COLLEGIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TEACHERS : THE CREATION AND TRANSMISSION OF A TECHNOLOGY OF TEACHING.

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Collegial relations between teachers: the creation and transmission of a technology of teaching.

Research into teacher/teacher relations is comparatively limited. This thesis is an attempt to widen the horizon of the research area and to focus on some of the dimensions of informal structure and communications in the staffroom. Data from an interview schedule and participant observation is examined along with evidence from a literature survey. A history of the methodology of the research is described.

The interview schedule yields data for sociometric analysis of teacher/teacher relations amongst a staff of seventy-six teachers at one school, and across three staffrooms. The results show that teachers do form groups within the staffroom and that there are certain factors guiding their choice; these include proximity, the model teacher and the shared interests of sex, age, departmental affiliation and some 'other' shared interests of less significance.

The nature of teacher task-related talk is investigated by classifying topics of 'shop' talk in a framework which is developed from other studies of the teaching profession. This framework has two spectra: institutional-academic and instrumental-expressive. A total of sixteen items of teaching 'technology' are presented with the typifying data and their location in the framework.

Another dimension of teacher talk is the 'fronting' which, despite the backstage arena of the staffroom, is usually maintained in order to prevent conflict amongst colleagues. Again, the typifying medium of teacher talk is used to generate a typology of 'fronting behaviour' from primary constructs.

The concluding discussion argues for further examination of the importance of the model teacher, proximity, departmental affiliation, a technology of teaching and the dramaturgical dimension. Some relevant issues in schools are suggested.

Key Words: TEACHERS STAFFROOM SOCIOMETRY COMMUNICATION CONFLICT

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Glossary of abbreviations

O.C.	observer description or comment.
coffee	raised voice
that boy....	speech tails off
: : : :	stretch of interaction omitted
pupils..... youra	stretch of speech omitted
(d 71)	footnote reference, observation from 71st day.
Goffman, 1956	See List of references for details.
indent and single spacing	either (i) preceded by name/number (Code) quote from teacher talk (sometimes with inverted commas)
	or (ii) quotation from the literature. (usually accompanied by author, year ref. in the text.)
sociogram Q6	The sociogram from question 6 of the interview schedule.

CHAPTER ONE

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ABOUT TEACHER/TEACHER RELATIONS

1.1 Introduction

The literature on collegial relations between teachers is limited compared to many other areas of education. This stems partly from the difficulty of getting agreement to research this area. Even if one can get to research it, there may not be any valid comparative group to emulate in research technique. This is critical because one of the observed discrepancies (Levy, 1969) in teachers' behaviour is that while they may pose as having special knowledge in handling learning situations, amongst themselves, and especially in staffroom situations, they do not present as having 'professional' discourse on educational issues (Waller, 1932). However, there are some articles and books which stand out as having some significant contribution to make to an understanding of teachers and the culture of the staffroom, and these form the substance of this review.

In order to guide the reader through the material which is to be examined in this chapter, there are three sub-headings: the structure of teacher/teacher relations, the content of teacher/teacher communications and a review of other considerations in teacher/teacher research. Very little research is specific to these sub-headings, but they should help the reader to focus on the issues which concerned the writer. Particular literature about teachers which was outstandingly helpful in directing the development of the research will be commented on and referred to again in subsequent chapters.

Much of the literature on teachers looks at their role in the official or formal system. Even then it is blurred. But the point of this research is to examine the unofficial or informal network which is centred around staffroom life. Does the 'idle talk' of the staffroom

have any relevance to what happens either in the classroom or in curriculum planning? Do the informal groupings of teachers away from the 'chalk-face' have a part to play in the organisation of the school? Throughout the research evidence has been abundant in staff-rooms, but scantily portrayed in the literature about school life. Therefore the survey which follows resembles the results of a 'dredging' of the literature, rather than a study of the line of development of interest in this 'field'. If such a line of development exists, it has certainly remained hidden from the view of this survey. What has emerged is still tenuous and many of the arguments tendentious, but they represent a spectrum of views which are rarely aired. Consequently it is thought to be worthwhile to examine this 'collection' in some detail.

1.2. The structure of teacher/teacher relations

This section examines the literature with regard to the membership of teacher groups and the choices made by teachers as to whom they consult. It is important to start with the structure, rather than the content or other analyses, since without defining which teachers talk to which teachers, and how, it is difficult to focus on the other aspects of teacher/teacher relations. This is not straightforward, because informal relations between teachers may not always be easily observed or readily commented on.

(a) Evidence of informal teacher/teacher interaction.

An article on 'the work context of teaching' (Denscombe,1980) sets out a framework for the study of teachers in classrooms. The argument is based on the concept of 'competent membership' as opposed to 'official membership', which is not usually in doubt amongst teachers. Competent membership, on the other hand is not clearly defined, as yet. It resides in the 'ability to interpret' knowledge of the formal structure 'in an appropriate manner'. To do this in the case of teachers would require the use of a framework which does five things:

> '(1) it directs research to the teachers' understanding of the situation at the level of intentionality, (2) it suggests that teachers share views of the situation despite ostensive differences of pedagogy, personality etc., (3) it regards the patterns of interpretation and activity as a product of teacher culture rather than official edict from the formal organisation, (4) it views competent teaching as the outcome of inclusion in a culture through a process of socialisation which (5) in the case of teachers, is primarily learnt on site and is not a product of 'professional' training (or other features of the teachers' social background).'

The method for achieving results which measure the premises above would centre on an ethnographic account of routine activity, which should be analysed through the situational pressures experienced by teachers as a result of the way in which the school is organised. The organisational factors which Denscombe draws out fall into three categories: resources, clientele and accountability. Of the factors which impinge on teachers, the fact of 'closed classrooms' is drawn on to support both the argument for using the 'competent membership' theme and as a situation which may be used to analyse the activity of competent membership. Denscombe is concerned to make out a framework which will focus attention on the classroom and teaching strategies. In fact, the premises underlying this approach have important repercussions for an analysis of teachers in the staffroom. He is assuming that there is an informal network amongst staff that

both rejects formal attempts to structure the teaching process and that establishes modes of behaviour by them. This suggests that classroom practice not only stems from a teacher's experience of practical problems, but from an interchange of practice amongst staff. Thus both teacher groups and their task related talk should be the important loci of attention for research in the school.

Much of the evidence for teacher/teacher interaction may be inferred from such sources, where the writer is really concerned to examine classroom practice. Similarly, it is possible to infer the existence and importance of informal teacher relations from discussions about staff relations which are concerned with altering formal working relationships. For example, articles on staff relations in schools sometimes appear in the pages of the Times Educational Supplement. As evidence of teacher interaction they are especially important because they are 'first hand'. Two such articles add depth to any consideration of the nature of teacher-teacher relations:

> 'On the daily working level there are major problems of staff absence and staff inefficiency.....
> While such absentees use the profession in such a way their pupils suffer, their colleagues suffer and there is an overall strain to any establishment.....
> However, teaching also shields those who have a guaranteed secure niche and who respond to this by failing miserably to fulfil their proper duties.....
> it should be a matter of urgency that procedures which bite are implemented to improve this scandalous situation.' (Anon.Letters to Editor 21.10.77)

> 'Many staff handbooks contain a diagram of a school's consultative machinery, showing how the lines of communication join up the staff hierarchy. Heads are linked down to their deputies, deputies to heads of departments and pastoral heads, and so on down the pyramid. The most junior teachers can be seen to have lines which ensure contact with those around and above them. It all looks splendid - especially on the overhead projector - like a complex electrical circuit with communications flashing to and fro, lighting (or fusing) successive staff bulbs.
> In practice it does not work, and you don't have to be a skilled electrician to see why. The wires get broken,

> large resistances find their way into the circuit, and it simply refuses to handle some messages (those for example, which require teachers to accept simultaneous pastoral and academic responsibilities.). Its most serious limitation is its single source of input, the head or inner cabinet, since in practice it is from here that most of the ideas that come to fruition originate. Opportunities for other teachers to contribute fresh thinking are very limited indeed.' (G.Walker(1.10.76)).

The first article is a written form of a common staffroom topic. The second forms part of a wider discussion of the role of staff councils. Both make their point fairly succinctly and demonstrate how teachers interact on one another. Behind these articles there lies the premise that teacher-teacher relations need improving and in particular areas. Could schools function more efficiently if attention were paid to issues which disturb good relationships between staff? It is impossible to say without a better understanding of the way in which teachers interact. Some authors think that teacher/teacher interaction is weak and perhaps of little importance. Dreeben (1973) pointed out that teachers lacked both a strong craft tradition and a highly developed technology. He accounted for this by pointing to the fact that teachers do not usually observe each other working, nor is there a tradition of written work reports. This contrasts with the fact that teachers do 'talk shop' and talk about each others problems, though they cannot judge or be helpful on the basis of direct observation. While these points underline the current role of the staffroom, after all there is 'shop talk' and it provides the only sounding board for many teachers, it doesn't seek to examine what occurs there, but rather how it could be supplemented. Much commentary by other authors is like this.

For example, Lortie (1975) in his book on teachers underlines the individuality of the teaching experience with phrases such as

'self-socialization' and by emphasising that assistance for teachers is always 'secondhand' and 'not in the classroom'. He does see that there is a need for more effective colleague relationships, but tends to dismiss present colleagueship as pure sociability - egalitarian and so non-judgmental as well as cathartic. Where he does specify 'task related talk', he enumerates boundaries, of the timetable, student relationships and the exchange of 'tricks of the trade'. In terms of detail, there is not much progress from the work of Waller (1932). This classic work reflects the same point of view - that teaching is an isolated occupation. But in one section Waller not only agrees with the general assumption that there is shop talk, he proceeds to attack it as the bane of teaching:

> 'It is not easy to return a satisfactory answer to the question "Why do teachers talk shop?" The fact that they do has sometimes been cited as one of the wholesome and hopeful things about the profession. From one point of view this incessant preoccupation of teachers with teaching is hopeful, for it argues that the task of forming the young is one of intrinsic interest. This it certainly is, and teachers, who hold the fate of generations in their hands, have a right to talk about their work. But partly also the unwillingness of teachers to talk about anything but teaching betokens an unhealthy narrowing of their mental horizon.'

Thus it is possible to identify a fairly negative attitude to the role of teacher/teacher interaction amongst many educationists. Relatively, e.g. to teacher-pupil interaction, it may be less consequential, but without due consideration it would seem strange to dismiss it out of hand. The chief problem in handling it though stems from the lack of consideration which it has had in the past. Therefore, authors like Levy and McPherson, while making important comments on it do not go much beyond general observation.

An interesting chapter in Levy (1969) describes the 'Counter-world of the Teacher'. This gives an atmosphere of staffroom life in

an inner city school. Levy's view is cathartic, he sees teachers seeking 'time out' in the counter-world and that interaction there is often designed to create a coping mechanism for returning to what may be a pretty difficult situation. He even infers a direct relationship between the teacher and their time 'out':

> 'The degree of emotion displayed at the loss of time is indicative of the harassed teacher's dependence on it for his stability.'

Levy explains the rivalry in telling each other about the 'worst' incidents of the day, week etcetera, as a form of griping. Whilst his exposition contains useful comments about teacher/teacher relations, it seems to allow these comments to lie undeveloped and without too much rationalisation. Similarly, McPherson (1972) in another observation on teaching, makes very useful comments about the nature of teacher/teacher relations. She refers to the 'territorial' attitude of teachers to their classroom or base and to the ways in which they vied in the pecking order of subjects. She also agrees that they form subgroups, and that the reasons for belonging to one or another group would be quite arbitrary. She sensed that most teachers come together when faced with outsiders - pupils or parents. Like Levy she noted that there was quite a lot of complaining, but rarely any real change. The 'old guard' who complained most, actually stayed on longer! Some explanation for the complaints without the machinery for change needs to be expounded.

So far it has been possible to identify the area of informal teacher/teacher relations by means of induction from articles on classroom practice and formal staff relations, and by noting either negative or neutral approaches to the issues of teacher/teacher interaction. A more positive approach to the analysis of teacher/teacher interaction can be found in one of the chapters written by

Hargreaves (1972) on staff relationships which provides pointers for the researcher to several areas which need exploration and clarification. The first notable feature of the chapter is the fact that it is mostly concerned with the role of the head and his relations with staff. Only the first few pages itemise points directly about teacher/teacher relations. The second point, which held then, though it is slightly less true now, is that 'there has been almost no systematic research into teacher/teacher relationships.' Thirdly, he makes an important comment about those relationships which may be taken as a starting point for the purposes of this thesis:

> 'In the larger secondary school there develops an intricate informal organisation of friendship groups and cliques. Usually, this informal organisation interpenetrates with the formal organisational hierarchy.'

He goes on to postulate the basis of such groupings: subject specialism, sex, age, seniority, shared interests and attitudinal homogeneity.

