contribute to raising standards in Literacy by “explaining to children the objectives for individual lessons.” (DfES, 2002, p5) thereby recognising the need for this particular formative assessment technique in teaching.

In keeping with this view, 13 of the 16 teachers in this case study also thought that this teaching approach of sharing learning intentions had beneficial effects upon the motivation of the children, and therefore increased the effectiveness of the teacher. This theory of motivational benefits maybe linked to and justified by earlier discussions of motivation. In this instance, the learner has identified the task, because the teacher has actively shared the learning intention with the pupil and the learner then aims to close the gap with attaining a targeted concept, perhaps as part of being procedurally autonomous (Ecclestone, 2002). Such understanding of the task and its principles could also foster personal autonomy as it begins to promote a context in which the learner can begin to organise his/her own learning (Ecclestone, 2002, Torrance and Pryor, 1998).

To sum up, in this small case study, suggests that the formative assessment technique of sharing the learning intention with children could improve the specificity of the teacher's teaching and by promoting positive intrinsic motivational traits in the learner. However, as Black *et al* argue it is all too easy to become teacher-centred and focussed on targets rather than on deep engagement with learning (Black *et al*, 2002). Counter arguments to this view will be discussed later in this chapter.

Modelling Success Criteria

Teachers could use their craft knowledge of teaching to explain, demonstrate and model examples of success criteria related to the planned learning intentions that have been shared with the children. The effective teacher in his/her craft knowledge repertoire could use such examples of modelling success criteria. This may include a variety of teaching styles such as instruction, questioning, drawing out reasoning, discussion, encouraging divergent thinking, choosing and showing examples of pupils work to diagnose error, suggesting ways work can be improved as well as providing models and different formats for writing. The class teacher could manage such learning using a whole class, small group, and paired or individual approach.

Bearing this theory of teaching in mind, we need to determine whether formative assessment could promote such teaching strategies. There are multiple answers to the nature of this question. Firstly, results from lesson observations and documentary analysis in this study indicate that teachers are using a wide range of teaching styles during their planning and teaching of writing. Results from the self-completed questionnaire show that 15 of the 16 teachers in this study are of the opinion that

assessment information has given them an accurate knowledge of pupil learning and assessment of children's writing helps them use a variety of teaching styles effectively (Graph XVI). All the teachers in this study firmly agree that assessment for learning provides more valuable information for teaching than statutory testing (Graph XVI). These results reflect the discussion explored in Chapter 1 – notably that formative assessment for learning requires that teachers use diagnostic information to provide more accurate teaching plans and effective presentation of concepts in a more informed and accurate way so the learning needs of the individual are taken into account (AAIA, 1992; Clarke, 1998, 2001; Connor, 1991; Dean, 2000; Sutton, 1990). Only one teacher in this study disagreed with this notion.

Such use of teaching styles, informed by formative assessment could possibly have positive pupil outcomes linked to autonomy and motivation. Figure 1 (from Ecclestone, 2002 and Torrance and Pryor, 1998), illustrated in Chapter 1 of this study, demonstrates how different formative assessment and teaching strategies could affect pupil outcomes. Figure 1 illustrates that when the teacher describes the task content and criteria for success and also when the teacher explains and negotiates quality criteria this could foster an understanding of task principles and quality in the learner and so could aid future self-monitoring. Additionally, when the teacher criticises an aspect of the learner's work this could enable the pupil to articulate and understand quality criteria and develop practice in self-monitoring. This may promote their personal autonomy (Ecclestone, 2002), enabling the pupil to organise his/her own learning where the task has been identified and the learner aims to close the gap with previous knowledge and new attainment, thereby moving away from the reliance on external rewards for learning. Such *identified* and *intrinsic* types of motivation

(Ecclestone, 2002) and positive effects on pupil learning autonomy has also been recognised by the Assessment Reform Group (2002). The ARG (2002) explain that formative assessment strategies encourage motivation by “emphasising progress and achievement rather than failure” (p.3) and also develops the learner’s capacity in self-assessment where learners are “...able to engage in self-reflection and to identify the next steps in their learning.” (p.3). However, in this study, there was very little evidence of this type of involvement.

However, such claims that the benefits of particular techniques of formative assessment in the delivery of a variety of teaching styles may not be so clear-cut. In this study, the effects of formative assessment are being analysed within the context of teaching writing throughout the school. In this school, writing is taught via the National Literacy Strategy objectives and a designated Literacy Hour, with a lesson structure advocated by the DFEE (1998a) in the strategy and discussed in Chapter 4 of this study. It could be argued that the teacher’s choice of style to be used may not be totally determined by formative assessment strategies, but also by a specified, prescriptive system of delivering objectives in writing, as defined by the DFEE (1998a). This ties the NLS to similarly prescriptive formative assessment techniques that, in turn, limit the chances of active pupil involvement in assessment for learning. If objectives are pre-defined by prescription, then it could be they are teacher-led and imposed upon the learner, rather than the learner taking a key role in addressing next steps in learning.

However, one could still argue that the teacher still has the choice of a variety of explanatory, demonstration and modelling criteria skills within these pre-defined

sessions, which may be determined by information for the teacher gleaned from formative assessment techniques.

Teachers' Knowledge of Pupils

The knowledge that teachers have of their pupils is central to successful teaching (Torrance and Pryor, 1998). In the following sections I will discuss how formative assessment techniques used in this case study have contributed to developing teacher knowledge of their pupils. This next section aims to analyse how teachers believe specific adopted formative assessment techniques to promote their knowledge of pupils contributes to teaching writing, and whether they can be characterised as formative assessment.

Differentiation

Differentiation is a vital part of managing learning within the Planning, Learning and Formative Assessment Cycle of Figure 2. As noted in the data analysis chapter, accurate formative assessment approaches could be used to inform teachers about the learning capabilities of their pupils and therefore may help them to differentiate work precisely, closely matched to the learning needs of the pupil. Self-completed questionnaire results from this study, as noted in Table XV, indicated that all teachers in this study thought that they were able to differentiate group activities as a result of formative assessment approaches. Possible formative assessment approaches used to provide teachers with information about their pupils could be marking and evaluation of previous learning, the use of a wide range of questioning to assess individual learning. This could ensure that teachers are aware of the abilities and needs of all pupils, and use this information to plan and design specific learning tasks to cater for

and match the learning needs of all pupils (OFSTED, 1993). As noted in the data analysis chapter 9 out of 10 teachers differentiated short-term plans by ability, task and by outcome and all plans analysed differentiated resources to support and challenge the wide range of ability of groups of children in their Literacy class.

Differentiation may be is informed by formative assessment techniques, and could increase the teacher's knowledge of the learning capabilities of his/her pupils, which is a key feature of theories of teaching as noted in earlier sections of this chapter (DFEE, 1998a; Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986; Higgins and Leat, 1997; King's College, 1997; Leat, 1993; Medwell, 1998; and Rich, 1993). Furthermore, it is central to planning and managing of children's learning. In other words, a teacher who is better informed about the learning capabilities of his/her pupils will be able to use his/her craft knowledge skills of planning for differentiation more accurately, where specified learning intentions are delivered using appropriate methods of explaining, demonstrating and modelling success criteria to cater for the all abilities in the class or group.

Plenary

In this small-scale case study, it was observed that all short-term teaching plans for Literacy contained a designated plenary session. All but one of the plans directly linked the plenary to the main learning intentions of the session. In all seven lessons observed, it was noted that all teachers engaged in a whole class plenary session to re-visit, consolidate and extend learning intentions. Such approaches to the Literacy plenary sessions matches the view that OFSTED (2002) has of good teaching practice within the plenary:

“Effective closing plenary sessions occur where the teacher has made the learning objectives precise and has given the pupils tasks that relate to the main theme of the lesson. He or she is then able to focus on and evaluate a specific element of learning with the whole class. Sufficient time is given to review the work so that the teacher can tackle any misunderstandings. In addition, through detailed and targeted questioning or very brief tasks, the teacher gains a good idea of the progress made and is then able to plan or adapt subsequent work to reflect this,” (OFSTED, 2002, paragraph, 43 p.14).

The plenary session, within the Literacy Hour can, therefore, be used both to manage and assess learning. The teacher manages the whole class in an approach that can be used to formatively assess children’s learning capability against the learning intention shared and taught in the session. This may increase the teacher’s knowledge of his/her pupils’ learning. The more informed teacher could, therefore, be more accurate in planning subsequent lessons that are more closely matched to his/her pupils learning needs.

Teacher management of the plenary session could have possible motivational and autonomous benefits for the learner. Although not investigated in this study, it could be argued, that when the teacher asks for clarification of learning that has been taught during the plenary session it has a positive effect upon metacognitive outcomes in pupils and enables pupils to re-articulate understanding. This could have positive influences on personal autonomy and intrinsic motivation.

Marking and Feedback

In this study, teachers’ views and opinions of marking and feedback strategies were investigated using self-completed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The

frequency on how often marking and feedback strategies were used were determined using documentary analysis of children's marked writing samples.

Results from this study tend to indicate that adopted marking and feedback strategies go some way to improve teachers' knowledge of their pupils. As noted in Graph VIII, all teachers felt that informing a pupil what he/she has achieved with specific reference to a learning intention either valuable or very valuable. 14 of the 16 teachers also found marking and feedback, using this approach, was more manageable for them and had an impact on future planning and teaching. All teachers felt that marking using the traffic light system informed them of children's learning. These results reflect theories advocated by both Clarke (1998, 2001) and Sutton (1997, 2000) who believe that if marking and feedback is to be an effective formative tool then it should have a specific purpose rather than a global assessment of the learning intention and all secretarial skills involved in the task. Having such a specific purpose to marking provides a clear-cut message to both the teacher and the learner.

Firstly, it informs the teacher precisely what the learner has achieved and where the learner needs to go next. Using this vital information the teacher can amend subsequent planning and teaching to either revisit or consolidate learning intentions that have not been fully understood or extend learning into new concepts when the learner has fully comprehended what has been taught. In other words, specific marking strategies could enable the teacher to be aware of the abilities and needs of all pupils and so use this information to design future learning tasks, catering for the needs and abilities of all his/her pupils. Formatively assessing student outcomes using

such marking strategies promotes the teacher's knowledge of his/her students which could have a positive knock on effect upon the teacher's management of new tasks.

Secondly, strategies of 'closing the gap' marking and feedback on work done may have motivational benefits for the learner. OFSTED (1993) notes that when the teacher provides clear and specific feedback that is linked to subsequent work it tends to have a positive impact on creating and sustaining motivation in learners. Torrance and Pryor (1998) mirror this view. It might be that that such teaching and formative assessment techniques enhance *identified* or *intrinsic* motivation (Ecclestone, 2002) in a context of empowerment for the learner with a deeper understanding and insight into his/her learning goals. The teacher has used formative assessment techniques to promote procedural and personal independence and engage children in their own learning. Critical analysis of adopted formative assessment techniques in this case study highlights their limitations. Opportunities for active involvement of the learner in marking and feedback were limited. The data in this study does not overtly suggest any opportunities for active pupil involvement. However, recent literature (Black *et al*, 2004 and AAIA, 2003) advocate that such opportunities could be developed using specific reflection and feedback from marking times, the use of peer partners and the development of questioning skills in both teacher and pupil. Since it was not possible to explore types of pupil involvement in this research, this is an important focus for further investigative studies.

In this study, group analysis of self-completed questionnaire results and the analysis of children's writing samples illuminated a difference of teachers' views, opinions and practice when it came to marking and feedback strategies. All but one teacher in

KS1 and one teacher in KS2 thought that the following strategies were valuable or very valuable:

- Using probing questions to diagnose the extent of pupils' learning.
- Analysing completed work to work out why a pupil has or has not achieved.
- Describing why an answer is correct.
- Writing an evaluative 'closing the gap' note on the work for the pupil.

Most teachers in The Early Years Unit thought that these strategies were of little or had no value to their practice. This is also reflected in analysis of children's writing samples that illustrates that the learning intention is not displayed on work and neither traffic lights nor marking nor feedback prompts were used to assess children's learning in writing. However, Early Years teachers did write a general comment on children's work related to the learning intention. Semi-structured interview data with an Early Years teacher revealed that they felt that teacher written comments on work were of little value to the children because they were unable to read them and therefore may have had no beneficial effect for the children. The Early Years teacher explained that feedback given to children is largely verbal because it is done as soon as the task is completed and provides children with instant feedback. The Early Years teacher goes on to say that any teacher comments on children's work is often related to learning and largely for the benefit of the teacher's knowledge of pupil achievement, rather than for the pupil. Further study could investigate other similar schools to ascertain whether Early Years teachers held similar views and opinions.

Differences in marking and feedback strategies used for different age groups of children could be linked back to theories of learning. As discussed in chapter 1, the

constructivists' view of learning may rely upon the use of formative assessment marking and feedback strategies to recognise what children have achieved. This is then used to determine the level of challenge for new mental connections and learning based on prior knowledge (Black, 1999, 2000; Gipps, 1994; Newton, 2000; Shorrocks, 1993; Torrance and Pryor, 1998; Vygostky, 1962). The teacher may therefore use marking and feedback strategies to determine a pupil's 'zone of proximal development' (Vygostky, 1962) and use 'closing the gap' feedback comments to communicate didactically with the pupil how to make connections with previous and new learning. Results from this study may indicate that this view of learning may not work in isolation, especially with the youngest children in the school. Performance of younger children needs to be fed back to them instantly and verbally, often accompanied by a motivational sticker. Feedback on learning may, therefore, be dominated by *external* motivational rewards for outcomes, rather than *introjected*, *identified* and *intrinsic* motivational learning, at least according to Ecclestone's typology (2002).

This view links directly to critical analysis of the techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment used in this case study primary school. It can be argued, techniques discussed throughout this thesis, are dominated by formulaic, teacher-led techniques as advocated by Clarke (1998) and Sutton (1997, 2000), where the teacher imposes external targets and learning intentions upon the learner. This could, potentially, exacerbate pupils' learning for external motivational benefits. If pupils were actively engaged in determining the next steps in their own learning as suggested by Black *et al* (2002) and AAIA (2003), motivation for learning would be more likely to emerge intrinsically from within the learner. In fact, analysis of both

positive and negative pupil responses may indicate that pupils are reacting to externally imposed learning goals and active involvement is limited. Pupils describe feelings of 'happiness' when they got the learning intention 'right' and feelings of 'sadness', embarrassment' and 'worry' when given an orange highlight and closing the gap comment. This exemplifies that pupils are externally driven by imposed learning and positive motivation is based on getting it right rather than using mistakes to help them make progress in their own learning (Black *et al*, 2004; AAIA, 2003).

It would take further in-depth investigation and analysis of verbal and written marking and feedback strategies to ascertain the validity of this argument which time and logistical barriers did not allow in this study; a further study might therefore address specifically the use of specific language and questions both teachers and pupils use for feedback and approaches used to promote active pupil engagement in their learning.

Evaluation of Short-term Plans

Data about how teachers evaluated short-term Literacy plans for writing illustrated how the assessment technique of evaluating learning against specific planned learning outcomes affected teachers' knowledge of their pupils. Data from self-completed questionnaires exemplified that all teachers in this study thought that evaluation of short-term planning using the traffic light system helped them plan future learning. All teachers also thought that writing significant observations helped them plan specifically for individuals and for groups of children. Semi-structured interview data

also mirrored these results and teachers described that such planning evaluations helped them plan future learning accurately.

These results show that, in this study, the strategy of evaluating short-term plans for Literacy improved teachers' knowledge of the learning gains of their pupils. With this information noted down on planning, the teacher could then decide how to manage children's learning to cater for all learning needs. An improved knowledge of pupils could enable the teacher to plan subsequent work and design tasks to extend or reinforce learning where appropriate. In terms of constructivist learning theory, the teacher is well informed about the level of previous learning and so next steps to close the gap with future learning can be addressed accurately.

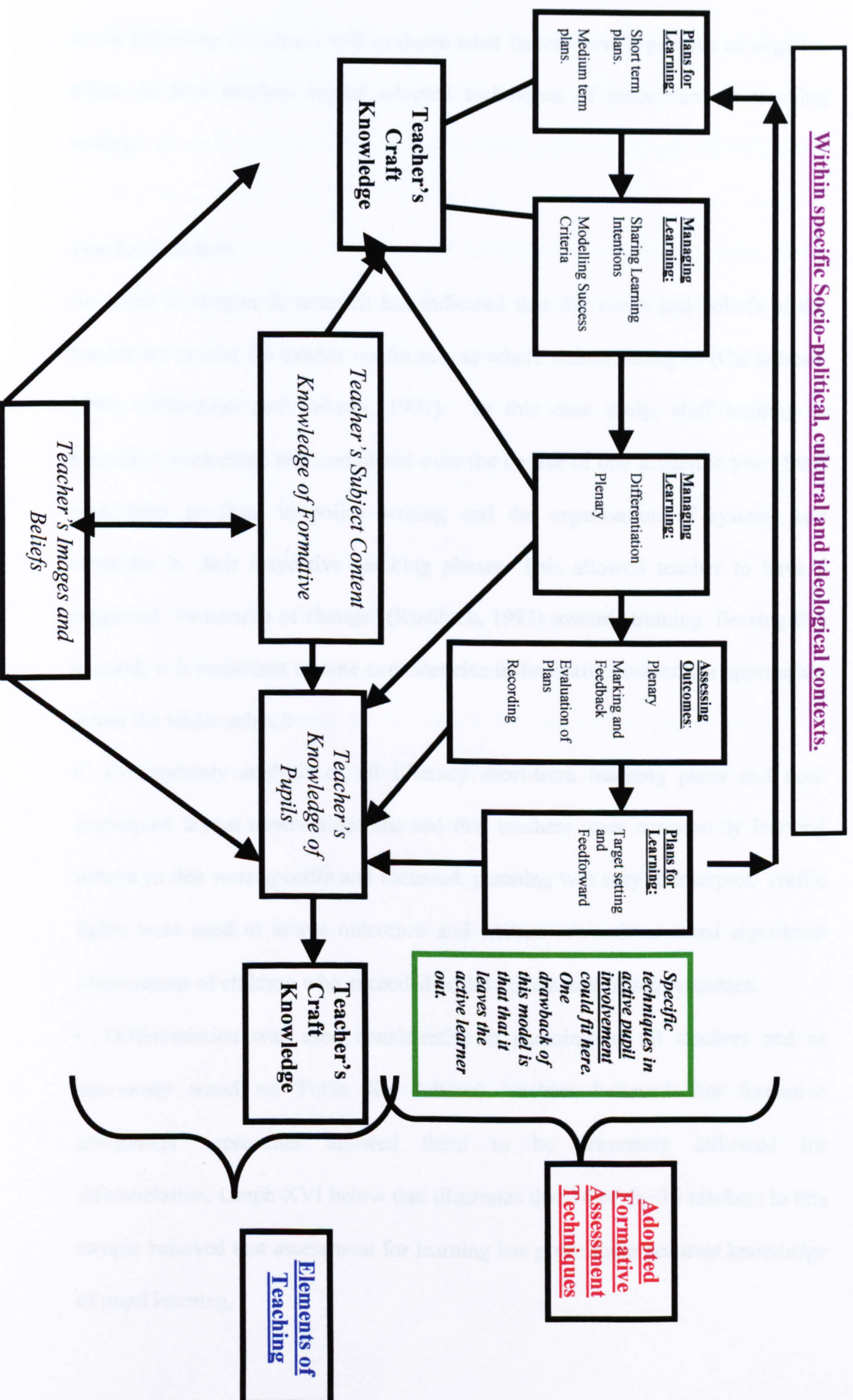
Target Setting and Feedforward

Evaluations of short-term Literacy plan feed forward directly into new learning targets. Targets set address new learning for children based on previous concept acquisition. Analysis of teachers' target setting documents confirmed that targets were 'SMART' (AAIA, 1997; DFEE, 1997, Sutton, 1997) and all teachers thought that target setting informed their future planning, helping to define specific learning intentions that were informed by lesson evaluations, marking and feedback. Such opinions and approaches matched OFSTED's (1993) view that good quality teaching involves the teacher checking pupils' work to consider whether learning intentions have been met and then altering subsequent learning in response to these evaluations. It could be argued that setting new informed learning targets might have a positive effect upon how the teacher plans and manages future learning. Having pre-defined teaching targets of children's next steps in learning could help the teacher to create

specific, focused learning intentions in planning that reflect pupils' learning directions.

In the preceding sections of this small-scale case study I have attempted to explain teachers' beliefs about adopted techniques in formative assessment. I have used evidence collected from self-completed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, documentary analyses and lesson observations. I have attempted to link the collected evidence to studies of formative assessment and elements of teacher effectiveness theory. FIGURE 10 below is my attempt to model how strategies of formative assessment in the Planning, Learning and Formative Assessment Cycle (Figure 2; Sutton, 2000, p.2) connect with particular elements of teaching.

FIGURE 10: A Model to Show How Formative Assessment Techniques Could Influence Elements of Teaching.



In the following sections, I will evaluate what factors have a positive or negative effect on how teachers regard adopted techniques of assessment in teaching writing.

Teachers' Beliefs

As noted in chapter 2, research has indicated that the views and beliefs of the teacher are crucial for teacher conformity to whole school strategies (Calderhead, 1993; Calderhead and Robson, 1991). In this case study, staff training in formative assessment was completed over the course of one academic year. Staff were fully involved in policy writing and the organisation of systems and strategies in their respective teaching phases. This allowed teacher to have a suggested “ownership of change” (Rudduck, 1993) towards training. Bearing this in mind, it is important to note consistencies in formative assessment approaches across the whole school:

- ✓ Documentary analysis of all Literacy short-term teaching plans and non-participant lesson observations showed that teachers were consistently learning outcomes that were specific and focussed, planning was easy to interpret. Traffic lights were used to assess outcomes and written evaluations noted significant observations of children who exceeded or did not reach learning outcomes.
- ✓ Differentiation was used consistently on planning by all teachers and as previously noted on Table XV (above) teachers believed that formative assessment approaches allowed them to be accurately informed for differentiation. Graph XVI below that illustrates that 14 of the 16 teachers in this sample believed that assessment for learning has given them accurate knowledge of pupil learning.

- ✓ Analysis of all teachers' target setting for writing revealed that all teachers wrote SMART targets (Sutton, 1997). This may indicate that teachers are well trained and well informed about such target setting procedures and are using them to full effect.
- ✓ Data retrieved from documentary analysis of children's books, semi-structured interviews and self-completed questionnaires indicated that there were consistencies in approaches in sharing learning intentions and marking strategies throughout KS2 and some areas of KS1. Discrepancies in the way marking and sharing learning intentions are used in Early Years will be discussed later in this section.

Analysis of Graph XVI, constructed by using data from self-completed questionnaires, (below) gives us some insight into teachers' firm, positive beliefs about formative assessment. In this Graph XVI all teachers agreed or strongly disagreed that formative assessment informs future planning and that it was more valuable than statutory testing. It is interesting to note, however, that for items 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7, 1 teacher disagreed that these strategies were of value for promoting effective teaching. Analysis of raw data from individual questionnaires revealed that this was the same KS2 teacher. Therefore, this individual did not hold similar values to the rest of the teaching staff. It may be interesting to investigate deeper to ascertain whether this teacher implemented formative assessment strategies in the same way as other teachers. However, anonymity of the self-completed questionnaire as well as ethical constraints would prevent such further exploration.

After further analysis of interview transcription data, I felt teachers might have initially perceived implementation of techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment strategies as a top-down process imposed upon them by the management of the school. However, interview transcriptions indicate that teachers in this study were fully engaged in the implementation process and found it useful for their practice:

It's just so informative, because you know what to move on to next. (KS2 Teacher)

**I*

Is there any negative effect, do you think, upon your teaching? All these strategies you use to model success criteria, do you think it has any negative effect?

I don't think so. I find it's quite positive. (KS2 Teacher)

**I*

What aspects of planning do you find most useful for your effective teaching? Which parts of your planning are most helpful to you as a teacher?

As a teacher, it's got to be the assessment part of what they've already done, so you can move on when you're planning your next week. As I'm actually teaching, I put my planning down, it's like the idiot's guide to teaching my lesson. (KS1 Teacher)

I think for assessment as well. I think it helps when we do end of term assessments. It certainly informs you where you're going and sometimes brings up things that you haven't seen. (KS2 Teacher)

It will, from your marking, it tells me where to focus in on next or the things that I keep having to drum home and drum home. I've got to mark to inform me. (KS1 Teacher)

I think every time we get together to plan, we have to evaluate, because we're a team and because we move round, and we're not doing the same tasks, the same area, each week, so we have to, we have to share information. And that shared information obviously informs the planning for the next time. Em, so it's, it's just a cycle. You know, you plan, you do it, you evaluate it, you either move on or you repeat it.

I think it's such a built in part of what you're doing, because if you don't assess them, you can't, you don't know where they are to move them on, or not move them on. (Early Years Teacher)

Teacher's Subject Content Knowledge

In the Data Analysis chapter of this thesis, I explained that 14 of the 16 teachers in the sample (Graph XVI) thought that a better subject knowledge of writing would help them to become more accurate in assessing children's learning needs for writing. This view could link back to the work completed by Richert (1993) who discussed the effect that teachers' knowledge of their curriculum subject had on the ability to assess children's learning. Richert (1993) argued that teachers were better equipped to deal with subject misconceptions in students with more thorough curriculum knowledge. Figure 10 above illustrates how teacher subject knowledge could have a knock on effect upon both the teacher's knowledge of their pupils and the teacher's craft knowledge. If we follow Richert's (1993) view, it may be that if a teacher has poorer subject knowledge of the technical skill of writing then it may have a negative affect upon the teacher's ability "...to detect student misconceptions..." (p.109) and so have an inaccurate knowledge of pupils' true ability. A teacher's craft knowledge may subsequently be affected as inaccurate knowledge of pupils could result in the teacher's planning, designing and implementing mismatched and inappropriate learning intentions and tasks for the learner. This view highlights the effect that limited subject knowledge has on the ability of the teacher to formatively assess children's learning accurately.