The analysis ends with a reference to the norms and values inculcated in teachers by their colleagues in the staffroom. These are briefly discussed and include many noted by other sociologists (Lortie etc.): the autonomy of the teacher, loyalty to the staff group, the 'mediocrity' norm (not to appear too good or bad), cynicism (to grumble), the typification of pupils and the labelling of other staff as less competent or more competent as scapegoats for their own internal conflicts. One of these norms, the last one, has a parallel in the typification of pupils. Teachers create the 'ideal' models to exchange information about their 'clients'. Later in the thesis the idea of the 'model' teacher will be examined in detail.

(b) Evidence of formal work arrangements affecting the nature of teacher/teacher interaction.

One specific area of research has shed light on the nature of teacher/teacher relations. This is the research done into team teaching, whether it be in open plan schools, or in adapted versions of traditional schools. Naturally, there is a lot of interest in how teaming may be most effective. It raises quite directly the question of teacher/teacher relations. Comparisons between the staffs of 'open', 'mixed' and 'closed' (separate classrooms) schools are a useful guide to the nature of teacher/teacher interaction.

One piece of research which assumes the importance of the informal collegial relations amongst teachers is that of Bishop (1977), who looks at the ways in which organisational (institutional) influences affect the work orientations of teachers. Bishop's 'assessments were attempted in the area of informal associations based on work-relevant communications' and demonstrated to some extent that 'formal arrangements for teaching as work have an influence on colleagueship':

> 'Traditionally organised schools, where work is treated as an individual responsibility, promote weak colleague ties among teaching staff. However, where mutual interdependence forms the basis for work organisation, work relevant colleague contacts become more prevalent and more extensive within the school.... It was found that the patterns of work relevant association among experienced and inexperienced teachers in traditional settings were essentially the same, although beginning teachers were found to spend more time discussing disciplinary and instructional issues.'

Bishop makes some important methodological points in approaching the question of informal social interaction among teachers at work. He discriminates between 'work relevant' and 'affective ties' as the basis for association between teachers.

He also recognises that formal arrangements for work may be an

important deciding factor in the development of teacher groups. He makes a distinction between 'self-contained', 'mixed' and 'co-operative' work arrangements.

A third point is that the need to establish separate sociometric dimensions followed from the first point. 'Friendship', 'matters of classroom discipline' and 'instructional programmes, curriculum and other matters related to instruction' were the factors of association which the questionnaire was aimed at. The latter two determined 'work relevant associations'. Bishop also delineated by questionnaire the 'work orientations' of teachers, though this part of the research proved to be very inconclusive.

Analysis of the results reveals other salient points. The comment that the results suggest a 'relatively large percentage' (as much as 65%) of self-contained teachers were involved in 'work relevant discussions' is described as 'surprising'. It gives added weight to the need to define and examine what teachers say to each other about their work. Part of the analysis of the extensiveness of an informal organisation was conducted with the use of 'integrated triplets'. This measure assessed how many teachers had mutual relationships with at least two other individuals, each of whom was also in mutual association with both of the other parties of the triplet. The findings were low; that is there was not a highly extensive informal organisation on any of Bishop's criterion for association. He concluded:

> 'the dominant pattern in self-contained schools is one of pairs of teachers engaged in friendly relations and in discussions of topics related to teaching'.

Since his research was with elementary teachers, it would be interesting to compare this with the sociometrically observed associations within secondary schools. (See chapter on sociometry.)

An article on research into teacher/teacher interaction in different types of schools, by Carson, Johnson and Oliva(1974) showed how there were differences in collaboration according to the type of school. The schools were classified into 'open area', 'quasi-open area', and the 'traditional' school. Clearly the issue here was what has been referred to as 'visibility' and the effects of 'team-teaching'. Does this affect the nature and extent of collaboration amongst teachers? If it does, then the types of teacher groups in the differing schools and the extent of their communications must vary. Here is the summary of their findings, with relation to teacher communications:

> 'Teachers in open area schools indicate that their work is done in collaboration with other teachers to a greater extent than is the case for teachers in either of the other types of schools.
> Teachers in open area schools indicated that they received reactions or advice from other teachers more frequently than was the case for either of the other teacher groups.
> In no instance, however, did a majority of open area teachers indicate that they received such advice very often or fairly often.
> 3-13
> Teachers from each type of school indicated that they talked more often to other teachers about the various school and non-school matters than they did to their principals.'

Although these findings are not surprising, indeed they are quite predictable, they reinforce some of the points already established: that teachers do communicate about task-related issues as well as 'non-school matters', and that these discussions take place amongst themselves more than with other groups, for example the principals (headteachers). The nature of the differences in communications between the teachers from the different schools as researched by Carson, Johnson and Oliva will be discussed under the review of research on task-related talk.

Comparison alone is not enough. Some commentators have discussed the possibility of improving the interactions between teachers. Doyle and Olszewski (1975) suggest how it might be done. They refer to the 'colleague interaction network' as being weak amongst teachers. They note that technical language would spring from an increase in a teacher's observation and analysis skills. Therefore the question that motivates their article is how to modify the colleague interaction network. They make two proposals, one for the use of task-related T groups and another for multi-unit schools where visibility and teacher interaction are greater. Training in observation techniques and a problem solving approach to practical teaching were also recommended. They concluded that:

> ' .. such interaction can become a valuable resource for establishing and maintaining high levels of professional effectiveness in teaching.'

If such team approaches are to be successful, it is necessary to find out more about the team situation. Gallesich, Iscoe and Payne (1971) studied team development and interpersonal functioning. They favoured collegial as opposed to bureaucratic teams (see Lortie 1964). They also spotlighted certain problems in team situations:

> 'The ideal condition for team integration is the presence on each team of a core of mature, professionally earnest teachers who are firmly committed to the team teaching philosophy and goals and at the same time open to new ideas from others - those within the seasoned, stable nucleus as well as new team members. These two conditions - dedication to the project and continuing openness to suggestions - appear somewhat incompatible ..... Teachers who create a team and foster its development usually have such strong involvement that they are unable to view the team approach objectively.'

Bredo (1977) in examining 'collaborative' relations among elementary schoolteachers stated that 'task interdependence' was a

crucial factor. But amongst teaching teams this was loose. The problem is that there are few rewards for collaboration in teaching. For example, there are rarely any external rewards for task accomplishments, the tasks are usually very 'immediate' requiring prompt action, there is a likelihood of disagreement over standards and procedures, and the complexity of the organisational and co-ordinating problems. There was one positive factor which he isolated:

> 'previous research indicates that individual team members who communicate often tend to be more influential than other members.'

In the light of the subsequent research this statement proved to be important.

Raggett(1975) also emphasises the importance of staff interaction, he sees that informal as well as formal interactions affect the new teacher's socialisation. He gives a list of informal interactions:

> 'discussions with fellow teachers, overheard discussions in the staffroom, visual material on the noticeboards, the symbolic nature of so much of what he sees and hears will 'present' a reality to the young teacher.'

Like others he allocates importance to the 'off-stage' recuperative facility of the staffroom, in particular evidenced where pressures are high, e.g. the inner city schools.

(c) Evidence of the structure of informal teacher groups.

Despite the paucity of research in this field, there are a few articles which provide some guidelines as to how the informal teacher group develops. This is clearly stated in an article by Iannaccone (1964). He postulates the argument that there is indeed an informal organisation 'behind' the formal organisation of any institution. He states:

> ' informal organisation is a complex network of inter personal relations among organisation members which functions to accomplish the organisation's tasks in ways more effective than those formally determined by the paper specification of functional roles.' (p.224)

In considering the 'extralegal' power structures of the school, he endorses the idea of 'social power' based in the 'primary groups' developed amongst teachers;

> 'One result, however, of the existence of primary groups is the creation of what may be called group power. The members of primary groups share norms, or statements of what ought to be, concerning the behaviour of a 'good' group member. Such norms help to control the behaviour of group members.'

The formation of these groups is related to at least the following factors, which overlap well with the comments of other sociologists (Ginsburg et al, Greenberger and Sorensen, King) :

> 'proximity of teaching stations, the schedule of free periods, and similarity of teaching assignments. Personal characteristics which influence group formation among teachers include age, sex, marital status and previous training.'

Just as it has been noted that there are 'stars' (see Bishop(1977)) in the universe of the staffroom, so Iannaccone points to 'linkages' between the primary groups: a common member in two groups is termed an 'articulation', a member of one group who regularly interacts with a member of another group is termed a bridge. He says:

> 'Information flows through such articulations and bridges, and mutual adjustment between groups faced with common problems is facilitated by them.'

This is reference to the fact that these groups do generate a kind of 'knowledge' about the school and certainly synthesise other forms of teaching 'technology'. This is an important theme which warrants further development. The point of this article on informal organisation is to make the place of the primary teacher group more noticed, because it could be a helpful part of shared decision-making within schools. He asserts that its process is in itself of great value:

> 'Much more time is spent by teachers discussing school policies in primary groups than is available for committee or faculty meetings. Such discussions are considerably less fettered than are those which go on in committees.'

If collegial groups of teachers do exist informally, it would be worth knowing whether or not they do spend as much time as is asserted here on 'talking shop'. Traditionally this has not been the image of teacher talk in the staffroom. Have such authorities as Waller or Lortie underestimated the importance of staffroom conversations?

Although there have been few studies made of the structuring of teacher groups, one of the most relevant is that of interpersonal choices amongst a junior high school faculty (Greenberger and Sorensen,1970). Using research on small groups undertaken by Blau as a model, in particular his analysis of interpersonal choices in a public welfare agency(1962), they use the ideas of segregation, the overchoice (that is choosing someone more than statistically likely) of people for others with the same attribute, and differentiation, the overchoice by everyone of people with a special attribute. A sociometric questionnaire tested for the qualities of consultation,

respect and liking, amongst teacher colleague groups. Predictions about the effect of sex, age, departmental affiliation and organisational status were made and checked against the results. They summarised their conclusions:

> 'Sex has a differentiating effect on choices under the instrumental criterion: male and female respondents both greatly overchoose men for consultation, and men overchoose men for respect. Sex has a segregating effect on sociable choices, each sex preferring like-sex individuals. Age mainly influences the choices for respect and liking. In both cases, mixed segregating and differentiating effects are observed. Departmental affiliation has a segregating effect on choices in all three categories, but differentiation effects also occur because administrative personnel are overchosen for consultation and teachers in the major academic departments are overchosen for respect. Formal organisational status (being a department chairman) produced the predicted differentiating effect on respect. In so far as membership in a major academic department also can be taken as an indicator of high organisational status, it appears that status has its strongest impact on interpersonal respect.'

It must be admitted that they open up some important areas of teacher group behaviour. The fact that they had chosen to look at the attributes of sex, age, departmental affiliation and status, encourages more research with these factors. Some of their findings suggest that there are strong influences on choice patterns amongst teacher colleague groups:

> 'Department may be a more important attribute than organisational status in the consultation choices', 'high ranking teachers are not too eager to consult any individuals in the school', 'stars among those chosen for consultation tend to be found in the high status group. Of eight persons receiving four or more choices, only two are not in a high status position; all the 'true' stars (7 or more choices) have a high organisational status.', 'the formal organisation of the school treats men and women as equally ranked subgroups; in the informal organisation, however, the sexes are ranked - particularly by men.'

These comments will be examined more closely in this research, both with sociometric data and by looking at what teachers actually say to each other. Here it is worth emphasing certain points of interest.

Firstly, their study was based on the premise that there is an informal network of teacher chosen colleague groups and that there is a great need to find out more about them. Secondly, the departmental affiliation of a member of staff will have a powerful influence upon their chosen teacher group. Thirdly, there is a relationship between status on the formal system and in the informal network's ranking; thus a 'star' is very likely to have an important post in the school. Fourthly, despite the theoretical equality of the sexes in education, there seems to be a distinct bias towards male staff, not only amongst men but also amongst women. Further support for these 'points of interest' might come from other authors.

Such detailed research opens up the question of factors which influence group structure amongst teachers. It might be assumed that these ought to bear some resemblance to factors which determine the occupational characteristics of other groups. In a paper on teachers and their views on professional and union affairs, Ginsburg, Meyenn and Miller(1978), set out just such a list of characteristics. These differentiating qualities run to seventeen items and are worthy of mention because they all bear on the sociology of the staffroom.

> 'Occupational characteristics.
> State(versus independent) sector institutions; size of school; age range of pupils; region of the country; rural/suburban/urban setting; maintained/aided/controlled form of governing body; religious background; social class; ethnicity; political affiliation; sex; age; family position; graduate/trained; subject specialist versus child centered; formal position in school hierarchy; union membership.'

Some of these factors were taken into account during this research

when examining the types of choices staff were making about consultation with colleagues. For example, two of the easiest to control for are those of sex and age. It is a pity that the paper does not give more details as to how respondents dealt with these issues, in terms of categorisation, though the authors made two important points about the predominance of female staff and the working class backgroundsof male teachers. The above list does serve as a useful guide when looking at teacher groups.

Seventeen differentiating qualities is rather too many to consider here. Anyway, some of them do not differentiate within one staffroom, for example whether the school is private or state controlled, and if the school is of any particular size. However, some factors which influence teacher/teacher interaction have been written about. Naturally, shared interests will bring certain teachers together. The greatest shared interest for most secondary teachers is usually the subject department or affiliation. Ball and Lacey(1980) offer some insight into this under-researched area. Teachers in the same departments share socially approved knowledge. While Ball and Lacey agreed that these communities of interest exist, they pointed to the fact that there are also substantial differences between the ways in which, say, English departments function. Indeed the

> 'extent of agreement and allegiance within subject departments cannot be taken for granted.'