Conversely, and although not investigated in this study, we could argue that the teacher's subject content knowledge of formative assessment techniques may also

have an affect upon a teacher's accurate knowledge of his/her pupils learning. If for example, a teacher was new to the school or relatively inexperienced in his/her professional development, his/her lack of knowledge of the technicalities of strategies of formative assessment may affect how or if the formative assessment is completed. This could influence how accurately teachers know their pupils and how they manage learning for them. The importance of a teachers' ability to understand formative assessment is recognised by the Assessment and Reform Group (2002). The ARG emphasises that such knowledge is a "key professional skill" (p.2) and it is imperative that:

"Teachers should be supported in developing these skills through initial and continuing professional development." (ARG, 2002, p.2)

Context

As noted in Chapter 1 of this thesis, teaching and learning does not take place in a bubble. Figure 10 illustrates that formative assessment techniques take place within specific socio-political, cultural and ideological contexts. For example, in this case study, the whole school is, as advised by the government and local LEA, using the National Literacy Strategy (1998a) to implement the teaching of English throughout the school, a powerful ideological and political influence. The way in which the Literacy Strategy is implemented is further influenced by specific Literacy and Assessment policies of the school (socio-political influences). Influences of the cultural attitudes of the families of this socio-economically deprived inner city area, where basic skills in Literacy are limited and 30% of the school's population are first generation immigrants from Bangladesh.

As noted, this study has illuminated ideological influences that may have an effect upon the implementation of techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment and the management of teaching and learning in the primary classroom. Analysis of data in the previous chapter has highlighted interesting ideological issues associated with short-term planning which will now be discussed.

Planning

Analysis of data from self-completed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews reveals that some teachers in this study felt that Literacy plans were too restrictive and bound by government guidelines about the coverage of National Literacy Strategy teaching objectives for a particular term. Such a dilemma is highlighted in chapter 1, which warns of a possible danger of inflexible plans that teachers feel have no room for manoeuvre when formative assessment strategies inform teachers that alternative planning for learning is needed (Sutton, 1997). In other words, some teachers in this study may have felt bound by The National Literacy Strategy and therefore unable to act upon vital knowledge of their pupils because they need to teach pre-planned NLS objectives. In this situation then, we could argue that ideological influences in the school affect teacher beliefs, because information about children's learning gleaned by formative assessment techniques may not be acted upon. Vital teacher knowledge about their pupils has little effect upon a teacher's craft knowledge because it may be hampered by strict adherence to government guidelines. In this case, teaching and formative assessment may be taking place, not in relation to the needs of the learner, but for the demands of an external curriculum. This could have negative effects on teaching because key

information about children's learning may not be being used to best effect. The Assessment Reform Group (2002) warns against such an approach and advises that, for effective teaching and learning ...

“A teacher's planning should provide opportunities for both learner and teacher to obtain and use information about progress towards learning goals. It also has to be flexible to respond to initial and emerging ideas and skills.” (ARG, 2002, p2)

The notion of inflexibility in Literacy planning works against the advocacy of learners' view of active involvement in using information about progress to move towards learning goals. Rigidity in planning caused by imposition of prescriptive learning outcomes defined by the NLS may make it very difficult for learning intentions defined by the learner to be used in teaching, thereby restricting active pupil self-assessment and discouraging teachers from seeing the potential for pupil involvement.

Age of the Learner

Figure 10 demonstrates how formative assessment strategies influence elements of teaching within specific socio-political, cultural and ideological contexts. This model, however, does not take into account the influences of the age of the learner. In this study, interesting results have been illuminated about teacher's differing views and practices about formative assessment between teaching phases. Marked differences in teachers' opinions and practices were illuminated in strategies of sharing the learning intention, modelling success criteria and also in marking and feedback.

Such differences in how teachers used formative assessment techniques may indicate that formative assessment strategies may not be globally practical in promoting teaching in writing. Age and ability of children may determine the particular type of formative assessment technique that can be used and therefore may have a bearing upon how teachers use particular formative assessment strategies in the primary classroom. In other words, from the evidence gleaned from this data it may be argued that techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment strategies that may promote teaching writing with Year 6 children may not be appropriate with Reception children, due to their ability or teachers' perceptions of their ability.

The following sections address what effect the adoptive strategies in formative assessment have on pupil motivation and autonomy.

Advertisement of Failure and Learning Theory

Sharing learning intentions with children using the WALT approach has some potentially positive effects upon teachers' pedagogy. However, results from semi-structured interviews with teachers have indicated that they felt that this particular formative assessment technique had some potentially negative effects upon teaching and learning. Teachers during semi-structured interview indicated that sharing the learning intention to the class does make explicit learning expectations for children, but if the child does not succeed then this apparent failure in their learning could be advertised. Therefore this assessment strategy could potentially de-motivate children. Jones (2002) argues that this way of thinking could be linked to learning theory. He suggests that using WALT to share learning

intentions encourages learning to centre on a behaviourist tradition of performance rather than constructive learning. Within this view, Jones (2002) advocates that learners focus on the curriculum content of the lesson with reward for success rather than focussed skills built on previous learning.

Additionally, approaches to sharing learning intentions with children in this study are teacher-led and are imposed in top-down way. Children seem, to be therefore, working towards external rewards for learning within a behaviourist tradition rather than developing intrinsic learning that comes from pupils' own self assessment. Pupils are given limited opportunities to intrinsically construct their own learning. This is also evident in using the traffic light technique for marking. One teacher reflected that the green and orange highlights were signals or 'grades' to achievement and therefore performance may be related to behaviourist theories of learning.

"We always use traffic lights and the children know that if they've getting a grade then they've done it and they can do something else. If they get an orange they know they need a bit more practise." (KS1 teacher, external researcher)

Furthermore, using an all-inclusive whole class WALT learning intention defeats the constructive object of basing new learning on previous acquisition of learning concepts, where individuals may have different starting points for new learning. Using one learning intention with children with different learning starting points may have a negative effect upon those pupils where the learning intention is inappropriate for them, because it is either too challenging or not demanding enough. This argument is further substantiated by negative comments extrapolated from pupil response templates. For both WALT and marking strategies pupils explain negative feelings when imposed learning intentions are not achieved.

The behaviourist tradition in learning, however, may be applicable in some scenarios of the model advocated in Figure 10. As highlighted in the Results and Data Analysis chapter, and also discussed earlier in this chapter, some teachers in particular teaching phases had particular opinions and used different techniques of formative assessment. In the Early Years teaching phase, specific elements of sharing learning intentions, modelling success criteria and marking and feedback were seen as inappropriate for this particular age group of children (4-5 years old). Reasons extrapolated at interview centred on children's inability to read, while their academic and social immaturity required that they received instant feedback on learning. Teachers felt that children responded better when verbal feedback was instant and reward was focussed on praise and stickers for achievement, which is a central approach to the behaviourist tradition of learning. Further insights into the nature of and rationale for verbal feedback could possibly be investigated to further substantiate this argument, but in this study it was logistically impossible.

Motivation

Figure 1 in Chapter 1 of this thesis outlines how possible teaching and formative assessment techniques could potentially have positive effects on pupil autonomy and motivation and some results in this study reflect this view. For example an Early Years teacher stated that:

“...in my group the kids go mad if they haven't had WALT because they like to know what we're learning about” (EY teacher, external researcher)

However critical evaluation of results in this study could indicate that specific formative assessment techniques might have potential negative outcomes on pupil

autonomy and motivation. For example, sharing learning intentions could potentially foster motivation that is linked to reward for outcomes or *external motivation* rather than promoting *identified* motivation. *External* motivation might lead to *introjected* motivation where pupils internalise the targets, but this internalisation is not self-determined; in other words, it remains determined by teachers. If pupil failure is more public or advertised, as discussed in earlier sections, then there is the potential for the pupil to become indifferent and apathetic, which could lead to an *amotivated* state. In fact, in this study, 29 negative responses indicated feelings of embarrassment, sadness and worry when learning intentions were not achieved, which may have a potentially adverse affect upon motivation towards learning.

Autonomy

In this section I will discuss whether adopted strategies affect pupils' motivation and autonomy.

Evidence from this study has suggested that some formative assessment techniques could focus children on a particular learning outcome and understood modelled success criteria. It could be argued that this may promote procedural independence in learners. That is, the learner understands the nature and structure of the task and principles for successful learning acquisition.

Critical evaluation of results, however, could question the use of these techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment in the development of autonomy in children of the primary age range. Results in this study indicated that mostly KS2

children responded to such formative assessment techniques. Teachers indicated that younger children tended to respond better to feedback that was verbal, instant and based on positive reward for learning. That may suggest that younger children have limited independence and react better to formative strategies based upon behaviourist learning theory.

Formative Assessment and Active Pupil Involvement

This section aims to explore whether adopted assessment strategies used in this school can be characterised as formative assessment.

As noted throughout this thesis, the active involvement of the pupil in taking responsibility for his/her own learning is central to recent theories of formative assessment (AAIA, 2003, ARG, 2002, Black et al, 2004). Critical analysis of techniques adopted in this case study primary school illuminates the formulaic top-down teacher-led techniques used in school that limit opportunities for pupil self-assessment. I feel that some of the techniques used are beneficial for the teacher rather than the learner. For example, learning intentions shared with pupils are devised by the teacher and are heavily influenced by ELGs and NLS objectives:

“We pick out objectives, taken from the Early Learning Goals, which we quite often try to differentiate.” (EY teacher, external researcher)

The same can be said about what some teachers believed about evaluation of planning and target setting:

“We tend to do a highlight to see where each child is at, because I was really struggling to know where Liam was at...” (EY teacher, external researcher)

“When we evaluate at the end of the week, we look at what’s happened, that kind of informs us what we’re doing next.” (EY teacher, external researcher)

Results from pupil response templates about the use of WALT and marking strategies suggest that pupils are not actively engaging in their own learning, but rather reacting to prescriptive learning imposed on them. This may imply that this form of learning is based on behaviourist traditions of learning by external achievement rather than an intrinsic constructivist approach.

It does seem that the techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment are used in this case study primary school for the benefit of improving teachers’ knowledge of pupil learning rather than to increase pupil knowledge and awareness of their own learning and, therefore, cannot be regarded as ‘assessment for learning, in terms of pupil self-assessment. Some reasons for this may centre on school and LEA priorities at that particular time. For example, implementation of adopted strategies did not promote active pupil engagement (as suggested by Black *et al* 2004) because these theories were still in their infancy whereas early work by Shirley Clarke (1998) was being heavily promoted with this particular LEA. Further discussion in the next chapter will address these issues in detail.

Methodological Issues

Reliability

As noted in the Methodological Design chapter of this thesis, there were potential hazards that could pose a threat to the reliability of this study. The Methodological

Design chapter highlights particular approaches used to overcome such threats, and every effort was made to ensure that these approaches were strictly adhered to.

However, there were some areas of the study that I found difficult to control, due to logistical issues of time and professional pressures on subjects.

- As advised by Drever (1997) subjects for semi-structured interview were sampled randomly for each teaching phase. However, due to professional commitments, I was only able to interview one member from each teaching phase. Such a small sample of subjects could increase the chances of unreliable data being retrieved. One teacher's viewpoint within a teaching phase of 3-5 teachers may not be representative of the sample. An external independent researcher interviewed a further three teachers in an attempt to address this problem. Fortunately, a full return from self-completed questionnaires allowed all teachers to express their viewpoints about formative assessment strategies and teacher effectiveness, and therefore differences in opinions could and were highlighted in this study.

- Also highlighted in the Methodological Design chapter was the effect of the researcher's role during interview. As stated, as the interviewer/researcher I held a potentially influential role over the interviewees. This factor was intensified by the fact that I hold the position of Deputy Headteacher within the school. During interview I ensured that all responses were anonymous and I was neutral and non-committal (Powney and Watts, 1987; Denscombe, 1998) and any data gathered would not be used outside the study. However, I still felt that during the interview, interviewees were highly aware of my position in the school and I felt that they

were rather inhibited with their responses; I feel the fact that the interview was recorded exacerbated this effect. The use of an external independent researcher was also used in future interviews in an attempt to overcome this influence and analysis of transcriptions from the independent researcher illustrates that these particular participants were more candid in their responses.

The acknowledgement of such potential effects upon the reliability of this study emphasises the importance of a loose form of triangulation. In this study, a multi-method approach was used (Bell, 1999; Bogdan and Bilken, 1998; Cohen and Manion, 1998; Robson, 1997). This enabled data collected by one method to be tested out and possibly substantiated by a different method of data collection. For example, data about the strategy of sharing outcomes could be observed during lesson observations, analyses in children's writing samples and views about the strategy could be collected through self-completed questionnaires and semi-structured interview. This approach may go some way to increase the reliability of the data if the same or similar outcomes are retrieved from different methods of data collection. It also illuminates the extent of reliability by showing differences or discrepancies; either way, it gives a richer picture of the data.

Generalizability

The findings and conclusions in this study are context specific. A description of the context of the school in earlier chapters may allow the reader to put conclusions into relevant context. The case study is an inner city urban school in the North East of England with 30% of children from a particular ethnic group for whom English is a second language. 70% of children are on the Special

Educational Needs register for learning or social and emotional difficulties. It would be ambitious of me to say that the conclusions drawn here will be applicable to all primary schools. It is hoped that from this qualitative research information gleaned about sharing learning intentions, planning, marking and feedback and target setting may be used for comparison in other situations and can be used to form opinions about other teaching and learning environments.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

This multi-method case study approach used self-completed questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, with both the researcher and an external independent researcher, documentary analysis and observation of teaching to explore teachers' values, beliefs and practice about particular techniques of formative assessment in teaching writing. Pupil response templates were also used with pupil focus groups to investigate what pupils thought about WALT and particular marking strategies. From results, data analysis and discussions in previous chapters the following conclusions may be drawn:

- Teachers in the sample believe that specific formative assessment strategies such as short term planning for Literacy, sharing learning intentions and modelling success criteria have contributed positively to teaching; this might be seen as contributing to teacher pedagogical craft knowledge in the school.
- Particular formative assessment techniques in the NLS such as differentiation, the plenary, marking and feedback, evaluation of planning and target setting and feed forward have contributed to richer, more accurate teacher knowledge of pupils amongst teachers in the school; this could potentially increase teachers' pedagogical craft knowledge, because planning and exposition of lessons are aligned more closely to the needs of the child.

- Some teachers thought that some strategies of formative assessment had potentially negative motivational effects upon children. Results from pupil response templates also suggest this. As noted earlier, focusing a lesson upon a shared objective and targets could advertise failure against given performance criteria rather than previous learning. Bearing this in mind, teachers need to be aware that shared learning intentions should build actively upon pupils' perceptions about their previous learning, as in the constructivist view of learning, rather than on pre planned learning intentions that are not linked to what learning has gone on before or what is happening in future learning.

- Differences in results between teaching phases could indicate that formative assessment strategies are influenced by specific socio-political, cultural and ideological factors that may influence both teachers and learners in the classroom. Academic abilities and the age and maturity of the child may also have an effect upon how formative assessment strategies are implemented within the primary classroom and their influence upon the critically accepted positivist view of teacher effectiveness and motivational benefits to the children.

- In this thesis, techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment are heavily based upon a particular interpretation formative assessment promoted by Clarke (1998) and Sutton (1997, 2000). Critical evaluation of these approaches, throughout this thesis, have illuminated that they lead to a teacher-led, formulaic, over-regimented approach that may transmit behaviourist views of learning. In contrast, Black *et al* (2004), AAIA (2003) and the ARG (2002) advocate much more active involvement of pupils in various formative processes that go beyond

techniques and approaches adopted in this study. It must be noted, however, that at the time of implementation of Clarke's strategies, adopted in the name of formative assessment, (academic year 2001-2002) there were barriers to adopting Black *et al's* (2004) vision of active pupil self-assessment. Although this study did not explore possibilities for more pupil involvement in formative assessment, it seems that school improvement planning are barriers to this. Further study could address pupil involvement directly.

✓ Assessment processes in the case study primary school before INSET were based upon rudimentary summative assessment techniques and all staff had limited knowledge of new ways of thinking about assessment. INSET delivered therefore had a very basic starting point. New techniques were decided upon by all staff and worked with, before extension to new techniques were introduced. In addition, many schools at that time were heavily influenced by particular interpretations of formative assessment, especially the model promoted by Shirley Clarke. During that academic year the leadership team of the school decided that training for active pupil self-assessment would be too big a shift for staff to take on board. This study has led to extension of formative assessment techniques into active pupil self-assessment in planned for the academic year (2004-2005) and is highlighted as Priority 1 in The School Improvement Plan.

✓ The needs of pupils in the case study primary school are very particular and often challenging. 70% of children are on the SEN register with either global or specific learning difficulties and 30% of pupils have English as a second language. Many children start school with poor language acquisition below the

baseline for the average child. This meant that priorities for the school at that time centred on promoting and developing speaking and listening skills (School Improvement Planning 2003-2004). The leadership team felt that once strategies to promote language skills in pupils had been addressed, then the school could move forward and extend adopted formative assessment techniques into pupil self assessment. This was also highlighted during an OFSTED inspection during March 2004 and forms a key issue in the OFSTED Action Plan for the school. This thesis offers pointers for the school in taking this forward.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE, POLICY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis suggests a number of implications for primary schools wishing to improve formative assessment and these are presented here, together with recommendations for different audiences.

For the Practitioner:

- Uses of particular and specific formative assessment techniques are valuable in the primary classroom and may have some beneficial effects upon particular elements of both teaching and learning. However, such formative assessment strategies cannot be globally applied and have to be adapted to the academic ability and age of the children in question. It is recommended that practitioners need to take into account specific formative assessment strategies that are relevant, especially for younger children.
- It is also important that teachers have ownership of change within the school. Evidence in this study has indicated that teachers' images and beliefs could have a profound effect on how well formative assessment strategies are delivered within the classroom. Subject leaders should, to make change effective, ensure that all staff are aware of the value of formative assessment for both themselves and their pupils.
- Coupled with this, effective in-service training that tries to model formative assessment in a constructivist way may ensure that teachers have good subject knowledge of formative assessment strategies and insights into how to implement

them with children rather than in a didactic way. Training for teachers needs to focus on ‘assessment for learning’. Teachers need to understand its purpose and practical strategies they can use to promote active pupil self-assessment in the classroom so that pupils are fully engaged in their own learning.

- There is a potential danger of advertising the failure of an individual child’s learning to the rest of the class. Teachers need to ensure that learning intentions shared with children are based on prior learning, where new learning is achievable. Curriculum pressure where teachers are under to cover NLS objectives could complicate this approach. Teachers should be aware that there needs to be a balance of NLS objective coverage in planning, but also flexibility in planning, so that future learning intentions are informed by children’s prior learning, rather than dictated by NLS coverage.

For Pupils:

This study suggests that teacher-led imposed assessment strategies based upon behaviourist learning theories may not promote active pupil engagement in learning. For pupils to be fully involved in ‘assessment for learning’, more overtly constructivist approaches need to allow the learner to know their level of understanding and about the methods they could use to improve and progress their own learning.

For Future Research:

- This research centred on one inner city primary school in a North East LEA. Future research could broaden this study into a wider number of schools of

varying size and incorporating a variety of demographic populations. It would be interesting to see if similar results emerged.

- This study also concentrated on formative assessment strategies in writing. Again, future studies could investigate whether similar effects are found in other curriculum areas.

- Future research could also investigate potential positive and negative effects that specific formative assessment strategies have upon pupil autonomy and motivation. For example, formative assessment that is over-regulated or which focuses too instrumentally on the achievement of summative targets, might lead to procedural autonomy or introjected motivation. Outcomes from such investigations could be of value to both policy makers and practitioners.

For Policy Makers:

Following this advice to practitioners, policy makers within QCA, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, and central government's Department for Education and Skills need to be aware of the following issues:

QCA and HMI need to be aware of:

- The value that teachers in this study placed on techniques adopted in the name of formative assessment, despite its limitations.

- The need for flexibility for the implementation of formative assessment strategies taking into account academic needs and abilities of the child.
- The limitations of formative assessment strategies used in this study. Adopted strategies, in this study, did not encourage active pupil involvement within pupil self-assessment, which may have affected pupil motivation and autonomy. Policy makers need to encourage the implementation of active pupil involvement in self-assessment to ensure schools engage children in their own learning.
- Methods of staff In-Service Training of formative assessment strategies to ensure all staff have good subject knowledge of ‘assessment for learning’ within formative assessment and pupil self-assessment and have ownership of change.
- Explicit information about flexible planning, so that short-term planning can be adapted according to a child’s prior learning acquisition.
- The role of pupil active engagement in ‘assessment for learning’. Pupils need to be fully involved in their own learning, rather than reacting to learning that is imposed formulaic and teacher-led.

Department for Education and Skills needs to be aware of:

- Pressure schools and individual teachers are placed upon to attain targets in statutory testing, which could result in formative assessment becoming little more than teachers finding more sophisticated ways to teach to tests, possibly resulting in negative motivational effects upon both teachers and their pupils. This suggests that particular formative assessment approaches in the context of testing and other factors highlighted in this study, become little more than summative techniques because pupils are not actively involved. Keeping a strong emphasis on formative assessment for learning may alleviate this unnecessary pressure and place more

emphasis on learning progression (Black *et al*, 2004; AAIA, 2003;ARG, 2002) with motivational benefits to learners.

- The danger that formative assessment strategies will be used simply to promote achievement of target levels. The political context described by Schools Minister Stephen Twigg stressed that tests, targets and tables would not be abandoned in the future (DfES, May, 2003). Bearing this in mind, it may be difficult for schools to adhere to the good advice offered by The Assessment Reform Group:

“Assessment for learning [can improve pupils’ attainment] by focussing on helping pupils to learn better- without teaching to the test and without increasing test taking or practice...if schools focus on promoting formative assessment practice and use summative assessment only when it is really necessary” (ARG, 2002 p.10)

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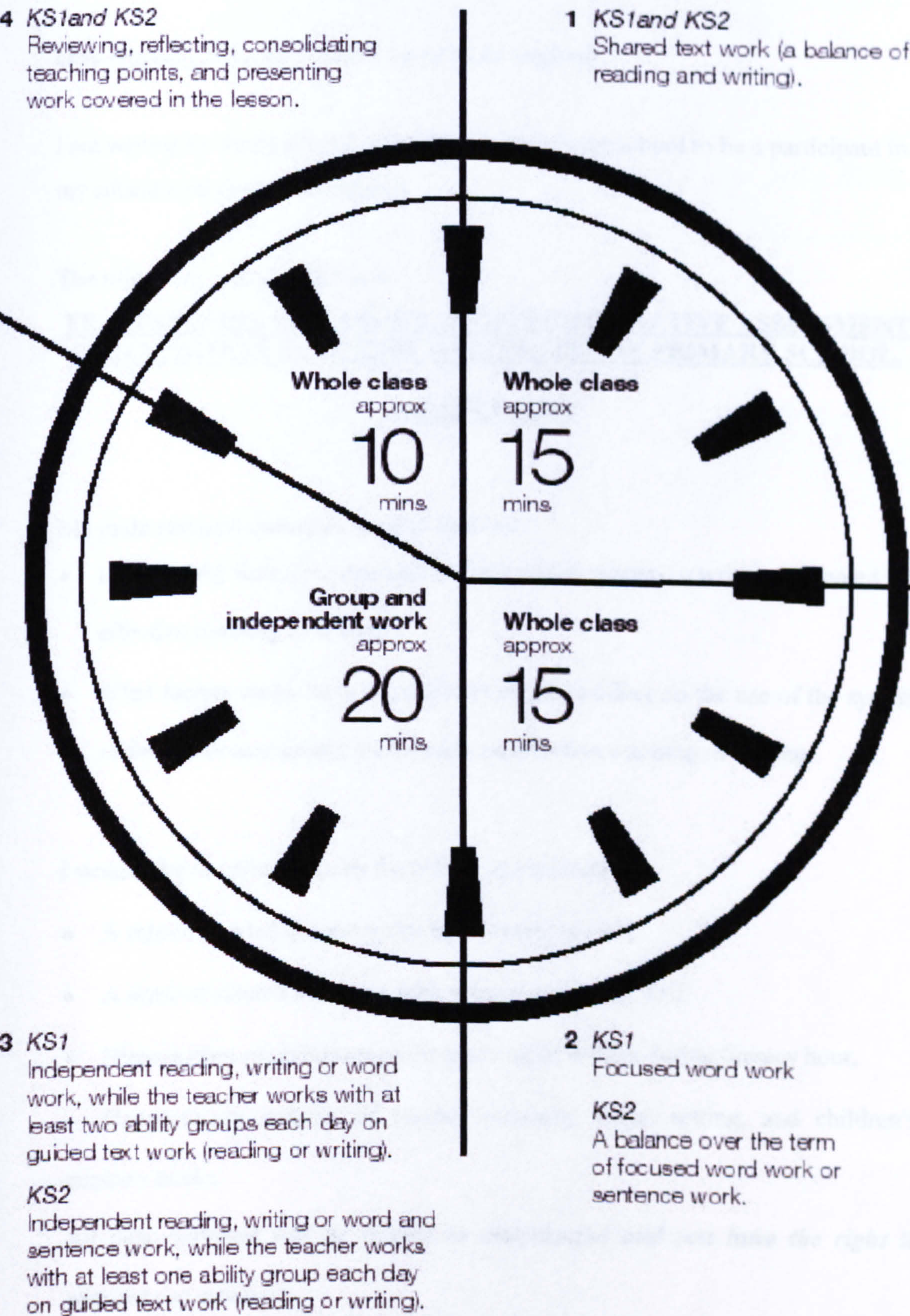
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APPENDIX A:

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LITERACY HOUR (DfEE, 1998a, OHT 1.2)

Structure of the Literacy Hour



APPENDIX B:
PERMISSION LETTERS TO HEADTEACHER/CHAIR OF
GOVERNORS AND TEACHERS

COPIES TO: Chair of Governors, Headteacher, Teachers

Dear teacher (individual names supplied in original),

I am writing to obtain formal permission for you/your school to be a participant in my educational doctorate research.

The title of my research thesis is:

TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT ADOPTED FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES IN TEACHING WRITING IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

A CASE STUDY

My main research questions hope to find out:

- How has the formative assessment for learning system in writing promoted the effective teaching of writing?
- What factors could have a positive or negative effect on the use of the system of formative assessment for learning on effective teaching of writing.

I would like to collect data by the following methods:

- A self-completed questionnaire by all teaching staff.
- A semi-structured interview with some members of staff.
- Direct lesson observations of the teaching of writing during literacy hour.
- Documentary analysis of teacher planning, target setting, and children's exercise books.

All data collected will be treated as confidential and you have the right to withdraw at any time.

Please complete the slip below.

Thank you for your help. Louise Guthrie.

I am a willing participant in your research investigation. I understand that all information will be confidential and I have the right to withdraw at any time.

Signed: _____ Date: July 2002.