They sought evidence for this by interviewing teachers about their departments. Within English departments they found at least three approaches: creative/expressive, grammarian and sociological. Also a 'strong', that is externally unified, department was likely to be able to get more resources and possibly influence school policy.

Perhaps the most important thing that one may conclude is that the 'mediating' culture of the department must be considered when examining staff relations. Corroboration for this comes from a different sector of education, where more research on relations between staff seems to have taken place.

A number of pieces of research amongst members of staff in higher education have isolated factors which may also operate amongst secondary school teachers. Devries (1975) studied the relationship of role expectations to faculty behaviour. He considered the influence of a faculty member's role set and the role conflict created within a faculty member by having research, teaching and administrative roles. The expectations of self and colleagues were seen to be important, as were organisational expectations. However, the expectations of the executive officer or head of department were seen to be much less so. No evidence was found to support the suggestion that role-conflict made the faculty member less productive. The premise that collegial influence, in this case expectations, is of importance is vindicated. The fact that a member of staff has competing areas of interest (role-conflict) is also an important assumption, despite the lack of proof as to its effects. Whilst this research is not directly analogous, it would seem to reinforce the line that shared perspectives, because of departmental orientation, are important. Another shared perspective is that of sex. Two commentators in this area point up different repercussions.

An article by King(1981) on 'Sex composition of staff, authority and collegiality in secondary schools' looks at the formal measures of school staff life: the composition of staff meetings and the distribution of positions of responsibility within a school held by men and women. He saw schools as having a dual authority system.

There is the authority of the heads of house and year groups, and the authority of heads of faculties and departments. The latter depend upon qualifications gained outside the school, while the former tend to have acquired their skill from practice. In both areas men tend to hold more positions of authority than women, and in mixed schools particularly this led to women losing out to men. This has a repercussion on the nature of controls within a school, because it seems that there are greater emphases on bureaucratic forms of control when men are running a school. King felt that comprehensive education had led to more curriculum meetings in schools and less likelihood of women finding positions of responsibility. This kind of analysis concentrates on formal interactions, which have an effect on informal interactions.

One other comment which he takes up is to stress the fact that there are far more males in teaching in Britain than in the States, therefore the a priori comments about a predominantly female occupation and therefore, status, made by sociologists may not be correct.

Contrasting with and to some extent agreeing with King, is the work of Delamont (1980). She suggests that groups of teachers in mixed staffrooms tend to segregate along male/female lines, except with the youngest category of teachers. This needs sociometric investigation. She does not seem to note that some female teachers cross the boundaries of sex stereotyping as 'model' teachers. Her general point about the status of female teachers is borne out in King's formal analysis. Whether female teachers fare any better on informal indicators needs investigation.

Inevitably two other factors combine with sex to make important structural effects on the informal teacher group. One is age, already mentioned by Delamont, and the other is hierarchical position,

alluded to by both King and Delamont. From the data so far it would seem worthwhile using the differentiating categories of sex, age, position and shared interests, particularly departmental affiliation, in analysing the structure of teacher groups.

(d) Summary.

a. There is evidence through inference and reference to demonstrate the existence of informal teacher groups within staffrooms.

b. There is evidence to demonstrate the effects of formal work organisation on these groups.

c. There is evidence to demonstrate the factors likely to form the basis of differentiation amongst these informal groups. They are sex, age, status and departmental affiliation.

1.3. The nature of teacher/teacher communications

(a) The content of teacher/teacher communications

When considering what teachers talk about it is notable that some commentators have suggested that teachers lack a coherent body of knowledge:

> 'teaching lacks a recognised body of technical knowledge; it is difficult to be accountable in detail for what is generally random repetitive and unstructured; advances quickly leave the teacher behind and vulnerable to programmes designed and published by a few experts. Non-graduate staff in non-examinable areas may be more at risk here.' (Redican, 1981).

Explanations for this vary but few are as clear and concise as this analysis by Sarason (1971):

> '1. During the course of the average day the teachers spend almost all of the time with (small) children.
> 2. Leaving lunchtime aside, during the course of the average day, the amount of time teachers spend in face-to-face contact with each other is extremely small .....
> 3. During eating time in the teachers' room there is considerable variation in how much the different teachers talk, and the degree to which any one teacher will talk to any other teacher.
> 4. It is extremely rare for a teacher to be physically alone.
> 5. Approximately ten times in the year, and each time after the children have left school, all the teachers meet with someone who ordinarily spends all of his time in a room with no children. On these occasions this person - the principal, of course - does most of the talking. In fact there are some teachers who in ten meetings never say anything. Most teachers do say something but the extent of their talk is far less than that of the principal.'

In other words it is felt that teachers do not spend enough time exchanging information and so there is a crude level of development of ideas. Indeed, there are teachers who feel that the whole question of discussing the art of teaching is pointless because:

> 'Each one of us feels his own best judge, more capable of evaluating his own performance than the most inquiring of observers.' Cornall(1976)

When they do exchange ideas it is not along the lines that one might expect, relating to the broader issues of education, but rather in this manner:

> 'In our fieldwork we noted the lack of discussion by teachers of the 'Great Debate' but observed many discussions about the cuts. The following comment coincides very much with our observations. "No, the most I've heard, I mean, I haven't heard it discussed in the staffroom at all - nobody ever mentions it. Well the only thing that's talked about in the staffroom is money and cuts."' Wallace and Miller(1981).

The explanation for this, that these authors suggested, was that differences in views on the Great Debate hindered discussion, whilst similarities in teachers' views on cuts facilitated it. This analysis seems to premise the idea that there are different types of teacher talk. For the purpose of this research, it is acknowledged that there are numerous types of teacher talk. Could a typology of task-related talk be devised from a review of the literature? There are several ways of approaching the development of a typology. One way of looking at this literature would be to survey the syllabuses of the various teacher training establishments to see what those who teach teachers think they should be talking about. This might be useful in itself, but it is not clear that the content or the balance of content would be representational of what teachers actually do talk about. Closer to the practising teacher are the local authority teacher's centres designed for in-service training and resource support of teachers. Feiman(1977) in reviewing the types of teachers centres stated that

> '..there exists among teachers a vast reservoir of untapped expertise and experience.'

The literature here seems to concentrate, however, on the way in which

centres function, rather than on the content of what teachers are actually saying. Furthermore, there is a certain artificiality about centres, where teachers feel free from the constraints of their staffroom colleagues. What is said in centres may therefore be considerably different from what they are prepared to say at school.

It is not easy to find out what teachers are saying in school, particularly unstructured task-related talk in the staffroom. Nevertheless, some topics are bound to be aired and some observers have written about teacher talk, though often this has been incidental to their main research. A consideration of this type of literature might yield two guidelines for further investigation: a list of topics which teachers hold conversations about, and a basis for determining how such an investigation might interpret teacher talk.

Three pieces of work demonstrate some of the topics which teachers talk about and how they view those topics. The first is an article by Meyenn on school girls peer groups which noted the fact that teachers were aware of peer groups and labelled them:

> 'In the staffroom-there was a lot of conversation among teachers which indicated that they were aware of the various girls' groupings. Comments like 'you know Josephine's mob', 'Betty and her lot' were commonly made in conversation or when recounting incidents.' (Meyenn, 1978)

Thus there does exist a body of incidental references to the existence of task-related teacher talk. Certainly it is not recognised, as yet, as being as vital as the three other interactions within schools, that is teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil and principal-teacher.

The second example is from Delamont who in a book on 'Sex roles and the school' looks briefly at the use of staffroom talk, demonstrating from research (Hargreaves and Woods) that pupils are certainly talked about. Teachers in their conversations both sex stereotype

pupils and treat (amongst male staff) female pupils as sex objects:

> 'My girls are dead worried. I told them they'd have to take everything off on Monday, and I hoped none of them were tattoed, and I think they believed me!'
> 'That wouldn't worry my lot, they'd be only too willing to oblige.' (Woods (1979)).

Another common feature of male staffroom humour is its frequent sexist butt: other female staff. If the theories about teacher expectation hold good, then Delamont's comments are important.

A third instance is a reference to the role of staffroom conversation made by Ginsburg, Meyenn and Miller (1978). It seems to fall into three categories, two of which are quite specific:

> ' ... teachers' staffroom conversation we observed was dominated by joking and tension-releasing conversation interspersed with dialogue aimed at co-ordinating colleagues' activities.'

Here there are two types of talk identified; joking, and other talk aimed at releasing tension built up from the actual task of teaching. This sort of talk Corwin regarded as 'fronting' and as such it contains valuable socialising messages between staff, as well as enabling survival from task related pressures. The third type which is hinted at, namely 'dialogue' aimed at co-ordinating colleagues' activities has been named by others (Hammersley 1981) 'task related talk'.

The second comment reinforces the view that much of teacher talk is in reality a specially constructed front:

> 'In order to maintain solidarity, conversations on topics which might produce conflict are avoided or quickly terminated. Thus there is neither the time, the energy, nor the inclination for teacher colleague groups to engage in analytical discussions of controversial, dissentious-inducing topics, including, for instance, the ideological nature of trade unionism and professionalism.'

(b) Overviews from ethnographic studies of staffrooms

It is possible to go on picking at pieces of research in education and to come up with views or interpretations of views which have and are being expressed in staffrooms and amongst teachers. However, without a means of interpreting such data, it would be an interesting but somewhat sterile activity. In order to get further into the problem, it is necessary to look at some of the conclusions and comments which a few writers of ethnographic studies of teachers have made.

One of these is the recent work of Hammersley(1980,1981). In an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, he has a chapter entitled 'Idle Talk in the Staffroom?'. He says:

> 'It was my strong impression, that, as Denison suggests work related talk predominated in the Downtown staffroom'
> and
> 'there are four major overlapping kinds of talk: trading news, sociability, complaints and accounts'.
> and
> 'rather than providing a setting in which common problems can be collectively discussed and appropriate strategies formulated, in this school at least the staffroom plays an important role in sustaining existing practices in the face of mounting pressures for change.'

In his later articles he emphasises the kind of pressure and the typical reaction of some staff:

> 'Greaves: They're thick.
> Holton: Yes and the tab end of the coons as well.'

Such quotes might leave little doubt in the minds of others as to the 'ideology' of the teachers concerned. But Hammersley points out that there are substantial inconsistencies between 'beliefs and actions'. Indeed he demonstrates that no consistent set of beliefs are employed, which fits with the findings of Ginsburg et al. One element of staffroom talk which he refers to is humour, and he

suggests that this comes under the category of sociability. Another commentator makes this the focus of his discussion/rationale about talk in the staffroom. This analysis of teacher talk has been that of P.Woods, in his book 'The Divided School.'(1979). In a chapter entitled 'The meaning of staffroom humour', he looks at the role of joking in talk amongst teachers. He looks at traditional ways in which humour within groups has been interpreted:

> 'To summarise: Humour has been interpreted in terms of (1) conflict, as a weapon with which to strike the enemy; or (2) control, as a device to establish norms; or (3) order, in the furtherance of social bonds, solidarity, intimacy, and accounting for failure and inadequacies; or (4) release from tension and anxiety.'

He criticises these explanations in the school context:

> 'First, as a reaction agent, there is insufficient emphasis on the structures and forms of organisation this humour is reacting against: second, there is hardly any acknowledgment of laughter as a creative, growth experience. The two are related, since the first stimulates the second. It is its counterbalancing force.'

Woods is pointing to the more positive attributes of joking. He mentions a few incidents from the staffroom of Lowfield, where he was observing, and makes constructive suggestions as to their interpretation. He admits that the socialisation of new staff is central to much of the laughter, but he notes that these 'backroom legends and traditions' are treated with 'fondness'. As Lortie(1964) suggests, it rises above the institution and links teachers to other adults and indeed to 'a broader scale of criteria'. This criteria might be called 'pure sociability', an important end in itself.

Woods is also aware that certain staff are particularly expert at contriving situations which encourage 'pure sociability'.

> 'At times, someone will, deliberately I suspect, aim to create a mirthful atmosphere....., offering him or herself up as the butt of the joke.'

Woods is sure that the subsequent sessions of repartee are 'a growth experience' and the members of such groups benefit from these exercises. He has recognised an important category: the tension release agent or 'fool' as a laughter producer. What he does not say, which might be examined, is who these agents are. Whoever they may be, they must be 'safe' enough in their own position to be able to risk possible misconstruction of comments by other staff. In other words, they are probably the natural leaders of the staffroom group or groups. This role will be looked at when the sociometry of the school staffroom is discussed.

He makes a further note which is worth taking up. There is a negative side to humour: how it doesn't happen. When things are past a joke. A school where there is little humour 'might suggest non-survival. Its presence is a sure indication of managing.' Humour at the wrong time may be lethal to good teacher/teacher relations too. Humour on its own won't make the staff more cohesive, some teachers commented on this to Woods when they felt that others had 'gone too far'. Thus the extent of humour may be worth investigating, in order to see if it is benign or malignant.