APPENDIX C: Self-Completed Questionnaire

TEACHER RESPONSES (RAW SCORES)

Early Years N = 3

KS1 = 4

KS2 = 6

How valuable are the strategies?	How often do you use the strategies?
A= very valuable	1= most lessons
B= valuable	2= most days
C= of little value	3= weekly
	4= termly
D= of no value	5= very rarely

Sharing the Learning Intention:	A	B	C	D	1	2	3	4	5
How valuable is sharing the learning intention?	10	6	0	0	12	3	0	0	0
Including the learning intention on pupils' work.	6	5	2	1	9	1	3	0	0
Sharing the learning intention gives purpose to the task.	8	7	0	0	12	0	2	0	0
Sharing the learning intention helps you to focus teaching to a specific learning outcome.	11	3	2	0					
Sharing the learning intention is supposed to motivate children to learn.	7	7	1	1					

Target Setting	A	B	C	D	1	2	3	4	5
Target Setting informs future planning.	8	7	0	0	3	5	5	1	0
Target setting helps you define specific learning intentions.	7	7	0	0	4	5	5	1	0
Targets are informed by lesson evaluations, marking and feedback.	8	6	0	0	5	4	5	1	0

Modelling quality and success criteria	A	B	C	D	1	2	3	4	5
How valuable is choosing and showing pupils examples of pupils work for learning purposes?	8	4	3	1	2	6	4	2	1
Getting a pupil to show you how s/he has gone about something so you can diagnose error.	7	5	2	1	3	4	6	1	1
Getting a pupil to demonstrate to the class how s/he did something.	9	6	1	0	3	8	4	0	0
Getting pupil to suggest ways something can be improved.	7	7	2	3	8	3	0	0	0
Providing formats and structures for writing.	7	8	0	1	3	8	3	0	0
Showing pupils a range of other pupils' work to make a judgement about their own progress.	1	10	4	1	1	2	2	3	7
Showing pupils a range of other pupils' work to model success criteria.	2	11	2	1	1	3	3	2	5

Planning	A	B	C	D	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluation of plans, using the traffic light system helps you plan future learning.	13	3	0	0	9	1	5	0	0
Evaluation of significant observations enables you to plan specifically for individuals or groups of children.	14	2	0	0	5	5	5	0	0
Planning specific, clear learning outcomes helps the clarity of your teaching.	15	1	0	0	10	3	2	0	0
You are able to plan time in sessions to follow up assessment feedback.	6	9	0	0	3	6	4	0	3
Plans are flexible for review time for you to act on your assessment results.	2	10	0	1	1	5	5	1	2
Your plans have differentiated group activities because of formative assessment approaches.	7	8	0	6	5	3	0	0	0
You plan specific guided writing activities for explicit formative assessment sessions.	8	4	0	0	2	3	6	0	0

Marking and Feedback	A	B	C	D		1	2	3	4	5
How valuable is using probing questions to diagnose the extent of pupils' learning.	8	4	2	0		9	5	0	0	0
Analysing completed work to work out why a pupil has or has not achieved.	8	4	3	1		5	6	2	0	2
Giving rewards only when achievement is satisfactory for that pupil (with specific comments referring to pupil success)	8	3	1	0		11	3	0	0	0
Giving verbal praise when achievement is satisfactory.	14	2	0	0		12	2	0	0	0
Making a conscious decision to avoid saying the pupil is wrong.	12	4	0	0		9	3	0	0	0
Telling a pupil what they have achieved with specific reference to their learning intention.	9	5	0	0		9	5	0	0	0
Describing why an answer is correct.	9	3	2	0		7	6	0	0	0
Specifying a different/better way of doing something.	7	9	0	0		5	7	1	0	0
Writing an evaluative 'closing the gap' note on work for the pupil.	4	8	4	0		4	3	5	0	0
Marking has an impact on future planning and teaching.	8	5	2	0		12	1	2	0	0
Marking against a learning intention is more manageable.	10	2	2	0		13	1	2	0	0
Traffic light system informs you of children's learning.	15	1	0	0		12		1	0	0

Assessment and Teaching	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The purpose of assessment is to inform future learning.	13	3	0	0
A better subject knowledge of writing would help me to become more effective in assessing children's learning needs for writing.	6	8	1	0
Assessment of children's writing helps me to be use a variety of different teaching styles effectively.	6	9	1	0
Using focused and shared learning intentions has encouraged me to use a wider range of accurate questions to assess children's knowledge.	6	9	1	0
Assessment for learning has given me accurate knowledge of pupil learning.	6	8	1	0
Literacy plans enable me to deliver subject content effectively.	4	7	2	0
I often revise plans due to informed marking and feedback.	1	14	1	0
Assessment for learning provides more valuable information for teaching than statutory testing.	8	7	0	0

APPENDIX D: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
EAST END VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Interview for Teaching Staff.

AIM:

To find out teachers' opinions of how they think formative assessment strategies have affected the quality of teaching writing.

Information for participants:

- All responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- All information will be used only for the purpose of this research.
- The interview is strictly anonymous. I won't reveal anyone's identity.
- All interviews will be recorded, but transcriptions will be strictly anonymous.
- I would like you to talk freely and honestly about each question.
- You will receive a copy of the interview transcription, when it is completed.

Thank you for your time, patience, and honesty.

Louise Guthrie.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

For this set of questions, I would like to find out what you think about sharing learning intentions with children.

- How do you share learning intentions with children?
- How are learning intentions shared verbally? (prompt)
- How are learning intentions shared on work/in writing? (probe)
- What effect does sharing learning intentions have upon you teaching writing?
- Has it changed the way you teach writing? (prompt)
- In what ways does sharing the learning intention affect your teaching directly? (probe)
- Why has it changed the way you teach writing? (probe)

For this set of questions, I would like to find out what you think about target setting in writing.

- How do you set targets for writing?
- What information do you use to set targets in writing? (probe)
- What effect does target setting have upon teaching of writing?
- How has it changed the way you plan and teach writing? (prompt)
- How do you use target setting to plan teaching for writing? (probe)
- How does target setting help you in delivering learning intentions during the teaching of writing? (probe)
- What is good/bad about target setting? (probe)

For this set of questions, I would like to find out what you think about sharing success criteria with children for writing.

- How do you model success criteria to children?
- *Model examples*
- *Checklists*
- *Pupil demonstration*
- *Writing frames*
- *Discussing progress with children*
- *Intentional errors. (prompts)*
- What effect does modelling success criteria have upon the teaching of writing?
- *What is good/bad about modelling success criteria? (probe)*

For this set of questions, I would like to find out what you think about Literacy planning for writing.

- What are the most important components of planning for writing?
- *Why do you think these components are most useful? (probe)*

• <i>What part of your Literacy planning has had the most direct effect upon the teaching of writing? (prompt)</i>
• <i>Why is it most effective? (probe)</i>
• <i>Which elements of planning may have had a negative effect on teaching writing? (prompt)</i>
• <i>Why has it had a negative effect? (probe)</i>
For this set of questions, I would like to find out what you think about marking of writing.
• Which methods do you use to provide marking and feedback to children to improve their writing?
• <i>Traffic light system</i>
• <i>Using a general comment linked to learning intention.</i>
• <i>Reminder prompt.</i>
• <i>Scaffolding prompt.</i>
• <i>Example prompt (prompts)</i>
• <i>Which type of marking comments do you find most useful to develop learning? (prompt)</i>
• <i>Why do you find these comments most useful? (probe)</i>
• Which marking and feedback methods have had the most direct affect upon your teaching of writing?
• <i>Why are these methods useful for your subsequent teaching of writing? (probe)</i>
• <i>How have you learned to use these methods?</i>
For the last question, I would like to find out what you think about assessment for learning in writing.
• What do you feel is the purpose of assessment for learning?
• <i>Why do you think FA has had a positive or negative effect upon your teaching? (probe)</i>

Reception

Elaine –these questions are all really about formative assessment and learning outcomes so if you think about the session that I've just watched, if you think what you were thinking of in terms of making explicit what you wanted them to learn, because the first bit here is about learning intention and if we can talk about how you intend to share with them

Teacher – that tends to .. there was activities that are going on, we tend not to use The Walt with them, it's more just this is what we're going to be doing kind of thing. During group time that's when we have, that's when we take two teachers and a nursery nurse and a smaller group of children out and do our full teaching then, and what you saw there was like a consolidation of what they'd been doing, reinforcing their words.

Elaine – because I know The Walt itself I know is specific but in terms of a group or thinking about how you were mentioning everybody knew how to play bingo, wanting them to read the words as well as match them, so you are pulling those things out into that particular consolidation session there and if you think about the kinds of things that you are giving The children – prompts, spelling, phonics and the blends - would you say that the focus of the activity was specifically the recognition or the

Teacher – I think that's more appropriate. I know my group, literacy group, a lot better than I know the other children. But for my group I was trying to get them to recognise the word, even if they don't ... just like the shape and formation of it, because there's some of them way back but I'm trying to give them that experience of word recognition as well. So for some of them, the fact that they could recognise a or I, I knew what their, the likes of Caitlin, she only knows particular words to read for her, she can visualise and match but she isn't able to read them yet. So for her, I'm hoping that she could read those words maybe look at some of the phonic sounds within a longer word whereas the likes of Bradley, who's also from my group, his sight vocabulary is a lot stronger and I need to reinforce that he knew the words. That group, there is a lot of variation in ability

Elaine – some of them are quite confident. So, in terms of using Walt just more generally, do you think that it's having much of an effect on how you've interacted with the children, talking about learning outcomes with them, different strategies that you use?

Teacher Yes– in my group the kids go mad if they haven't had Walt because they like to know what we're going to be learning about. Put the letter on and it's good to refocus them, they've got such a short attention span, if we were learning 'y' and written it on the board 'y', we can keep pointing back to that 'y' 'y', what are we learning about, what sound was it. What does yoghurt start with?, and if they forget you've got that there to reference to. I think it's the younger ones, I use one thing at a time and keep rubbing that off and writing the next out, so that there's only one thing on there as opposed to when I was in year 2, we had the word level, text level on for the morning, and we would just go through them, whereas with that group... But they love to have that, it brings them back together at the end, what have we been learning about, have we been learning about that, and they can see yes, they've done it.

Elaine – now there's a whole load of stuff about target setting, but we'll come back to that. what's quite interesting to me in particular in relation to what you've just been doing is modelling and success criteria, so in terms of modelling your expectations to the children at a

different level and later with the different ability groups. So, how clear in your own mind, how explicit are you about what your success criteria are?

Teacher – On the planning I think we put down on it that we were going to play bingo with them, focusing upon different word sets, but in my mind I knew that they should now be able to look at the words and construct a sentence, which is why at the end I decided to pull it out. because that gave them pure pleasure, there was only really Clayton who struggled with one of the words, the rest of them, they could read them, they knew how to play the game, it was just a nice activity, reinforcing what they knew, so for them I wanted to pull out an extension by putting in ‘can you make a sentence with the words that are there?’ and they were quite, they made a bit of a mix-up on the word, in the wrong order, which then we were able to work on the order.

Elaine – so in your mind you’ve got various methods of extension that you want to use. And the levels of detail that you put into planning is that becoming much more than it used to be? At the planning stage, do you literally have to sit there and think right, ok, for the basic level I’m going to write down that this is what the expectation is...

Teacher – the objective I think was to begin to recognise some familiarity and I think that that is begin to recognise familiar words and begin to make short sentences with them. Off the top of my head I can’t remember. Early learning goals ... bring that through, but sometimes I find them quite bored you know, to begin to recognise some familiar words ...

Elaine – I recognise the shape of ‘i’ but now I know it’s an ‘i’. Now one of the other things I did notice that you did do in the group is that you use a lot of peer support in terms of getting other children to suggest or help fill in. Is that something that you do a lot of?

Teacher – yes. I think it’s when you’re not conscience of what you’re doing but thinking about it I do like the children to work in pairs and discuss things and if they can’t I do think rather than me tell them, I’d rather another child gave them hints or told them what they thought, as opposed to be always being the teacher

Elaine – it’s quite difficult isn’t it in something like Bingo where they are right or wrong . Again for different children you were doing a different kind of intervention in terms of difficulty and the prompts you were using: phonemes and blends, again is that a picture that you’re consciously aware of, or is that simply that you’re reacting, to where that child is and that’s what they need at this point

Teacher – in my bottom group I was definitely more aware of doing the first sound and the second sound, nobody even tried to slide them together so we could hear it, and the likes of Chloe, when she had ‘at’, she couldn’t – she could say the sound and I’d expect her to know those two phones but to actually put them together I wasn’t sure she could actually have achieved that. I feel more comfortable with my group because I’ve done a lot more literacy work with them. With Shannay it was the look, although that we’d broken it into sets, that’s the set three word which to her is just barely new, she’s had a little bit, I would expect her to be able to listen to the different sounds and then try and put them together, which I think she achieved.

Elaine – yes she did, we didn’t really do anything on marking feedback. The kind of verbal feedback, you gave them a lot of praise lot of structured praise and I also noticed that while

everyone had turns, you tended to mix it up a bit - how do you manage that in terms of making sure everyone gets a turn, but also that they don't feel that their turn is looming

Teacher - You try in your own mind to make sure that every child has had a go at reading a word and I think with 'me' and 'my' ... going back and making a focus on that and because it came up ... I think she got 'my' and put it on 'me'. I think the intention was that as soon as that word came up I wanted her to look at that again so I knew that was her there, could she read it, and did she realise that that was different to the word 'my'. You know that kind of thing. As you go through, then Clayton when he was struggling with 'the', in my mind I knew like when it came to that, that that would be his question

Elaine - so you have quite a specific objective for the individual children in the group that comes from how the session plays out?