After the chapter on staffroom humour, Woods adds some salient comments in his summary and conclusions to the book. He refers to the concept of the 'ideal model' pupil, which other sociologists such as Hargreaves and Keddie, to differing extents, see teachers using. This analysis springs from examining comments in school reports. Perhaps a similar analysis could be made by examining, say, staffroom talk. He also suggests that

> 'it is better to view the degree of attachment to formal role as a dimension along which teachers can be differentiated as a body, but also along which a single teacher can oscillate according to certain factors - the day of the week, the particular class he is teaching....'.

Woods states this from the perspective of the pupil in particular. It should be noted that the teacher-person/teacher-bureaucrat spectrum provides a hint as to how the complicated and intangible role of the teacher might be more clearly defined. Woods underlines his assessment of the 'Jekyll and Hyde' nature of teachers in sharing Weber's distinction between the 'specialist' and the 'cultivated' man. Woods thinks that teachers are 'oscillators' between these two positions. In this dilemma he sees the role of the teacher as being 'sustained by group pressure' in the staffroom', the staffroom where

> 'you could send up, without fear of redress, the artificial contours of the school, the paradoxes and inconsistencies of your own position in it, and the requirements made of you.'

Thus Woods puts a constructive interpretation on the joking which permeates, in his view, healthy staffroom life. It stands in contrast to the emphasis on task-related talk which Hammersley looked at, though their conclusions both emphasise the 'sociability' of teacher talk. Is it possible to construct from these or other sources a map of teacher talk? Some authors (see section(c))suggest that teacher talk is shaped and that some structuration of it might help observers to better understand the nature of teacher talk and its function in the life of the school. While turning towards the problem of understanding what teachers are saying and why they are saying it, the content of their talk - joking, sociability, pupils, professionalism, cuts, etcetera - in terms of the topics will not be forgotten. They will be needed as the test of any framework or pattern or secondary construct by which researchers may hope to measure the worth of teacher discourse.

(c) Evidence of a framework for understanding teacher talk

An article which focuses on this area of school life is that by Hargreaves on the 'Occupational Culture of Teachers' (1980). The use of three themes to analise the 'teachers' culture' of schools is a useful device for generating discussion of most areas of a teacher's life and place in the sociology of education. The 'status' theme is indeed an important issue for teachers. Where the article makes particularly helpful comments is in the remarks on the causes of 'dissatisfaction of teachers with their work', and in particular the historical reasons for a split between 'subject' and 'child' centred schooling. Under the heading of the 'competence' theme he argues in the same mode, but looks at the 'results' which teachers claim to produce, and concludes that because of societal changes e.g. unemployment, that 'competence anxieties break through once again'. Under the last theme, the 'relational' theme, emphasis is placed on the negative effects of the 'cult of individualism' in teaching. It reinforces competence anxieties since assessment is poor, as are direct rewards for able class teachers. This procedure also inhibits the creation of a technical language to describe the 'mysterious' gifts of the good teacher. Briefly the importance of the staffroom is mentioned, and that

> 'teachers have to rely on somewhat indirect measures of their colleagues competencies ..... teachers do not of course remain in igorance of one anothers skills, for the indirect measures of teachers ..... are part of the common knowledge of the school, but they are transmitted SOTTO VOCE by gossip.'

He concurs in the view of other sociologists that the staffroom is cathartic and where fronts are lowered; a good staffroom is a key element in making a good school. The three themes of Hargreaves: status, competence and the relational theme do explain quite a lot of what is said in

staffrooms. The main drawback of this line of approach is that it seems they were taken from the synthesis of other sociological comment. In other words they are at least tertiary constructs. While bearing these in mind, other schema must be examined.

A small but nevertheless useful article (research note) by Rodger (1978) does provide some information which corroborates the views of those looking for a relationship between staffroom culture and the curriculum. He is quick to point out the limitations of the project in terms of reliability. The premise is that if one can define the majority of educational topics discussed in a staffroom, then one should be able to plot the frequency and so find out if there is a relationship between the topics discussed and the staffrooms of differing schools. He quotes Fuchs (1969) as an example of this in practice and goes on to define what Hammersley calls 'task-related teacher talk' as having four aspects: the material conditions e.g. salary, resources and buildings; the external influences e.g. parents, neighbourhood, LEA, extramural curriculum; the internal influences e.g. levels of attainment, discipline, attendance, organisation and auxiliary help; the curriculum e.g. aims, content, development and teaching method. This list was compiled with the help of a panel of teachers and interestingly, perhaps inevitably, overlaps considerably with separate lists which are drawn up later in this thesis. Lambert, Taylor and others, including all those who seek to 'teach teachers' have at some stage drawn up their own lists. It is disappointing that Rodger did not say more about the basis on which the lists were drawn up. He is not the only researcher to have found this a difficult, yet crucial problem.

Rodger shows clearly by rank order not only that some topics take up more discussion time (assuming that the respondents were right) but that some staff in some schools perceive that they are

talking more about one topic than another. Therefore Rodger was able to say categorically that older male teachers would probably talk less about the curriculum and that staff in some schools talked more about it. Certainly the low rating in general given to talk about the curriculum suggests that the ideology of a large number of teachers may be 'a kind of pedagogical conservatism' (Jackson, 1968) despite Hammersley's claims that the ideological argument is wrong. He had found it the easiest 'culture' to stereotype in his own work.

Rodger's final conclusions reinforce what other sociologists agree: the time is ripe for further development in terms of ethnography of the staffroom and in particular the role of teacher talk in determining the course of curriculum change. No doubt he would agree that the subjective views of his respondents ought to be set against other measures of the frequency and content of teacher talk as discussed in later chapters of this thesis. His contribution is particularly to highlight the concept of staffroom talk as an important ingredient in educational development.

Rodger's analysis of a list of technical talk amongst teachers raises the issue of other lists about teachers. One of the more interesting of such lists is an article by Casciano-Savignano in the NASSP Bulletin (April 1976) (N.B. another list which was apparently constructed by teachers) which summarised the results of a survey into secondary schools. For the purposes of the thesis the teacher/principal, teacher/counsellor and teacher/librarian relations itemised in the same article are omitted from this discussion because the aim is not to study formal relations in a school, e.g. with the head-teacher, but to examine the informal side of teacher culture. Also the term 'counsellor' and 'librarian' whilst having equivalents in Britain do not necessarily mean the same thing. Looking at teacher/

teacher relations and the problem areas, the author identifies twenty-two separate 'impediments.' Not surprisingly they underline the views of Hargreaves: that it is the separateness of teachers which leads to varying practice and contending ideologies. Most of the categories were rather vague and few pointed out concrete problem areas. The most defined were teacher competition for advancement e.g. schedules and salaries, lack of time to exchange ideas and conflicting philosophies of teaching. As Rodger pointed out from his study and as has been shown earlier, differences due to age and sex are also significant.

On the positive side Casciano-Savignano asked for suggestions as to improvements which could be made. This is a more balanced stance than Hargreaves who tends to stress the 'problems' of teacher culture. Grouping teachers together to work on projects and more time for an exchange of ideas and views, as well as the recognition of new initiatives in classes or training, were all put forward. Greater social knowledge of each other was included. It would appear that teachers are keen to see more of other teachers. This is an interesting finding in itself. It suggests that although teaching is an 'isolated' activity, the general belief of teachers is that they can still learn a lot from each other. The only basis that they have for this view is their staffroom talk and the occasional inservice course. This suggests that teachers see 'task related talk' as important. One might therefore conjecture that not only do they already indulge in a significant amount of 'shop' talk, but that they derive enjoyment and help from it. Casciano-Savignano's list of topics was directed at suggestions from teachers as to ways of improving teacher/teacher relations. It is not a list of topics which they would necessarily talk about. It does prove that teachers

have an in-depth view of their relationships with colleagues and it is a construct of teachers' views about teachers.

Biddle(1970) made a list of potential role-conflict areas for teachers and others associated with schools in four countries. The list is constructed from the tables given by Biddle:

'Regular attendance at meetings of P.T.A.
Willing acceptance of non-professional duties (e.g. clubs, lunchroom supervision)
Consistently maintaining orderliness and quiet in the classroom.
Emphasis on broad range of goals in classroom instruction.
Use of corporal punishment.
Use of free periods.
Adherence to administration's curriculum.
* Avoidance of taking public stance on political issues.
* Drinking at a local hotel or bar.
Emphasis on social advancement in instruction (preparing the child to 'get ahead').'

(* These are not directly task related, but were part of the list which Biddle used.)

Shuster and Stewart(1973) constructed a list on the basis of job analysis, with a view to helping principals monitor staff suitability for positions on the staff. They felt that such an approach might ease principal-staff relations through defining what was required of staff and how they performed.

Another approach is to consider the quite considerable literature now available about team teaching. The studies here are quite often school based and so present a more 'real' picture. Martin(1975) has looked at the ways in which teachers interact in both open and closed schools. He noted what teachers were discussing:

'In open plan schools there was a higher frequency of discussion on curriculum development, individualistic instruction, student participation in decision making, grouping of students, supervising students, the amount of team teaching, experimentation in teaching and following a timetable.
In closed schools there was a higher frequency of discussion on scheduling activities, maintaining order, keeping records and teaching methods.
In both open and closed schools procedures for pupil evaluation and methods of discipline were discussed.

> In both types of school there was more discussion of topics relating to overall relationship to students than to overall relationship to teachers.'

Principally, Martin was concerned with how decisions were made in schools. But he formulated the question that underlies thinking about task-related talk: 'What are the main issues which teachers interact over?' Carson, Johnson and Oliva(1974) made similar comments on their work comparing open, quasi-open and closed schools. These authors helped to focus in on the 'issues' which teachers discuss at school, complemented by other lists which can be derived from other research areas. DeRoche(1972) looked at faculty meetings in elementary schools. He made a list of the issues which principals felt were most discussed.

It may be that there are numerous other lists. It becomes important to ask a further question: 'If there is such a thing as task-related talk amongst teachers, and if it ranges across many issues, to some extent or other, then is it possible to construct a framework into which these issues may be sorted?' McNamara and Desforges(1978) proposed that there ought to be a way of objectifying craft knowledge. They recognised that without such schemes it would be difficult for teaching to become modified and improved. They assert that there is such a thing as 'school teacher recipe knowledge' and that 'teachers can and do talk in very great detail about particular children etc.' They also note that

> 'the student teacher becomes a more useful interlocutor in the process of stimulating and sustaining talk about practicalities.'

They suggest that concepts like that of competence should be looked at afresh, using a framework of methods/theories/models which social sciences have developed. They see the trainee student teacher as being an integral part of this re-think.

One such structuring of teaching experience by Lambert (1975) was formulated in order that the role of head of department in secondary schools could be better evaluated. Indeed, Lambert showed that this was a nebulous role, but that it could be measured by borrowing a model from Taylor (1964). Lambert drew up his own 'lists' of functions under four headings: instrumental/academic, instrumental/institutional, expressive/institutional and expressive/academic. He measured how far both the heads of departments and the heads of schools agreed about the role of the head of department. He discovered that there was considerable disagreement, particularly in expressive areas, which he supposed meant the need for more training 'in human relationships and management techniques'.

Because of the detail which Lambert goes into, these lists are reproduced (see Fig.1.1). Although Lambert does not do more than itemise each area, in four separate figures, they have been arranged so that they may be compared with another theoretical framework. Lambert drew on a framework which had been constructed by Taylor, whose work was directed at the role of the training college principal. This diagram (Fig.1.2) is taken from that research, and would appear to be the result of two considerations by Taylor. First, he recognised the duality of role required of a principal: academic and institutional. Second, he drew on the work of Parsons and Bales (1956) who had already used the juxtapositioning of expressive and instrumental functions. By 'expressive' one means 'person-centred' and by 'instrumental' one means 'task-centred'. Thus he arrived at this model.

Fig. 1.1 Lambert's Role Analysis for Heads of Depts.

Instrumental Institutional Role-Functions

1. Care of stock
2. Care of audio-visual aids
3. Requisitioning, choice and allocation of text books
4. Requisitioning, choice and allocation of apparatus and materials
5. Timetable alterations
6. Safety requirements
7. Attainment and diagnostic testing
8. Conduct of internal exams and preparation of papers
9. Preparation for and entries for external examinations
10. Making final decisions on all examination entries in the department
11. Preparation of records and reports
12. Have complete discretion in allocating departmental staff
13. Deploy departmental ancilliaries at own discretion

Instrumental Academic Role-Functions

1. Play a part in the development of school policy
2. Carrying out school policy
3. Developing a departmental policy
4. Setting definite aims and objectives for the department
5. The preparation of schemes of work and syllabuses and their organisation throughout the school
6. Regular review of the syllabus and schemes of work
7. Sole responsibility for drawing up the syllabus
8. Revising the syllabus annually
9. Developing new teaching techniques
10. Taking an active part in development of new curricula
11. Keeping abreast of contemporary developments
12. Arranging visits of educational interest
13. Arranging outside speakers

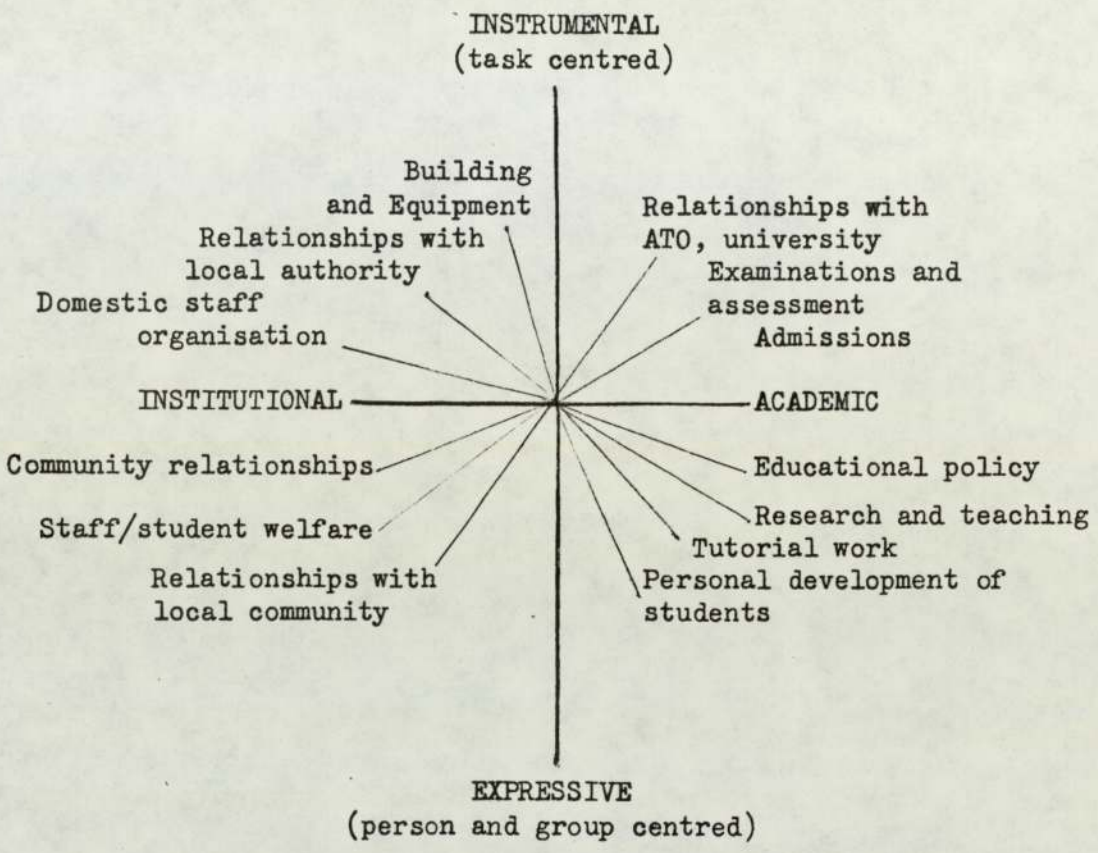
Expressive Institutional Role-Functions

1. Links with careers staff
2. Careers advice
3. Fostering and running out of school activities
4. Organising overseas journeys
5. Organising displays of work in classrooms
6. Organising departmental displays on Open Evenings
7. Attending courses regularly
8. Attending parents' meetings regularly in the evenings
9. Be an active member of a PTA
10. Prepare a report annually on work of department for the Head
11. Have a written description of head of department duties provided by the Head

Expressive Academic Role-Functions

1. Holding meetings of departmental staff
2. Holding regular meetings of departmental staff
3. Checking progress through the syllabus
4. Check and co-ordinate progress in all classes through the syllabus
5. Setting an example of good teaching
6. Inspiring and guiding the department
7. Taking full responsibility for probationers in the department
8. Have a major say in the appointment of departmental staff
9. Develop departmental policy by discussion with departmental staff
10. Supervision of staff methods of teaching
11. Advise teaching staff in department on teaching method
12. Sit in at lessons given by departmental staff
13. Taking a decision and standing by it
14. Dealing with classroom disciplinary problems of departmental staff as a departmental matter
15. Discussion with other heads of department and the correlation of work
16. Direction of homework
17. Standardisation methods and marking schemes

Fig. 1.2 Taylor's role analysis for Principals.



It is not clear as to whether Taylor expected his diagram to act as any more than a visual aid when describing the conflicting elements within the role of principals of training colleges. However, the broad assumption that teachers may also operate along similar spectra, pulled this way or that according to the demands of the immediate situation, may be an important insight into the diversity which appears to be the hallmark of their task-related talk. Further speculation on this follows in later chapters.

(d) Summary

a. There are different types of teacher talk and in particular there does exist a substantial amount of 'task-related talk'.

b. Teacher talk can be divided into topics, of which there are a vast number, though some, e.g. pupils, occur more frequently than others.

c. Teacher talk can be divided into different styles e.g. joking, which may be more appropriate to some topics than others.

d. Ethnographic studies of staffroom talk have drawn differing conclusions about the 'purpose' of it.

e. There have been few attempts to make a structured analysis of teacher talk. Frameworks, which developed from other theoretical standpoints or itemised frequencies of topics, do exist. The two do not seem to have been put together, as yet, in any detail or with outstanding success. Without such a framework one is forced to rely on vague terms such as 'sociability' to explain what is happening when teachers talk to teachers.

1.4. A review of some approaches to teacher/teacher research.

Apart from the literature which relates specifically to the study of teacher groups and the nature of teacher-teacher communications, there is a body of literature which has contributed to the formulation of some of the ideas developed in this research. Although it is not linked together in the way that the previous material was, that is by theme, it has tangential implications for the research which is outlined later. Necessarily some extremely important work on groups and on teachers is skimmed here; it should not be construed from this that the works are unimportant.

a. Considerations arising from the study of primary groups.

A further way of examining the teacher group is to consider the staff of a school as a primary group.

Warren (1970 etc.) in looking at primary groups examined eighteen school staffs to see what mechanisms were being employed for control within the groups. He used a typology of primary groups which yielded three types: consensual, when solidarity and stability are of the essence; diffuse, when off the job socialising predominates; and

job-specific, when the interaction in the work context is the most typical. By means of a questionnaire, he examined attitudes of teachers to see if these groups could be identified and if so what controls were used to maintain them.

The four controls of isolation, socialisation, selective recruitment and selective expulsion which Warren defines may not be the only controls, but at least there is an attempt to locate norms of teacher groups. He emphasises the role of such a group:

> 'This finding (that schools low on structure are low on controls) supports the view that peer social controls tend to operate apart from the effects of external controls. It is at the level of the given school building that occupational and school-system effects are filtered. Both in terms of defining the values of the fledgling teacher and reinforcing or altering those of teaching veteran, staff climate and its mode of influence is the crucible for testing these larger forces.'

However, the interests of the group are not necessarily paramount. As within all relationships, choice and friendship are elements which should not be underestimated. It may be that the choosing of friends amongst colleagues has quite decisive effects on the formation of teacher groups. Therefore, amongst the factors which have to be accounted for in the formation of teacher groups, there is the influence of 'adult friendship choice'. This has been shown to have certain predictable features, such as the proximity principle and the edge effect. Verbrugge (1977) states:

> 'The proximity principle claims that the more similar people are, the more likely they will meet and become friends. Compared to a random choice model, adult friendships show strong bias toward status similarity for all social characteristics. Bias is strongest for 'edge' categories of ranked statuses and for 'best' friends.'

This would seem to reinforce boundaries of age, sex, departmental affiliation and other shared interests.

b. Considerations arising from the study of role conflict amongst school staff.

Yet a further approach, if it could be identified as a separate entity, is the propensity of many authors to emphasise the role conflicts inherent in the posts of principals and heads of departments. Fuchs(1969) in her classic 'Teachers Talk' has a chapter entitled 'The Rexograph Machine'. In this chapter she draws out the distinction between professional and administrative authority in schools. It is not surprising that this conflict will manifest itself since it goes to the heart of school life.

> 'The real source of conflict here and potential danger to morale,concerns itself with the disagreement between lower echelon employees, the teachers, and their perception of themselves as professionals with the right to make decisions concerning teaching materials, and the administration, which does not grant this right but rather considers itself responsible for checking, limiting, and exercising control over what the teacher does.'

Furthermore, if one accepts the category 'semi-professional' (Etzioni, (1961)), then this would appear to be a perpetual problem in schools. Several commentators on the relations between staff and principals would see the problems of education management in the same light. Elboim-Dror(1972) says that the untrained administrators have lost their 'professional' company of equals basis of operation and so look for other forms of power - reward and punishment, legitimate and expert power. Zaleznik(1966) underlines this by implying that education administrators who have left teaching suffer from guilt and anxiety. Bailey(1973) examined the role of heads of departments in comprehensive schools and elaborated in greater detail on the various aspects of the head of department. He emphasised that there were considerable administrative problems which they face, especially in a large school where the department had at least four, or more, staff.

For example, the block timetabling method means that more departmental heads in effect organise timetabling. Also, the number of communication linkages increases quadratically with each new teacher in the team. Therefore the head of department is involved in the bureaucracy of the school as well as in the direct teaching. Again there is conflict. This theme of duality is given another slant by Williams and Hoy(1971) in an article investigating staff-principal relations. They defined two types of leadership: task-oriented and relationship-oriented. They discussed the following perspective which they felt explained some of their findings:

> 'It seems reasonable to suggest that complementary leadership roles may emerge in effective school organisations. Bales'research in small groups led him to the proposition that there are usually two leaders in a group, each with a different set of role responsibilities - the task leader and the social leader. The task leader keeps the group engaged in work, but in this role pressure must often be applied for performance which may tend to provoke irritation and injure the unity of the group. On the other hand the social leader provides considerate treatment for individuals and helps keep the work group unified and satisfied. It appears that the effective functioning of a collectivity requires the co-operation of both types of leaders.'

From this position they hypothesize about the role of an 'informal' leader and 'informal' authority which may complement the principal's formal role. This seems an important concept, since it would help to explain some of the data about the informal relations amongst teachers which this research outlines. Certainly there is much about school life that has not been satisfactorily explained by simply analysing the formal relations in the school. Role conflict on bureaucratic-professional lines and the possible existence of informal leaders may be two interconnected issues in teacher/ teacher relations.

Apart from the levels of heads of department and principals, there has been corroboration of this dual orientation from research on neophyte teachers. Kuhlmann and Hoy(1974) described their findings in this way:

> 'The basic assumptions underlying the research were that teachers will relate in a positive fashion to both the norms of the bureaucracy and the norms of the profession during their initial encounter with the school in a professional capacity and that they will assume a 'mixed type' dual role orientation. Data was collected from prospective teachers during their student teaching experiences and again, near the conclusion of their first year of full-time professional employment. Responses suggest that experience in the school organisation for beginning teachers is related to increased bureaucratic orientation and decreased professional orientation.'

As some sociologists have commented on the dual role of teachers, these authors assumed that this would lead to such an orientation. For secondary teachers, their findings showed a substantial swing from professional to bureaucratic orientation. Such a swing does not eliminate the 'mixed type' role. It highlights the amount of influence from the bureaucracy of the school and the way in which a teacher must come to terms with this. Therefore it would appear that teachers must orientate along an institutional/academic spectrum.

c. Considerations arising from literature as to practicable methodological approaches to the study of teacher groups.

Detailed suggestions for research into teacher/teacher relations are rare. One of those which should be considered is a chapter by Dan C. Lortie(1964) in a book on team teaching (Shaplin and Olds(1964)) The examination of team teaching gives rise to new perspectives on teacher/teacher relations. Lortie argues that there are two possible scenarios for the development of team teaching. These are vertical-bureaucratic, with a clearly defined hierarchy from team leader down, and horizontal-collegial, with a greater degree of shared decision making.

The first important point which Lortie makes is about the need for systematic research into 'team cultures' :

> 'It is clear that we shall need detailed observational reports which cover the subtle interactions involved in the development of team cultures. Close watch should be kept on how each team defines its norms and how individual members react to these norms. Records of conferences will necessarily be supplemented by observations of classroom behaviour and running accounts of the attitudes of teachers as individuals.....Such researches can profit from the experience of social scientists in a variety of settings, particularly the studies of industrial work groups.'

This is the conclusion which he comes to at the end of a section on authority systems and the teacher. It accords with the conclusions of other commentators in this field of research. Besides the authority system he examines the reward system and teachers, using the same differentiation between vertical-bureaucratic and horizontal-collegial which he has before. In this section he makes an important statement about teacher talk:

> 'Teachers talking about the good things in their work are likely, especially at elementary level, to mention the sociable intercourse they have with other teachers, and their talk reminds one of the 'pure sociability' described by Simmel, where people enjoy interaction per se. The work of

> teachers places them under two unusual strains. First, teachers to be effective, must be able to think and talk at the level of their students. Continued day after day, this can result in a kind of infantilization which teachers seem to fear, for it threatens their hold on adulthood and their self-esteem as mature persons. Furthermore teaching is a controlled activity where spontaneity in the classroom must be inhibited. Therefore, teachers probably need both adult sociability and relatively relaxed, unguarded interaction with others. Although teachers at leisure often do talk shop, autonomy-equality means that each teacher is talking about his unique experiences. Where his colleagues are equals, he can do so in a comfortable, off-guard way without too much fear of consequence for himself and his career.'