Teacher - as it goes through, yeh. I mean it wasn't pre-determined in my mind, but I think if they make a mistake which they do, and giving them an opportunity to Don't know what I'm trying to say, you know what I mean, the 'me' and the 'my', I want her to look again and realise what she knows and can do.

Elaine - You want her to have success within the session?

Teacher - yes

Elaine - I mean what was interesting to me was that some of the praise was specifically about remembering and recognising and some of it was about reading and spelling and I thought that was interesting, I mean obviously I'll have to cross check this with the observation notes but it's quite interesting, in terms of what your expectations and your hopes for the sessions. You were hoping they would remember, recognise, read, spell - some would do all of it, some only bits. You could be quite explicit in your own mind about all these aspects and combinations or...

Teacher - I don't think that you're aware of that as you do it really... As you pick upon the children, they've been in half a year now, that has got quite a good feeling, the majority of them, some of them I'm not so sure about because I don't teach them within the group and it's once a week, different areas that we work in, so I might see that child for literacy, every three weeks, quite a hard

Elaine - do you find that that actually has an impact on how far you're able to focus on each individual child?

Teacher - in some ways yes, but we do sit down and discuss various children and what they're able to do, we've got like a foundation stage profile, broken down and we tend to do a highlight that to see where each child's at, because I was really struggling to know where Liam was at, I could go and look at the profile and see where I was at within that

Elaine - Do you find the Foundation Stage Profile helpful?

Teacher - yes it's one two and three and they build up progressively to early learning goal which is where they need to be at the end of the session. The kids that I have in my group are hovering between sets one two and three, some of them are moving onto three, yet the one's

in Leanne's group quite a few of them are choosing early learning goals and ... they're in that band, Sue's a kind of between that again. You can see where they are and where they need to be moving onto. I just, I started September with Reception, I've never done that age group before, so that was quite helpful to see where they'd come from and how they need to move on to achieve that goal, to move into Key Stage 1.

Elaine – What aspects of your planning are most useful to you as a teacher?

Teacher – Pick out the objectives, taken from the early learning goals, which we quite often try to differentiate, it's not always necessary to, but within – we've got the colour coding for that that we're quite familiar with using now, which does, when you're looking at it, it's that band, that's what I'm aiming for. We also try to put on activities, writing, that's the activity and then in colour coding, if we're going to ... I think we tend to aim for the middle and then we put in like a colour coded pink section for the more able and if necessary the blue for support, that kind of extra help.

Elaine – it's really very little extra then

Teacher – and I think it's also good for, for example, if I was released for some time and we have a supply in, it's very visual and you can see straightaway who's where and what.

Elaine – and how do you decide on which learning outcome, for each week?

Teacher – with another group, we tend to try and stick to something that we can see, we've had a bit of conflict but it took us a while to work out how we wanted to work it and what was best for us, I think we've cracked that pretty well at the minute, we also feel quite comfortable with it. Basically we decided on the objectives, we've got for example, to begin to recognise the words on the activity. We pick out the objective and then differentiate that for each level of the group. So we try to pick out objectives that can go right across the group and follow those through and we tend to focus on the phonics and then a word and then a sentence. It leads them in to the literacy hour. That's our group. The literacy area which we decide on once every three weeks, we tend to pick off some of the objectives to a like support group activity, and then anything related to our themes, so when we were doing weddings, we got the kids doing some literacy activities, writing about the wedding, labelling things, it was all do with a theme, so it just depends on whether if there is something in group time that we really want. I was thinking this time it's a story, so been trying to get them having a go, to do their own writing.

Elaine – in terms of formative assessment strategies, do you find that they come in at the planning stages as well or do you focus on that later?

Teacher – when we evaluate at the end of the week, we look at what's happened, that kind of informs us what we're doing next. I suppose it's a key issue like for example if a child is too... like last week, doing cutting with scissors with Sean which for him it was a case of watch my fingers, watch, so he achieved that, that went on the planning, which was then used when we come to the overview issues, he could do that.

Elaine – given that planning is quite detailed, do you find that it is flexible enough so that when somebody achieves something within the session that's unexpected – do you feel you can record that?

Teacher – sometimes there is a ... Leanne's group, we've got three high fliers that are doing well in their reading and Afton especially, she is very able, sometimes on the plan we jot down for Afton it will be, this is the activity she is going to do, with the intention of the outcome we want for her.

Elaine – now ... target setting. This is really related to your planning isn't it? What about how you use formative assessment information to set targets? So you've got something that you know the children have achieved in a session. How much does that information feed through into the next one?

Teacher – we don't really do weekly target with them, it's more a term target that we set once a term obviously, to evaluate it and then we set our new one. Now within reception I think we decided that the objectives that we had to target in the autumn term weren't necessarily needing to be followed through as targets set down for this term, we chose different things for them to be achieving, as opposed to taking them on. Because we were aware of where they were at, subconsciously maybe, you know where they're at and you know where you want them to go, the next target we put down is something different again.

Teacher – so we wanted then to achieve to their target, you're aware of it and build onto it, I forgot what the question was again

Elaine – no it is about using the assessment information that you've got, now in terms of using target setting to plan your teaching, Are you very aware of target setting while you're teaching and while you're planning or is it something that you just return to, cyclically, with the terms?

Teacher – what we do is we tend to look at where the kids are. And then we look at the next stepping stone or the next bit of an early learning goal, that one, see where we think would fall by the end of it, and plan within the term, you know the objectives that we want to cover to make sure that that's the truth, we revisit them at the end of the term, so that spring term target will be ready for evaluating and we traffic light them, using that colour coding to see 'has the child achieved really well' in terms of putting in an extension, have they not achieved it at all, why they didn't? Orange coloured coding is they're almost there but not quite

Teacher – I think having the targets related directly to the foundation stage, that kind of support

Elaine – yes it all seems to be quite knitting together. So I mean overall, winding up now, in general terms I mean, how do you in your mind differentiate formative assessment to other kinds of assessment that you do

Teacher – I'm not really sure

Elaine – there are many kinds of assessment, but what is it that's formative about it really? In what ways does it differ from marking, tests or something like that?

Teacher – I think sharing the Walt, I think that gives you a basis for a child making errors to bring them back. I mean for the little ones it's... I think I'm trying to get my head around it

all because you can't highlight, they don't understand what that means, I sometimes I have sat and done that with them so that they get used to it, but it's like, how do you give them progress and their marking because they don't get their work marked, they don't Well done and that kind of thing. So that gives you a focus to bring them back and say 'Yes you achieved that well and done that' or 'Maybe we're not so good at that, we'll have to come back to that again and we'll leave it at that and see if you can get that' giving them that kind of response. I mean they can't read what's on there, if we put to read the words.... If we pick five words in set three, at the end of the lesson I might turn them round and say 'well you can definitely read that word and you can definitely read that' or 'We're not sure about these three and we'll come back tomorrow and we'll just look at those three'. It's given them the kind of 'yes I've achieved', they know what they've achieved and then they know where they need to be going next but if they haven't achieved they know that that's alright.

Year 3 Interview

Elaine – first of all can I just check your view of how many of the children in that group were E2L originally

Teacher – 10 in the class, 4 in that group

Elaine – they all actually seem to be really quite confident and working very well at the same level as their peers

Teacher – They're not quite the top group, but they're getting more confident, so we try to draw information from them and use what they've learnt over the past two weeks ... that's the difficult thing, putting pencil to paper, which is where the whiteboards come in because they're not as afraid to write on the whiteboards because they can just make mistakes

Elaine – that was one thing that they seemed to be very clear about but they were very happy with that, weren't they, they were showing me their work in progress very happily. So within the projects you had the visit

Teacher – the visit was in history lesson – Anglo Saxons, and then we brought it into literacy. They're looking at instructional texts and trying really to reflect on the experiences they've had so they can write about something they've really done and I think they've run away with the idea. I think it's given them an illustration that in a few short lines that they can actually get an awful lot into that

Elaine – but it's quite un-stressful, the way they did it

Teacher – we use a lot of frameworks, writing frameworks

Elaine – so in terms of when you were planning this particular project, were you conscious of right they're going to have three possibly four opportunities to think and write and draft and re-draft – was that a deliberate strategy for you

Teacher – it is planning a fortnightly block and obviously we'd start with the shared writing, scrub that, shared reading, looking at different kinds of text, and then coming in to writing. So really to do that last session, to look at dragging things out of them to get them to do, so we're quite conscious of it and it's broken into shared reading, shared writing and then their planning

Elaine – so the bullet points, does that mean they'll do relatively speaking, quite a lot of this? Because they seem actually to be very comfortable with that, although I was wondering the fact that you were modelling it well, have you found that particularly helpful?

Teacher – I think it's actually what you want from them, because they aren't you know trying to write sentences. I want them to think what did you do, can you break that down and then try to write notes because some of them start to struggle with that area, get hooked on, how do you spell that

Elaine – there was one girl who right at the beginning was worrying about spelling

Teacher – I think because they feel the final draft has to be so perfect, to have the chance of do a couple of drafts first, work on it, they can actually get into it and then come back to that. Although they're working at the same level, they've all got problems with what they do, some can spell no bother, but they don't know capital letter and full stop, they do know but they haven't used it. You can actually tease little things out for them and

Elaine – I noticed that yes. That's what's quite interesting within the group work. That you were encouraging them to do work with their partners

Teacher – we do a lot of talking partners, listening work over the last I think eighteen months, that's been quite high profile and use this as a talking point, two heads are better than one, and also you know, they don't actually read what they've written, so I think that also helps for some people. So it seems to have a good effect there. Somebody will remember things. It works well, it works well right through the school.

Elaine – I notice one of the things in your feedback, was that it was quite differentiated amongst the group. What do you do in a situation where a child is missing a lot of the key areas – content, spelling, punctuation, but they're working enthusiastically – I mean how do you support their autonomy at one stage, to say yes I'm happy, that you're in your comfort zone, *laughter*

Teacher – I think really because we have a nice relationship, and you know how far you can go, you can think well, can you just read it again or can we just look at it this way, so you can actually move down the path you want them to go, or you might say, yeh I'm happy with that fine, read it again, and put the emphasis on the words you don't want and try to get them to come along with you and hopefully by the end they can see that the way they've written doesn't actually make sense, if.... but that's

Elaine – and I mean presumably a process like this where they're drafting an re-drafting, that helps. So within your planning for this, do you sit and think I will look at punctuation on the whiteboard, you have the various levels

Teacher – I mean we have looked at dictionary work this term so sometimes the emphasis is on the word board - we have a word board where they can actually look at new vocabulary so that stays with them constantly, but I also have some able readers who are ready to write and ready to fly. They need that extra bit. They are very good aren't they for that. We've got to cover that. You can't have everybody standing around waiting.. *laughter* So it is quite tricky to make sure you know what they know to start with and then ... I think one lad was stuck he wanted to say monastery and they know it's a church and you get Jared from over there in the other group who's not supposed to be listening, shouting monastery, thank you *laughter*

Elaine – on one level that's a lovely example, and that they are in that mode of helping each other, but in terms of target setting for writing, when you're looking at the individual level you have specific targets?

Teacher – For the topic we have overall targets and then you just react, on the ground, to what the kids need to get them there. Making it clear to them, where you have to be and where you could be.

Elaine – yes

Teacher – so I think planning is quite general, the object that you're looking at.

Elaine – how much ... do you support that in terms of your security, how much of that is paired, how much of that is written, in some form of assessment

Teacher – I actually write a lot on my plans, some people don't but we start with the main objective and tease out the bit out that we're focusing on and then when it comes to the guided section I've got more sentences that .. you know little words that are going to come up of course then we assess what we've done, so naming children, could do it, couldn't do it, needs a bit more

Elaine – so you've got quite a lot of that structure. When I was talking to your colleague in Reception, she was showing me how it's broken down for the Foundation Stage. How differently do you have that, I mean do you have it broken down somewhere, where you think, well we'll be covering that level and that level in this unit

Teacher - well you're looking at a unit, so because you've looked at the unit and you know where they should be, you know who's not there and you know who's further on, so that's ... that's general .. some of it is written down, some of it's in your head, some of it's instinct, because you see something, my goodness, there's not a capital letter .. a full stop in there, you know you've forgotten that... you're on the ball all the time, you can't let your guard down,

Elaine –we've been talking a lot about how, the ways in which you model success, I notice that do a lot of assessment feedback in that particular lesson, as well as modelling the way in which you wanted them to do the task, I wondered whether it's a key strategy for you

Teacher – I think that you tend to look for the process, writing ... assignments, but you're trying to start them where they are *when you're teaching* you're teasing out of them as much as you possibly can and then I often read what they've got, ask them: is that what you meant. We often model mistakes - you're trying to fit everything in. I think once they've had a chance to feel they've done the questions you say to them: You thought hard and long about five things, you did all that and really they're able, I hope, to link that back, ooh I've got loads more to do tomorrow

Elaine – I think they have lots of ideas as well, I think they did seem to feel they knew what it was about and I thought that was interesting

Teacher – I think they shared, really well what they knew about the monks, what they learned on the trip. Their habits are only washed once a year so if you've been out on a farm in the mud and the whatever else, you just hung your habit on a peg at the end of the day and hoped that it was dry the following day and put it back on

Elaine – it was probably much easier to be celibate *laughter*

Teacher – doesn't bear thinking about really *laughter*

Elaine – so going back to how you view your formative assessment strategies and your planning, just generally how had you felt your planning feeds in to teaching

Teacher – well you think oh, well I've only got twenty minutes to do this, and today I think I've used twenty five which meant other things drop off the end, there are so many objectives – to cover them in any depth, and why... They never actually go away, they're always buried in the back of when you need them. Planning because we plan a two week block now and you can see exactly where you're going, where you want to end up. This is where I want to be, what am I going to do to get there? So that kind of helped. Sometime I sketch things, I like to use a skeleton and I bring that back in and I often had If I've done ... and then Friday something is missing, you know, where do I catch up. Then the next week all the things that you haven't done becomes impossible, but you have to become aware that and you're aiming for a kind of stretch. It's flexible, if you get to the end of day 1 and say oh my goodness that was way over the top....