Lortie analyses the motivation for 'sociable intercourse' and suggests that the isolated nature of the task creates a desire for 'adult sociability' and 'relaxed interaction'. The latter notion more than hints at the importance of fronting in the teacher's role. This will be examined more closely when Corwin's work is discussed. There is also a brief mention here of 'talking shop' which is said to be 'often'. This notion of 'task-related talk' is referred to in much of the literature on teachers, but seldom is it much more specific than this. Investigation of such taken-for-granted comments is essential if teacher/teacher relations are to be properly examined. The third point which is commented on by this article, is that of the basis for choice amongst teachers as to friendship/social grouping.

> 'Emphasis on rank differences would decrease the pure sociability possible among teachers, at least in the presence of superordinates possessing genuine authority.....where teachers fear their superiors' judgments in class, it is unlikely that they will find it easy to mix with them outside. Research observers should watch these phenomena closely. Specifically, free period and lunch groups should be observed for tendencies toward grouping according to rank.....awkward situations may arise where the school staff is too small to support separate sociability groupings.'

This scenario is an important conclusion to the hypothesis of vertical-bureaucratic team teaching arrangements. It is present to some extent in traditionally organised schooling. The need to look at informal teacher groups and their role in the school is defined on the basis of time: free period and lunch. In this context adult friendship choices need to be examined. Therefore both who and what teachers talk to and about needs to be researched.

Another consideration when examining the structure of teacher groups is the work already done on pupil groups in schools. One such work has a number of useful comments to make on the nature of groups (Meyenn 1978). It seems reasonable to suppose that the comments should be considered in the light of teacher groups as well.

Meyenn points to a lack of research on both pupil/pupil and teacher/teacher relations. He then asks two useful questions:

> 'Do peer groups exist, in this case among 12/13 year old boys and girls, as a social reality and secondly, is the concept of peer groups useful in aiding an understanding of school and classroom behaviour?'

The answer which he gives to the first part of the question is affirmative, though he recognises 'that a certain degree of fluidity is present' but there are groups of pupils 'who exhibit relatively consistent patterns of behaviour' at least in terms of their outlook and relations with other pupils. If this is true for pupils, on another level it may be true for teachers. This must lead to the conclusion that techniques of group observation are not only useful with pupils but also useful with teachers. The data for Meyenn's study was acquired by means of participant observation, interviews and sociometric questionnaires. Perhaps these techniques might also prove or disprove notions about teacher/teacher relations. Meyenn

touches on teacher culture when he states that:

> 'They (the quiet girls' peer groups) are certainly a good example of the pervasiveness of the peer group in making the situation tolerable.'

This quote reflects a view of the group, in this case girls but by analogy teachers, according with other commentators (Lortie, Waller, Levy).

What is said amongst pupils in a peer group may differ in kind from what is said by teachers in their 'peer' groups. The state of the technology of teaching may be, perhaps, measured by a closer observation of how, what and when teachers talk to teachers. For example, Randolph and Finch (1977) present an interesting definition of technology.

> 'Technology is defined as the collection of plant, machine tools and procedures available for the execution of a task and also the rationale and knowledge underlying their use.'

They also conclude that technology does appear to influence the communication patterns in organisations. The degree of certainty of the technology can influence both the frequency and direction of those communications. The more certain the technology, frequency of communication goes down and tends to emphasise the importance of peers as opposed to superiors. Since schools are organisations and education is an industry, it might be appropriate to examine the technology of teaching as it is reflected in the staffroom.

One of the comments by Woods (1980), in an introductory chapter to articles on various elements of teaching, underlines the useful approach of Goffman (1969) to 'strategic interaction': there is pressure on teachers who admit that much of their activity is 'playing a part'. This is obvious in the classroom, but not so clear in the staffroom, especially when some commentators have referred to the

staffroom as being 'offstage'. Woods certainly concludes that 'this area would appear ripe for study'. Fuchs, in the chapter 'Help! Exploited' comes to the same conclusions when discussing teacher/teacher relations. Undoubtedly the applicability of Goffman's work is worth investigating. The idea of 'front' and the categorising of types of behaviour lends a ready made measuring device to the observer of relationships amongst adults. Not surprisingly, this opportunity has been taken up by Corwin (1965), Martin (1975) and Peterson (1975). Of these the most comprehensive is that of Corwin, who used Goffman's dramaturgical approach to examine what happened when conflict arose amongst teachers. He makes an important comment about the relevance of such studies to the sociology of the school:

> 'Evasion tactics, discretion, ignorance and joking are all familiar acts, but ones which are not commonly associated with the functioning of organisations and occupations. Yet, each of these processes has positive as well as negative functions for the organisation which are at present only faintly understood. Surely further exploration of these processes is as important in understanding teaching as a vocation as is the development of a new method of budgeting or a new pedagogical device.'

He concludes that:

> 'much more attention needs to be paid to discrepancies between the formal image, the implicit image and informal backstage behaviour.'

Later on this thesis will seek to re-interpret 'informal backstage behaviour'.

d. Summary.

a. The most useful approach to a study of teacher/teacher relations may be through the use of participant observation and interview.

b. Most teacher/teacher interaction is during breaks. Therefore that is likely to be the most fruitful time for observation.

c. There are several ways of using the data which might be generated from a. and b. Several analyses are required.

d. Any observable 'framework' or pattern must take into account the diverse factors impinging on teachers. Two of these may be called 'institutional' and 'academic'.

1.5. Concluding remarks.

There emerges from this literature survey many possible avenues of research. So far many kinds of approach have been used, but there remain substantial gaps in understanding the nature and content of teacher/teacher interaction. There are also unsatisfactory explanations of this area of school life. It is hoped that the rest of this thesis will be able to shed some light on these problems. Evidence from sociologists as to the nature and content of teacher/teacher interaction has pointed to the existence of informal groups indulging in task-related talk, consoling colleagues and simply enjoying a joke with other adults. Explanations as to how teachers choose their informal group, and why these groups exist, vary, but the answer may lie in the study of the groupings and the communications typical to them. Studies of other work groups have shown that the views of the group members, taken first-hand, have an important role to play in the explanation of colleague interaction. How these views are to be collected and the parameters of studying the informal teacher group are methodological questions which concern the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. Aims of the research

(a) Background

The first and most significant point which should be made from the start of a discourse upon the aims of this research is that it was the practical experiences of the researcher which prompted this line of research. With little understanding of any theoretical or sociological background, the colleagueship enjoyed by the researcher, whilst teaching in a secondary modern school, persuaded him that there had been substantial omissions from both the literature as presented on initial training and in subsequent in-service courses. Yet, through experience of other staffrooms, it seemed to the researcher that there was both considerable variation and consistency to the factor of colleagueship. Also the researcher's involvement, professionally, with in-service training made this interest more immediate.

A second factor was the development of the research itself. An initial research hypothesis read:

> 'The more informal and closer the relationships within a school based in-service training group, the more successful that group will be.'

And a further comment on this said:

> 'There are two ways in which "success" might be measured. One is the length of time a group is in existence; the other is the concrete changes institutionalised by the group into their school..... Another measure of success is the subjective views of the group on its own achievements, which would require careful handling since valid self-criticism is rare.'

These comments are worthy of comparison with the final hypotheses, both for their similarities and for their difference.

The third notable contribution to this research, sprang from

the literature, some of which, the most relevant, was recorded in Chapter One. A negative impression was created because instead of being able to read through the 'field' of teacher/teacher relations, it necessitated scraping each book or article to find a few lines or at best a chapter, vaguely concerned with teacher/teacher relations. Since this research began (1976) there have been many more relevant articles and chapters written than existed at all before. Even so, the extent of research in this area remains quite small, compared with literature on almost all other aspects of school life.

(b) Devising a set of hypotheses

With some guidance from tutors the literature survey developed various themes. Reading up on work on teacher/teacher relations tended to focus on American research, since there was very little available in British journals, to begin with. Three books were particularly helpful. These were Levy's 'Ghetto School', McPherson's 'Small Town Teacher' and Fuchs' 'Teachers Talk'. Not only did they contain 'commonsense' comments about teachers, but they actually had far more material in them than major works on teachers such as Waller (1932) and Lortie (1975), at least more about teacher/teacher relations. At the same time it was essential that the researcher should learn something about the theory of small groups. Homans came close to answering some of the questions about small groups which were forming. There seemed to be a gap between the type of group analysed there and what was by then being observed in a school. What it had decided for the research was that observation of a group was essential. Research based on questionnaires or interviews alone would not suffice. More discussion on this point is raised under the section on choosing a method. Still dissatisfied with the

commentaries which did not seem to go far enough into explaining teacher behaviour, the researcher read Sarason's 'The culture of the school and the problem of change.' This work added some depth to the growing awareness that the reason for not only this research, but others, taking a new look at teachers, lay in the fact that there are considerable pressures building up within education. Indeed, the modern teacher is more 'accountable' than ever before, to parents, to the community, to the advance of technology, and even to, quite naturally, the pupils. Looking at teacher/teacher relations for its own sake is interesting, but the use of it would be in producing curriculum change more easily and steadily than before. That is providing the analysis of teachers does not project some reason for despairing of change in schools.

Another line of enquiry which was developing simultaneously, concerned the problem of the teacher as a professional. Jackson(1968) and Dreeben(1973) both agreed that there does not appear to be a highly developed technology, nor a shared technical vocabulary. The idea that the language of a workgroup denotes its professionalism, or otherwise, reinforced the researcher's intention of examining what teachers were saying to each other. This theme grew as further reading defined from which sociological standpoint the researcher viewed the world. Basically, the outlook, which seemed most appropriate, was an interactionist one, along the lines of Schutz(1953), Silverman(1970) and Stebbins(1971). This was because the original hypothesis would not be feasible in its specific form, since it assumed too great an existing framework of knowledge about teacher/teacher relations. A standpoint which emphasised 'socially constructed meanings' allowed the researcher to avoid the danger of allotting variables before the ideal-typical sets of meanings were

abstracted from the data. Thus a new hypothesis was developed:

> 'What is the typology of shared stocks of technical knowledge in an informal teacher group?'

A number of subsidiary questions were generated at the same time, in particular:

> 'By what rules do teachers informally share technical knowledge?'

At this stage the idea of a 'group' was still too rigid. There were other articles which were to contribute to the development of the final hypotheses. At this point the outstanding articles which focussed in on the primary hypothesis started to surface. Greenberger and Sorensen's on 'Interpersonal Choice amongst a Junior High School' was more structured than the research had so far suggested was desirable. Still, it did corroborate some of the comments by Hargreaves as to what might influence choice of informal groups amongst staff. Together they formed the basis of an idea that the structure of teacher groups needed to be monitored in some way. Another angle was the problem of defining technical knowledge. Had any research been done on what teachers knew or needed to know in order to do their job? This had to be less specific than specialist subject knowledge, but, as Randolph and Finch (1977) put it, about the 'technology' of teaching. As far as the researcher could tell, and this still applies, no one had done this by putting together what teachers had said. One example of a specific part of this is an analysis of teachers' typifications of pupils (Hargreaves,1977). However, there was some work which seemed to come closer to this than anything else. When some researchers had considered the role of heads of department, or principals, they had enumerated lists of functions which they were supposed to perform. Examples of this were

Lambert(1975) and Taylor(1964). In particular, the lists of Lambert seemed as commonsense and useful as any. Naturally one would expect teachers to be concerned with different topics, but would the framework for analysis be helpful? The route led back to Parsons and Bales(1956) classic work on family groups. The framework seemed a suitable one to use as a basis for organising a typology, if the fieldwork ever yielded sufficient data to make an analysis. As it turned out the typology was not to be as straight forward as that. Nevertheless, it made the possibility of analysis seem more practicable.

There were other important strands too. For example, what about the many commentators on team teaching? Surely they had something to offer. This contributed two things. First, it reinforced, by using lists of staff topics of discussion, the idea that there was a 'technology' of teaching which staff had to communicate to one another. Here the work of Martin(1975) and DeRoche(1972) were useful guides to substantiating the more rigid lists of Lambert. McNamara and Desforges(1978) asked for just such an 'objectification'. In the same way other lists Rodger(1978) and Casciano-Savignano(1976) reinforced a notion of technology, though for slightly different reasons. Secondly, team teaching research also looked at the question of team membership. Indirectly this could be regarded as looking at group structure. At this point it was not clear that this would be that relevant, but just something to be borne in mind. It turned out that the research findings would give more weight to these accounts, such as Gallesich, Iscoe, Payne(1971) and Bredo(1977).

There were also some useful analogies to be drawn from the much larger body of literature on pupil groups. There were three

things which struck the researcher as being noteworthy. One was the fact that teachers identify certain pupil types which they frequently use to explain discontinuities in performance or expectation. It seems likely that they may also 'typify' colleagues in the same way. If there is such a thing as an 'ideal-model' pupil, perhaps there is an 'ideal-model' teacher. Second, analyses of pupil groups is often done by means of sociometric testing, what would be the effect of doing the same with teachers? Third, there is considerable importance given to what pupils say about school life. The same significance, if not greater, should pertain to teacher talk.