Side 2

Elaine – now in terms of marking and feedback, obviously I saw your verbal feedback. But presumably in year 2 you probably have to do some marking? How is that managed?

Teacher – we track it, the children are used to having their work back with a colour code on, so if they've got the target it will be green, then throughout the piece of work you would highlight green bits that have gone well for them, if they haven't got it, or there's more that's not right, you would colour orange and show where they'd gone wrong, you would highlight bits that are green, but they're more orange than green, being that they've got a lot more work, show at the bottom and try and put *Laughter*

Elaine – I mean do you find, I mean I've heard from some other people that things like this are not a mark as such, do you find them comparing greens or counting their oranges or ...

Teacher – Yes - and they're quite happy with that. The children who get the orange, well all the work you do is focused on giving them time. And we try to encourage them, it's not many, but a few minutes to read over teacher comments. The children who are working with the teaching substitute actually have a lot of feedback after the session, so they're guided all the time, the traffic lights for them are normal now and they actually write back some of them are just, thank you *laughter*. Or I really enjoyed doing that or it was easy for me. Well that's a two way thing... rather than just teacher comments, we've got away from the red pens going right through everything, we don't use red pens, instead we put the targets at the bottom, you've got this kind now when you look at how tall you're capital letters are or something like that, something to work towards, so ...

Elaine – so they've essentially got a sense of where they've come from and where they are going

Teacher – we also traffic light plan as well, so we think that's the main body of the plan to have an objective, or the part of the objective is such and such you would highlight that in your plan and then in your lesson. So you can actually see yes, we have or we haven't got it, and if we haven't covered it for whatever reason, colour code it in red, so it jumps out at you, so the traffic light is not only for the children but for the teachers as well *laughter*

Teacher – it does, it shines out at you. Where you've done a lot of writing in the box, you know we don't always read back over what we've written but you can see it, I haven't done that, I haven't ... I'm going to have to fit that in somewhere

Elaine – just the last thing actually. If you're thinking about formative assessment and the thing itself, compared to other kinds of assessment that you're using, can you think about what to you is distinctive about it ?

Teacher – I think we actually have a framework for that, we've got the level that you can go across and mark that piece of work, we do a lot of narrative assessment and ... just after the narrative, whereas it used to come at the end of the half term, where there might have been narrative three weeks before and then suddenly they've forgotten how to do it, but we actually have the framework that we can go across and colour code again with the red, green, and we can actually see the child's working at 2A.. *background noise* so you can actually see where they are and do the targets for the next, so it is solid and it does inform what you do the next time around, on a formal basis, the rest of the But it's the narrative that's used for the children's final level.

Elaine – brilliant, thank you very much

Year 1 interview

Elaine – Obviously I didn't see the beginning of the session, but it was quite clear for me that during the last bit of the plenary, you had to be very clear, very direct in your instructions. Did you have those written out, or did you just show them?

Teacher – just show them to the children at the beginning of the session. This is what we're going to do.

Elaine – how do you feel this focus on sharing outcomes has affected the way you teach?

Teacher – it's got more focused I think, the children know what you expect of them, what they have done by the end of the session

Elaine – so in that way it's a bit different from the way you're working before? Or is it an extension of what you are doing?

Teacher – It's just an extension - I used the phrase, you're going to learn to do this today, so it wouldn't be quite as focused really

Elaine – I have to say that when I was teaching I think I was a lot more focused, and a lot less explicit with the children about what it was they were doing and you would be doing something, and they'd just come along for the ride, it seems to me now that it's much more about making them aware of what they're doing, how that builds on what they've done before and how that's leading towards what they're going to do in the future. Do you think, because you've got your children in ability groups. Do you think that makes it more explicit, in terms of progression?

Teacher – they know what I expect, that bottom group, they expect to be ... in this case re-tell the story, maybe like word with support, the next group maybe to write a phrase and then the two top groups start writing ... they know that's what I expect of them

Elaine – noticeably that the group that's still working with support, is actually writing quite a bit

Teacher – more than I expected, which was great

Elaine – ehm, this is probably a good way to go into think about how you set targets for writing and You are planning in a slightly different way? So can you tell me a bit about how you do your planning

Teacher – do you mean from the literacy strategy?

Elaine – the things you plan fortnightly and you do the same?

Teacher – week's reading and a week's writing and then you practise all the skills, things like that on the reading week, and then you use that in the writing part, so they try to get it right independently Because that's what I've been aiming for basically, especially with the bottom two groups.

Elaine – and how frequently are you making notes of how close they're getting to your target?

Teacher – I highlight my plans every week, so that at the end of the week, or the end of the day, if something's gone, you know hasn't gone well at all, I might change my plans for the next day, maybe to recap that or do it towards the end of the week, but I highlight that I need to evaluate the plans every week so it goes onto the next fortnight, sort of thing

Elaine – so do you think that specific targets you'll set for each, each group or each child?

Teacher – each group

Elaine – and in terms of doing that on a fortnightly basis, is that more focused than what you were doing previously?

Teacher – no I mean the child has individual targets and by the end of the term your children in that group will hopefully be able to do, say, write a sentence independently, you know write a paragraph or a story opening or differentiate according to the task

Elaine – and do you think that's a good support for the way you've been planning writing or is it just an extra level of admin

Teacher – no it isn't, we share the targets with the children and it's worth doing – focusing on getting them to write a sentence independently, you know all the planning really goes into that

Elaine – now in terms of what was going on in the session, I just sat and coded it, about the way that you were modelling the particular different success criteria you had for that session, the group you were working with there were actually quite a few weren't there? The actual construction of the story from their plans, the construction was story language, as well as the punctuation issue. What I noticed is that most of the time you were modelling in terms of asking questions, 'how will you change that?', 'do you want to look at that again?' 'how could you make that more interesting?' do you think that's your particular way of modelling

Teacher – I think so. I think everyone's got their own way. I try to make them see for themselves... to realise that they need full stops ... I mean

Elaine – there were about four things that I wrote down that you said over and over again, I don't mean that in a bad way *laughter* One of the things that you kept saying was 'Tell me that in a sentence'. And as quickly as they understood what you meant by that, but some of them in the group were much better than others at taking it and making it happen Ehm, but there was a particular thing about you using 'and what have you missed out' And I did notice that the little boy who was sitting next to me, he was actually doing that, he was taking a little bit longer about it, he was working through those particular points. Is that something you've been working on?

Teacher – we do that a lot, every time we write, we write the sentence and then check it write the sentence, keep reading it through as we're writing it, so they're checking that it makes sense, or when they do their own work, they're doing that, makes sense

Elaine – so it's becoming an automatic strategy? I mean what I thought was interesting, again, that when you were allowed to micro-manage the other little boy towards the end, because obviously he's done a massive kind of pouring out of writing and really quite for well for him, he wanted you to help him, do that with micro-managing, the other children, particularly the pairs of girls immediately started to do that with one another so do you do a lot of paired work and peer assessment?

Teacher – I do a lot of paired work where they say 'oh yeah that's a good sentence. But not as in checking the work

Elaine – they were checking off in a kind of 'you've left that letter out' 'you've spelled that wrong'

Laughter

Elaine – it was all very nice and they were showing – I think it was because you'd written invitations later on and so she's done her own phonetic spelling ... with a nice shun on the end and obviously at the time she had guessed it. They were really reading one another's work. They seem to be much more engaged with it as a group task

Laughter

Elaine – do you think that process of looking at other people's work, do you think that comes from this approach that you've got about the process of thinking about the ways in which you think about writing?

Teacher – I've never asked them to check each other's work, maybe I will do that, especially with that group, I'll tell them to have a look at it but see if it makes sense... because on the whole I tell them to check their work, to read through it, after writing every sentence, to read it through, does it make sense, read the whole lot through, does it make sense, so yes

Elaine – what's interesting to me is that ehm, if I can again look back to my own teaching there was much more focusing on the vocabulary that I asked them to do for example, much more about the product than the process. I think then that you're focusing much more on process and structure, I don't know

Teacher – the structure, because if they haven't got the structure of the writing, they can't – I mean that group are ready to have lists and things like that, but I wanted them to have the beginning and the middle and the end and to have a flowing story, so that was why I You know the punctuation, what happens at the beginning, etc.

Elaine – I think again, it seems to me that there's more of a focus on that – moving away from hitting particular targets and things .. so you know all the children have a worksheet, all the children ... their story, to all the children that have thought about their writing, but you can tell me what the difference in the way they do it and maybe in the way that you work, I don't know, ... have you always worked ...

Teacher – I think I've always worked this way but maybe it's more in focus now because of the way we plan it.

Elaine – we talked a bit about planning, in terms of the sort of formative assessment, strategies that you're using have you, in terms of when you're doing your planning do you already have specific main targets for that week

Teacher – some of the questions that I've already asked them, especially in the guidance sessions when you put them on the board, because you know what your groups can do and you know that maybe you may need a re-cap and then you'll be asking the same questions over and over again, like the bottom group, repeating everything every week just so that they can consolidate them. Checking what they've learnt before you can move on...in the top group the questions change, it all depends on what children you're working with, but you always think in your head, right – at the end – this is what I want them to do sort of thing

Elaine – so in terms of marking and feedback, I mean obviously within the group you were giving immediate feedback. Are you using traffic lights?

Teacher – yes, yes. Tying the target in with it in a comment on the bottom, but that group, that's fine, they can read it if you've written things - but with my bottom group unless I say I couldn't just hand it to them I'd have to do it when the children were there, I couldn't actually say to them, I wouldn't be able to

Elaine – With your two groups in the middle you'd use the lights?

Teacher – always use traffic lights and the children know that if they've getting a grade then they've done it and they can do something else. If they get an orange then they know they need a bit more practise, they know that, but it's more verbal feedback than written

Elaine – it's more like a come and see me about it

Teacher – yes, or you will be doing it again tomorrow

Elaine – and how much of that do you find that you have to record in terms of repetitions, or how many ... or is it just something that you're just more generally aware of?

Teacher – just generally aware of, usually if my bottom two groups haven't got it, and they get an orange on the traffic lights, the traffic light system, I maybe give the other two groups something else to do which they're getting on with and stick with them two on the carpet and work around the carpet and do it that way, I can mark the highlighted green and look for them next time

Elaine – in the plenary sessions how are you assessing their level of development?

Teacher – questioning, maybe using their skills to write maybe a sentence on whiteboard and to read it out and things like that, going over what you wanted them to learn, what target they wanted to learn, and even just to read some of their work out – say yeh that's brilliant, you've done that and this is what you've included so that the other children can go back, maybe another day and say that I didn't actually include that, I'll go back and maybe put that in

Elaine – I noticed today with one of the children that you were able to say, that was lovely, but you need to do more, so that was a good example. So, in terms of planning and using

formative assessment in the classroom, what do you think there is about formative assessment that is particularly useful or not particularly useful?

Teacher – It helps you to see where they are... where they go to next, using the questions and things like that, help them to do their best, you know and.. do your best *laughter*

Elaine – Thank you, that's it, is that ok

APPENDIX E: DIRECT LESSON OBSERVATION SCHEDULE
MONITORING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING OF WRITING

CRITERIA	COMMENTS (descriptive narrative supported by examples)
MONITORING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING (Year 5 and 6 class)	
Are learning outcomes on short term planning explicit? (Give examples)	Yes: to know the differences in style and structure of fiction and non-fiction writing and To secure knowledge of ! and ? and use them for a purpose in writing.
Is short term planning clear and easy to interpret?	Learning outcomes clear in shared, independent and guided work and made explicit and easy to understand.
Is there evidence on short term planning that the 'traffic light assessment system' is in operation? Describe the types of evaluations on plans.	A working document. Learning outcomes are highlighted in green, orange or red according to the majority of children's achievement. Significant observations are noted about which children have not achieved or exceeded learning outcomes.
Is there evidence that the teacher is drawing on examples from the NLS document?	Yes, references to NLS objectives. EG: T8, S1, W10,W11, S6.
Are clear learning outcomes shared with the children at the beginning of a session using WALT (list), and then reinforced during a plenary?	Yes: a WALT proforma is used and the teacher asked children to read and explain it, therefore WALT is received orally and written form. WALT is written in child speak and any technical vocabulary is explained.
What are the ranges of teaching strategies used during the lesson?	Whole class shared work and plenary. Small group guided work. Individual and paired work during independent time.
How is the lesson paced, and structured to ensure that the learning outcome(s) is achieved?	Kept to Structure of Literacy Hour. Well-paced and learning outcome continually reinforced.
Are clear and high expectations made explicit to the children, with shared success criteria?	Discussed orally, no written examples modelled.
Are activities differentiated appropriately to meet the needs of the children?	Yes: activities clearly differentiated on plan, using a school colour coding technique. Explained how activity is finely tuned for less able children and extended for more able children.
What resources used to promote effective learning? How are they organised?	Teaching assistant assigned to work with children with particular special needs. Texts matched to children's abilities.
Does the teacher demonstrate good subject knowledge?	Yes: clear knowledge of both Literacy and Science concepts.
Does the teacher use a range of open and closed questions?	Yes: both open and closed questions used. Used open questions to clarify and extend thinking.
Is the learning intention present on children's work?	Yes: as part of the target title, and highlighted green if it is achieved.
Is there are plenary session? Does the plenary link to shared learning intentions?	Yes: Plenary relates directly back to S10 and S6 from shared writing. Children shared and explained questions and how they were written.

Reception – Tuesday am
Word Bingo with Bears
5 children – 2m 3f, SEN Group

M	T: How many bears will you need? (2 sec) one two three four [Individual children directed to four bears]
	T: Let's see how many you've got? How many do you need? [Paired counting, checking, making up to four]
S	(handing out cards) T: See if you can recognize any of the words
	M1: I've got dog
P	T: good boy!
M	Who else has got dog?
Q	M2: I have – corrected ('big')
S	Can you read any of your words F2?
M	Say the sound a-t "at"
	F1: 'at'
M	T: b – i – g 'big'
	F2: big
	M2: mam – (immediate word recognition)
P	T: good boy
	F2: cat
P	T: well done
M	T: F2 can you remember this one?
	F2: at
Q	T: good girl
	F2: look
M/S	T: how did you know it was look – it starts with 'l' doesn't it?
	F3: eer
M	T: tell me the sound
	F3: d-o-g
Q	T: 'dog'
S	I haven't go it
	T: Read it anyway
Q	T: good
S	T: that was our new one, can you remember
	M2: nn
Q	T: no, it hasn't got a nn
M	T: eventually has to give the – not phonetically found
M(P)	M1: points out me on F3's card
P	F2: big

APPENDIX B
STAFF INSET SLIDES: AUTUMN 2011

	T: clever girl you remembered
M(P)	F2: b-b-big
M	T: repeats
P	T: picks up F3's missed word and encourages her to match it
P	F3 gets next word and 'wins' – all clap and she is encouraged to shout 'Bingo'
P	M1 & M2 get next word 'mum' and win

Reception (continued)

Group 2

(Voluntary) 5F, middle ability

S/M	Children reading words to partner F1: reads successfully F2: ditto F3: ditto F4: ditto F5: to one another
S	T: Do you know what to do? - general uh-uhs
S	T: Ah, I knew you'd know that!
	F1: correctly 'and'
M	T: have a look at the sounds
	F2: d-a-d
M	T: d-ad (progressing the blend)
Q	F2: dad! – T: well done
	F1: correctly identifies but puts bear on me
M	T: corrects very gently showing end difference
	F4: matching but not naming
	T: scaffolding F5 though 'th'
	F5: no response
	F4: (prompted) names 'am'
	F2: names most words very quickly
M	F1: me comes up and T prompt memory - identifies correctly
M(P)	F2: finally gets 'at' after F2 'hat' F4 'cat'
P	Two winners Then others follow on and win. Same praise routine high 5's, claps, praise for knowing all the words

APPENDIX F:
STAFF INSET SLIDES: AUTUMN 2001

MARKING AND FEEDBACK FOR IMPROVEMENT

Feedback and feedforward

"Weighing the pig
doesn't make it fatter"
Powell 1999

Why is marking and feedback useful?

- ✓ Provides a focus for teacher on areas of learning where groups/individuals need specific help or extension.
- ✓ Provides a record of children's progress.

Good Practice: research findings

- ✓ Children need to understand comments.
- ✓ Children need to respond to comments.
- ✓ Children need time to improve work as a result of feedback.
- ✓ Marking and feedback should be related to taught L.I.s

Good Practice: research findings

- ✓ Marking should take place as soon as possible after work is completed.
- ✓ Successes as well as improvement should be highlighted.
- ✓ Marking feeds into evaluation of planning and feeds forward into next steps of learning.

Staff Responses: Questionnaire Spring 2001.

- ✓ Marking must be manageable.
- ✓ Marking must be well presented.
- ✓ Comments about improvement.
- ✓ Time for children to react to comments.
- ✓ Consolidation questions.
- ✓ Interactive: children should respond.
- ✓ Immediate written/verbal feedback.
- ✓ Positive rewards.

Practical approaches: Planning

- ✓ Current practice.
- ✓ Traffic light planning.
- ✓ Evaluations of plans.

Practical approaches: Marking and Feedback.

- ✓ Different approaches for different age ranges/abilities and tasks.
- ✓ Feedback should reflect learning intention.
- ✓ Focus on spelling in other contexts.
- ✓ Closing the gap prompts.
- ✓ Avoid grading.
- ✓ Manageability.
- ✓ Shirley Clarke.

Feedback and Marking Strategy: Shirley Clarke.

- ✓ Learning intentions need to be clear to the teacher.
- ✓ Learning intentions need to be on work.
- ✓ Highlight 3 places where learning intention has been fulfilled.
- ✓ Use an arrow in 1 place where it could be improved.
- ✓ Closing the gap prompts: reminder, scaffold, example.
- ✓ Give the children 5 minutes to improve.

Target Setting

Feed forward

Target Setting: Feed forward

"Of course targets alone will not raise standards in schools. They are the next step in improving developmental planning for learning"
(DFEE 1997)

Target Setting: Feed forward

- ✓ Termly targets for Literacy and Numeracy:
- ✓ Marking feedback and evaluations should inform target setting.
- ✓ Feeds forward into new planning.
- ✓ Tight-loose dilemma.

Target Setting: Revision

- ✓ SMART targets.
- ✓ **S**...specific eg To learn to spell 3 given words
- ✓ **M**...measurable by the end of a timescale.
- ✓ **A**... achievable yet challenging.
- ✓ **R**...realistic
- ✓ **T**...time related.

The Way Forward

Shirley Clarke (2000):

* All assessment process must be useful and have a positive impact on children's learning and teacher's teaching.

Assessment must make a difference.

Recommendations From Review

MARKING: should be 'a valuable part of the learning process that provides children with constructive feedback'

TEACHING OBJECTIVES: 'need to be explained and referred to throughout the session...so children know acceptable standards required'

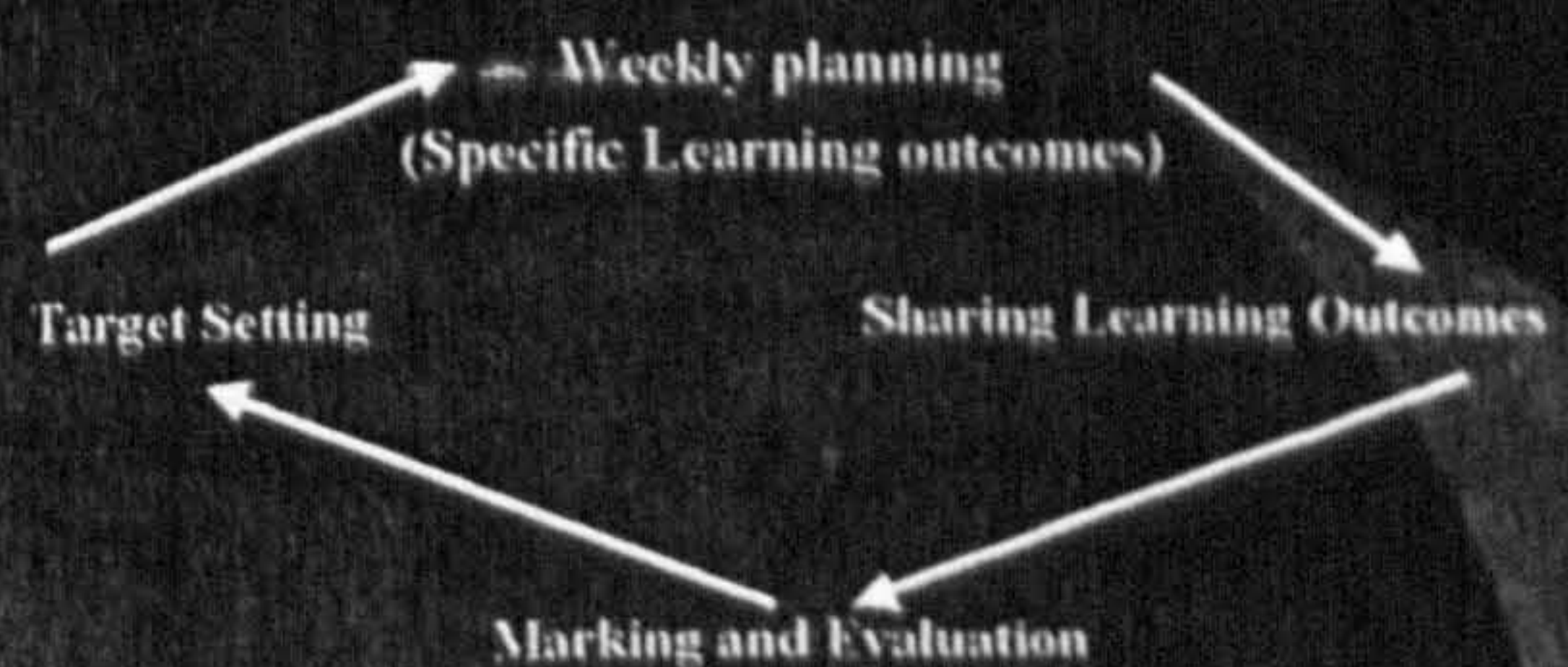
The Assessment Cycle

PLANNING: must be led by learning intentions (outcomes).

MARKING: should feed forward into planning.

ASSESSMENT: should involve children.

The Assessment Cycle



Timetable of INSET

11.09.01: sharing learning intentions and linking to marking.

25.09.01: sharing learning intentions- a whole school approach.

09.10.01: marking and evaluation strategies; Target setting.

11.12.01: staff analysis of practice.

Sharing Learning Intentions

If learning outcomes are to be tracked they need to appear on the work.

Gives activity purpose and meaning.

For Children Who Can Write:

L.O. Could be written as the title or written under the date and title.

Marking: a short general comment can reflect the learning outcome taught.

Very Young Children or Those Who Cannot Write:

A ~~marking~~ comment at the end of the work includes the L.O.

LO shared with the children.

Sharing Learning Outcomes

A Whole school approach.

Research Evidence:

- **Learning Intentions are skills attitudes and knowledge to be delivered.**
- **L.I. is made explicit to children it has the greatest impact on learning.**
- **Not sharing L.I. Makes children unsure about what teacher wants.**

The Rainbow Activity:

- ***'Today I want you to paint a picture of a rainbow (WHAT). Here is a chart of the rainbow colours that we have been looking at this week. You will be given a piece of white paper, a long flat-headed brush and some water colours. Make it the most beautiful rainbow you can.'* (HOW)**

No purpose given: unanswered questions.

- **Do I use part or all of the paper?**
- **Can I have other things in the picture?**
- **What does beautiful mean?**
- **Bright colours or faint and watery?**

Resulting in.....

- **Child will ask what to do again!**
- **Teacher will have to repeat instructions!**
- **Time-wasting tactics!**
- **Many take the safe bet and take the lead from the child next to them.**

Rainbow Activity: Sharing Learning Intentions:

- **WHAT: verbally shared instructions**
- **HOW: verbally shared instructions**
- **WHY: comes after the instructions- should be written**
- **WHY: gives children purpose and focus to work: We are learning to..... (see R.A. sheet)**

Sharing Learning Intentions:

- **Children get straight on.**
- **Children are focussed.**
- **Quality of work increases.**
- **Less time wasting.**
- **Marking is easier.**

Implications:

- **Staff need to be clear about learning outcome of lesson.**
- **Need a maximum of 2 LO/LI or they will be diluted.**
- **Learning intention needs to be translated into child speak so it is clear and simple for the child.(task)**

A whole School Approach:

- **Need a common format about how learning intentions are to be shared with the children.**
- **Standardisation when children moving between classes.**

Approaches:

- **LI written down in an agreed format on a whiteboard or chart (see example).**
- **Criteria for success**
- **For younger children remind them throughout session.**
- **Approaches within teams will form part of school marking and feedback policy.**

APPENDIX G:

QUESTION PROMPTS FOR WALT WORKSHEET.

BLUE SPEECH BUBBLE

- Why would you tell another school to use WALT?
- What do other children learn with WALT?
- What is good about WALT?
- What is not so good about WALT?
- What would you tell people that you felt about using WALT?
- Who do you think WALT helps the most?

RED THOUGHT BUBBLE

- What do YOU get from using WALT?
- How does WALT help you?
- How does WALT help you learn?

QUESTION PROMPTS FOR TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND TEACHER COMMENTS FOR MARKING WORKSHEET.

BLUE SPEECH BUBBLE

- Why would you tell another school about traffic lights and teacher comments for marking work?
- What do other children learn with traffic lights and teacher comments when their work is marked?
- What is good about traffic lights and teacher comments in marking?
- What is not so good about traffic lights and teacher comments in marking?
- What would you tell people that you felt about using traffic lights and teacher comments in marking?
- Who do you think traffic lights and teacher comments in marking helps the most?

RED THOUGHT BUBBLE

- What do YOU get from traffic lights and teacher comments in marking?
- How do traffic lights and teacher comments in marking help you?
- How do traffic lights and teacher comments in marking help you learn?