One area of importance in deciding what exactly the issues were which needed investigation, was the influence of colleagues at work. This was both informal and formal. Naturally the ideas which the researcher was developing surfaced when he spoke to some colleagues and friends in the teaching 'profession'. It is impossible to tell how far their reactions to his changing ideas actually shaped what he thought, though there must have been some interaction. Formally, he did try out three 'types' of questionnaire with teachers who were either 'available' or with whom he was specially well acquainted. He also discussed it with some senior staff, including the head, at a school which might have been an ideal location. These pilot schemes are included in the next section. As it turned out, the researcher did not use that particular school since he moved location. Nevertheless, the procedure design changed as a result and he may well have altered his perspective of the aim, though with hindsight, it was undoubtedly shaped much more by the data thrown up from the research and the literature than from the pilot work. More reference to

this in detail is under the next section of this chapter.

It seems appropriate, having mentioned, briefly, the history of the researcher's thinking on the issues of teacher/teacher relations, to state exactly what the aims became and the hypotheses which dominated the research. Before this is stated there is one caveat: these hypotheses were seen as the important aims of the research, but they were not viewed as incontrovertible maxims. From the literature survey, it was possible to come to many more conclusions than the ones which because of experience and interest the researcher chose to pursue. Indeed, the researcher felt that the data might at any time overturn any of them, and that it might even be necessary to devise a completely different set of hypotheses. Still, it was felt that even negative results are significant. In this light the major hypotheses are as follows:

(i) that teachers form a network of informal groups

(ii) that teachers share technical knowledge through task-related talk in groups

(iii) that a typology of task-related talk can be developed

(iv) that there are other useful typologies for explaining staffroom behaviour.

At the outset it was clear that the first two hypotheses could be justified from both the literature and the experience of the researcher. The second two were much more speculative and had much less to recommend them. However, it was the methodological considerations which determined, in part, this approach to these issues. While the research was likely to demonstrate the 'degree' to which the first two hypotheses were proven, there was no indication that either of the last two would even be valid hypotheses.

2.2 An appropriate method

(a) Background

Some indication has been given in the previous sections as to exactly what literature was influencing decisions about methodology. The earliest research proposal had contained a much more structured working hypothesis than that which developed eventually. Here is a part of that suggestion:

> 'There are two ways in which this could be measured. Firstly, a sociogram of the group to be taken as the group begins its activity cycle following discussion or learning sessions. Secondly, at the same time as the sociogram, an attitude test to determine the characteristics of teachers in the group. A correlation between these two measurements will be looked for....."Those teachers who score more than X on value/attitude test O will have a more integrated pattern than those who score below Y."'

This approach had been influenced considerably by using references such as Entwistle and Nisbet(1970). The assumption is that one could generate operational hypotheses which could be tested by questionnaire and sociometry. This holds good if one is prepared to forego a discussion of what is really happening in group situations and assume certain reified influences on human behaviour. It took some time for the researcher to reach the conclusion that this might be too narrow an approach to such an under-researched subject.

The researcher began to review the possibility of using an alternative paradigm. The approach to research chosen was based on the observations of Schutz(1953), Cicourel(1963) and Esland(1971), whose redefinition of sociology was in many ways a reaction to the 'restrictive practices' inherent in a traditional approach. The particular strength of this approach seems to lie in

Fig. 2.1 Proposed contract of participant observation.

Research into Teacher Interaction

There are three questions which I am investigating in this field.

1. Do groups of teachers acquire technical knowledge by informal methods?
2. How does a group of teachers acquire technical knowledge?
3. How much can it acquire informally?

One way in which I wish to investigate this is by observation of teachers in non-teaching situations, but within school. There follows a list of points which form a contract of observation which I would like to put to the staff at

PROPOSAL: That Mr. D. Allan Jones should be allowed to function as an observer in the staffroom of the teachers.

Terms of observation:

(1) Nothing be published or made available to anyone other than the observer and his academic supervisor, without prior knowledge of this staff, headmaster and L.E.A.

(2) That Mr. Jones be allowed to approach members of staff with a view to - a. Interviews.

b. Diary making. (A simple list of contacts a member of staff makes during the day.)

(3) Any member of staff may reserve the right to refuse to be interviewed or assist Mr. Jones in any way.

(4) That this observation is specifically not to alter the routine of the school or staff.

(5) That the staff and headteacher may remove the right of observation at any time, unconditionally. Mr. Jones will immediately cease observation on such notice.

(6) That Mr. Jones be open to account to the staff at any time over the progress of the observation. But that no information given in confidence be revealed to any other member of staff.

.....19

The above to be signed by myself as being bound by it.

its openness to micro-level research. Everything becomes important, and one builds upwards instead of down. What were the advantages of one approach as against the other in the situation or context of the researcher?

There were a number of discussions between the researcher and the L.E.A. as to the way in which this research could collect data. By consultation with two senior officers and a research supervisor from a local college, it was agreed that the best line of data collection would be by agreement with headteachers rather than by a mass survey of schoolteachers in the area. In order to facilitate this approach and make clear the terms of reference for the research, a document was drawn up (see Fig.2.1) to present to relevant heads. At the same time drafts were prepared of possible questionnaires or interviews which might be put to teachers about their interaction with other staff.

The literature on teacher/teacher relations has already been noted as being less than plentiful. This made the construction of a questionnaire or interview somewhat difficult. Several formats were investigated, but four in all might be identified as worth noting, including the final version. There were two problems. One was how the idea of 'technical knowledge' might be elucidated, the other was how to get reasonable replies to questions on teacher/teacher interaction.

To take technical knowledge first, a simple set of questions was prepared with closed responses on a scale of three. One 'open' question was left at the end to try and get a teacher's definition of technical knowledge, since this was a difficult, even misleading concept.

Fig. 2.2

Questions from initial (Type A) questionnaire.

How able are you in the following:	Above	Average	Below
Discipline within the classroom			
within the school			
Motivating children - formal work			
informal work			
Academic knowledge of child development			
at age range taught			
other ages			
Knowledge of local community			
home background			
Knowledge of specialist subject			
the three Rs			
presentation of your subject			

	Head or Deputy	Teachers in same Depart.	Teachers of own age.
Who do you consult most about problems at school?			
Who do you relax with during breaks etc?			

What do you understand the term 'technical knowledge' to mean, in the context of teaching as a profession?

. . . . . .

Question and instruction from second (Type B) questionnaire.

Make a list of the six points which you would mention to a new teacher at your school. Place them in order and give brief details.

There were several points arising from the above which led to further modification of the research procedure and method. The idea of classification, even though it was subjective, of ability within the areas defined (Type A) seemed to be superfluous, at least for the purposes of this study. The breakdown of 'technical knowledge' suggested in Type A was also pejorative to a genuine answer on the last 'open' question. It seemed unnecessary to have an assumption of a typology so early on. However, the second (Type B), was still an attempt to elicit directly some kind of typology of technical knowledge. Indeed, the pilot for this yielded some interesting data, though the sample was too small

to be significant. Basically, the points on which there was most agreement were on discipline, the acquiring of resources (both stock and equipment), drawing on the experience of other teachers and being adaptable in terms of teaching strategies. On the question of collegial support one reply is worth quoting:

> 'It helps to discuss problems with other members of staff. Often they have the same or similar problems to you.'

Although this reply and others emphasised finding things out from other teachers, and produced, or at least started to, a useful list of points which teachers regard as important to new staff, there was one drawback. This was that they were really saying what they would suggest to a new teacher. A lot of research has gone into the neophyte teacher, especially that by Lacey(1977). Nevertheless, this study was aimed at what teachers actually say to each other. Any kind of survey into this is only yielding second-hand data. What was required was something which could be a reliable primary source. One more attempt to achieve this via questionnaire was made.

Fig. 2.3

Questions from type C questionnaire.

1. What subject do you teach?
2. Do you teach pupil X ?
3. How many times a week?
4. What do you think of Xs progress?
5. Would you like any support for the teaching of X ? Suggest what.
6. Who else teaches X that you know? And know to speak to.
7. Has anyone approached you to discuss X?
8. Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about how to handle a discipline problem over X?
9. Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about how to motivate X ?
10. Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about X's understanding of content?
11. Have you ever organised an extracurricular activity for X's group? " " " " a special curricular " " " " ? Who with?
12. Is there anyone you would like to talk to about X, but haven't yet?

see over

Fig. 2.3. Cont.

13. Name three people who you would introduce to anyone new to teaching X ?
14. Where do you teach X ?
15. Have you had any contact with X's parents?

It must be admitted that Type C was a circuitous route to getting the data which would, hopefully, demonstrate the existence of teacher groups and the typology of their 'technical knowledge'. The decision to attempt this format arose from two different stimuli.. One was that at this stage it had become clear that teachers did talk preponderantly about pupils. Therefore, in particular after considering that what was required was a task-related appraisal, it seemed a valid way of approaching staff. Much better in fact than vague concepts of 'shared stocks of knowledge' and much more specific than the generalised boxes such as 'classroom discipline' or 'child development'. The other reason for this version was that it included both the elements of sociometric choice and the elements of open ended questions to produce data from the teachers themselves. However, there were substantial drawbacks, apart from the wording of some of the questions. One was the fact that it overly concentrated on the pupil. Since it was quite easy to choose a good cross-section of pupils throughout the school, it was in theory going to be quite straight forward. In practice, teachers were too easily distracted by trying to remember who X was, or what X had scored in a recent test, or whether X had got a merit mark this week. Plenty of detail about what teachers knew, but a little too biased by what X was doing. Asking about classes might have been a better idea. The other drawback was the fact that again the two problems of who staff talked to and what staff talked about were being handled together. It became clear that this was not the best approach.

The alternative to devising practicable questionnaires, for use in interview or by staff on their own, was to devise a smaller interview schedule and use participant observation to both collect data on the content of teacher/teacher talk and to back up the interview data on group composition. This had been the conclusion of the literature survey conducted at the beginning.

(b) The Method: the interview

The conclusions from the literature which were recorded then stated:

> 'The interactionist theory stresses 'the improvisational and emergent character of action'. The strength of such a position seems to lie in its emphasis 'that human beings are capable of making their own thoughts and activities objects of analysis.' To look on culture as a consensus of meanings provides one with a breadth of view which can take in new areas of research, carefully preserving an open-ended comment on an area which lacks documentation. Blumer says: 'While its progress may be slow and tedious, it has the virtue of remaining in close and continuing relations with the natural world.' This line is clearly spelt out in Silverman's 'Action Frame of Reference'. The theoretical outline is as follows: 'sociology is concerned with understanding action', 'action arises out of meanings which define social reality', 'particular constellations of meaning are only sustained by continual reaffirmation in everyday actions', 'through interaction men transform social meanings', 'the manner in which the everyday world is socially constructed.....becomes a crucial concern of sociological analysis'. Above all it must be remembered that 'the relationship between objects, acts and meanings is properly one of mutual determination.'

There follows from this a further conclusion:

> 'It is proposed to take up Silverman's recommendation of participant observation, and Bogdan and Taylor's rendering of the technique aligns with this sociological stance. Through participant observation I hope to follow Schutz's recommendation as set out by Cicourel and Kitsuse: basically using the definitions of the actors in the situation, that is their vocabulary and syntax which is the 'typifying medium par excellence', to classify the technical knowledge.'

Thus the decision to use participant observation as a major source of data, and in particular to generate a typology of technical talk,

was made.

This did not exclude consideration of an interview schedule which might support details of the typology and more importantly demonstrate the structure of the groups of teachers. Drawing on the previous piloted schedules and after a trial of the fourth 'type D', this is what the new interview schedule looked like. (See over.)

There were four questions which were primarily designed to aid the construction of a sociometric survey of the staffroom. These were numbers 6, 7, 8 and 10. Two others were aimed at taking up any 'slack' left by those four. For example, a teacher might not be able to say that they regularly talked with another teacher, but they may have had a close working relationship at some point in time. (Question 3). Alternatively, there might be a member of staff whose ideas and views they know of slightly or secondhand, but because of factors such as proximity of time and space, they may not have been able to form an informal relationship (Question 9). Question 1 was designed to categorise teachers by department, which was not always the same as the official school listing. Question 2 was designed to help analysis of proximity and teacher/teacher relations. Questions 4 and 5 (and to some extent 3) were designed to elucidate shared interests not necessarily revealed by the official school timetable or departmental structure. Question 11, which was picked up by the time the interviewing started, though not in the original listing, examined other shared interests between staff. These were usually social interests completely outside of task-related interest. The reason for placing the most important of the sociometric questions towards the end of the interviews was so that respondents would have had some time to 'warm up'. Responses were to be made to myself and there was no time limit to the interviews. Sometimes useful

FIG. 2.4

The following is a questionnaire devised by Allan Jones as part of a research thesis on the 'creation and transmission of a Technology of Teaching.' The research is under the supervision of Aston University, where Allan Jones is a registered research student. You are invited to assist with the research by answering these questions. There is no compulsion to do so. This questionnaire is entirely voluntary. This questionnaire is also anonymous, both as to the school and the teachers. The only person who will see the results of the questionnaire will be Allan Jones, though the results will go in a different form to assist the research thesis.

Reference No.

1. What subject do you teach?

2. Where do you teach?

3. Have you ever taught/planned any lessons with another member of staff?

4. Have you ever organised an extracurricular activity?

5. Have you ever organised a special curricular activity?

6. Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about discipline?

7. Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about motivating pupils?

8. Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about understanding content?

9. Is there anyone on the staff who you would like to talk to about teaching, but haven't yet.

10. Name three people you would introduce a new teacher to.

11. Have you any contacts outside of school with other staff?

replies had to be reslotted into the right place if respondents took longer than expected to mention significant points.

Some of the other factors in the interviewing were the time available and the type of responses given. The interviews of necessity varied in the time allowed. They rarely lasted less than half an hour, but they were sometimes interrupted. They rarely lasted above an hour, the length of a 'double' period on the time-table - between breaks. It was not made clear that it might be a 'one off'. Although many were, it was important to keep open the option of returning to a respondent, which the researcher often did. Indeed, several interviews were interrupted either at the request of the researcher or the respondent. Later they were resumed.

The venue for each interview depended on opportunity. It was essential to get every respondent in a relaxed and yet relatively quiet setting. This might be their classroom, study or sometimes one of the staffrooms when they were alone. But it is not 'natural' for staff in such a school to be alone for very long. For example, if they have a study it is because they frequently see pupils or staff there. Space in many secondary schools is at a premium. It was a case of allowing a 'natural' break to occur, when a member of staff would be likely to feel positive towards a searching set of questions. The alternative - summoning staff to the researcher in a separate study - would have made too formal a setting, as if they were being summoned by the headteacher.

(c) The Method : participant observation

The participant observation was designed along the lines suggested by Bogdan and Taylor,(1975) and Schatzman and Strauss, (1973).

Choosing the site.

The reasons for choosing Grassybank School as the site for this research were twofold. It was a suitable site. There were enough staff (76) to present a good cross-section of secondary teachers. The research into teacher/teacher relations already seemed to be weighted towards primary teachers; this would break new ground. More important the researcher knew far more about secondary education than about primary education. In addition there were three staff areas, each of which had a 'busy' informal atmosphere. It was a feasible site. Not only was the researcher located on site, but he had good reasons for moving freely around the site: my post (Scale 3) included responsibility for in-service training. More discussion of the pros and cons of participant observation follow in the 'concluding discussion' on this method.

The tactics of entry.

The first problem with this method is that of entry. This cannot be understated. While many people feel happy enough filling out a questionnaire, the idea of someone 'observing' their behaviour and perhaps reporting on it is far less desirable. Particularly so when much of traditional teaching takes place 'in private'. As has been already described, part of this had been done (see page 59). The headteacher had spent two separate occasions discussing the aims and procedures of the research with the researcher. In between these meetings he had consulted other senior staff and with very little qualification he allowed the research to proceed. This was partly facilitated by the fact that the researcher offered to do a small project concerning the pupils at the same time, as well as being directly responsible for the in-service training of some of the staff at the school. The presence of the researcher also

helped, to some extent, in linking the two sites of the school, since the more staff travelling between them, the better the communication. It is essential for such a long term observation and in-depth study to be able to offer something which will directly benefit the establishment, as long as it does not detract from the research itself.

Senior staff and the headteacher were thus appraised of what was happening. However, since the sites were multifarious and staff meetings of the whole staff extremely rare, it was left to myself to explain details and my aims to staff on an individual and group basis. This took place during the first three terms whilst mapping and initial trials of interview design were being made. A general announcement to the staff about the presence of a researcher was made through the school bulletin. Since it was not clear, at first, as to the possible dimensions of the research, this allowed considerable flexibility in handling queries from staff.

Mapping

The fact that this research was being conducted on a part-time basis meant that the samples of time had to be according to what was available to the researcher after other duties were completed. For example, though teaching took place in the annexe, if it was desirable to be at the main school at any particular time to see someone or something then arrangements had to be made to shift teaching duties. Usually this meant that the researcher negotiated with other staff. The last two terms of the research were much more flexible, since by then the teaching commitment was smaller and not timetabled. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there may well have been parts of school life which it was not possible to sample or sample adequately. In order to try to

offset this problem, at several points in the research some areas of school life were deliberately excluded when it transpired that they would not necessarily provide adequate data.

A similar decision had to be made over location. The chief locations which were sampled (multiple positioning) were the three staffrooms. Some sampling of other areas - resources rooms, corridors, classrooms - was attempted, though almost always the best data seemed to come from being in or near the staffrooms. Thus part of the positioning could be described as 'mobile', a necessary concomitant of studying informal groups and informal talk.

The last two considerations under 'mapping' as an operation, meant deciding how much it was possible for a single researcher to do and what degree of acceptance one seemed to be getting. As far as this goes, there are two observations: it was very easy to over-estimate how much could be seen, heard or recorded and it was pleasing to find that many colleagues were prepared to spend a considerable amount of time talking about school life as they saw it.

Watching, listening and recording.

In terms of strategies for 'watching', the researcher adopted all four of the techniques: a passive presence, limited questioning of occurrences, active control of occurrence through interview schedules and full participation in the life of the school. Of the four, the one which was possibly under-used was that of 'limited questioning' which is more essential for complete outsiders. However, it may be that the participation of the researcher was so involving that too many 'at face' explanations were accepted. Strategies for listening included 'eavesdropping', situational conversation and interviewing. The emphasis of the later stages of the research was

particularly on what teachers were saying to teachers. Therefore the balance between eavesdropping and situational conversation was deliberately controlled so that the temptation to swamp the natural dialogue of the group with directed talk would be avoided. Eavesdropping was easiest in staffroom C, where there was usually only one conversation in progress. Also a logical discovery was that meanings became clear in the context of time. Stay with a group long enough and it becomes possible to 'read' their talk.

Two points deserve mentioning as observations on the tactics of listening and watching. When 'listening' in the form of eavesdropping, the participant observer would usually sit 'in' the group, with a notepad on his lap or at hand, exchanging comments with the others, if this was required. As far as possible the researcher tried not to 'develop' conversations but gave 'neutral' comments. Occasionally this did not fit with what a 'participant' might be expected to say. In which case, he said whatever came naturally. Thus a certain amount of 'switching' of roles took place. The first few times this made the researcher feel schizophrenic. Later as it developed, it proved easier, indeed the two roles fitted better.

At times it was a great effort for the researcher to listen carefully and sympathetically to his colleagues. In fact the 'role-taking' image of the good listener was essential to an appreciation of the situation. However, the researcher persisted and found that listening became easier, while recall and note-taking were more efficient. The adjustment of the note-taking was as crucial as that of the listening. At first, it was tempting to try to write down everything that happened. Later, much was left unrecorded as the areas of greatest importance were 'focussed' in on.

Although there are advantages to using taperecorders, it seemed

less dramatic to simply make notes and to write up a fuller account afterwards. Much of what was said soon fell into recognisable categories which did not require detailed recording. Occasionally it was clear that a tape would have saved time, and effort. For the number of occasions when this was the case, it did not seem worth while carrying it. Also, as a teacher as well as a researcher it was not easy to carry a taperecorder into all of the teaching areas. The possibility of loss or damage were significant. Again, there was the possibility of losing valuable material because the mike was at the wrong angle or through background noise, which made this a less useful tool than it might seem at first sight. These comments are made after some trials were conducted.

The construction of the final notes was in prose, using the distinction of observers comments to cover remarks by the researcher as to theoretical or methodological points which occurred to him on observation or on writing up. The location and date of observation, as well as the 'actors' present were usually listed. Later on a procedure for analysing the seating of the groups was instituted, filling in seating diagrams for forty-one of the observations. The interview records were filed separately and according to number in the sequence of interviewing them. Later, for purposes of writing up the research, new names were given to the staff according to random choice from a telephone directory. Thus at no stage is anyone mentioned except by anonymous pseudonym.

Eventually there were two hundred days of observation, of which eighty-one had recorded conversations, forty-one had recorded seating arrangements and some twenty days were spent interviewing staff. Further details of the observation are carried in following table:

Table 2.1

NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS

BY LOCATION AND TIME

TERM	MAIN SCHOOL	ANNEX	MAIN SCHOOL AND ANNEX	TOTALS
SUMMER '77	0	1	0	1
AUTUMN '77	12	25	1	38
SPRING '78	7	9	1	17
SUMMER '78	5	37	1	43
AUTUMN '78	9	35	4	48
SPRING '79	8	34	10	52
SUMMER '79	0	0	1	1
TOTALS	41	141	18	200

N.B. Each unit = one day when some observation was recorded.

Terminology.

As far as possible there has been an attempt to curtail the use of words or phrases which are not commonly met in everyday sociology and even in common usage. Some of the phraseology, such as that on fronting, will be discussed in the relevant chapter, since it occurs nowhere else. Some of the words which will be used become defined in the research, but to avoid confusion some will be mentioned now.

informal - that which is not pertaining to the formal organisation or process of the school as an institution; that which pertains to the relationship of teachers outside of directed activities e.g. teachers talking in a group in the staffroom, but not their talk in a departmental meeting. (Sometimes synonymous with 'unofficial'.)

formal - that which is official school business and for which there is an organised format. (Sometimes synonymous with 'official'.)

the network - that discernible pattern of informal relations between staff in school, extending to relations with the same teachers outside of school.

the system - that formal organisation by which the business of the school is administered (functions).

teacher group - any pair or more of teachers having a short or long term relationship. This may be formal or informal.

matrix - the typology of teacher talk which is evolved in this research (on task-related issues.)

technical talk - task-related talk by teachers (in this research usually in informal groups).

shared stock of knowledge - task related knowledge which is mutually exchanged and modified by the 'network'.

(c) Description of the chosen site.

Location

Grassybank Comprehensive School is located on the margin of an inner city area. It has three areas where staff operate, and there is some division between them. They shall be referred to as A, B and C. On occasion area C is referred to as the 'annexe'. Of the three, area C was situated furthest away from the other two areas, which were only a short distance apart. In addition to the staffrooms, which will be described in some detail, there were resources areas which were used by staff both formally and informally.

Staffroom A

This was located in area A. (See Fig. 3.7) There was seating for at least thirty staff. The arrangement of the room allowed staff to enter from a corridor into a clear area near the noticeboards and the coffee/tea making facilities. Along the wall opposite to the door were windows overlooking the yard. In the corner nearest to the sink and coffee area there was a set of lockers and the telephone. In the opposite corner there were more lockers and noticeboards concerned with staff activities or union information. Except in this corner and by the door there were comfortable chairs around the walls, with wooden chairs and tables dotted about the middle of the room. Some of the comfortable seating had been pulled into a square around a low table just behind the door.

Staffroom B

This was located in area B. (See Fig. 3.7). There was seating for at least thirty staff. Again there was a clear area near the door and coffee making areas, which were adjacent to each other. At the opposite end of the room from the door and coffee areas was a

set of lockers. On the wall between the door and the lockers there was a set of noticeboards. On the opposite wall to the noticeboards there were windows overlooking the yard. Two rows of armchairs ran back to back down the middle of the room, faced by another row of armchairs along the windows. Near the lockers on both sides of the rows of armchairs were low tables with other comfortable seats around them. Towards the coffee area and door, but not immediately upon them were two round wooden tables with plastic chairs at which staff could mark more easily.

Staffroom C

This was located in the annexe. (See Fig. 3.8). There was seating for about a dozen staff. All of the noticeboards were near the door. The coffee area was also next to the door. Most of the clear standing area was near the door. Opposite the door, but in an alcove, was the telephone. There were windows opposite the door and also on the adjacent wall in the area furthest from the door. On the same side as the door there was a gas fire and a partition which screened off the sink. In the staffroom there was almost a circle of armchairs with two coffee tables, at the end furthest from the door. Three comfortable chairs were near the window opposite the door. There were no high tables for marking.

Transport

Most staff came to school by car or bus. A very few came by bike. Staff on buses met each other and travelled in on the same buses as the children. Some of the staff were involved in extensive car sharing, and many junior female staff came in through a lift by someone else. At home time, unless pressed, the staff would wait until the first rush of pupils had bused back into town, before getting a bus in themselves. This avoided long queues and the

inevitable problem of who controlled children at bus stops or on the buses.

Number and Sex

There were sixty-five teaching staff at the main school, of whom forty-five were interviewed and ten others spoken to in the course of the observation. In area C there were eleven teaching staff, of whom all were interviewed.

There were some forty-one male staff at Main School and some twenty-four female staff. Eleven of the female staff were not married. Area C had five permanent members of staff and two temporary members of staff who were male. There were four female members of staff, all of whom were permanent. Only one was not married.

Age

Of those staff interviewed most were under 40, though there weren't many staff who had only recently qualified. The vast majority of staff (male and female) were between the ages of 25 and 45. Only the head and a few senior staff were in their fifties or sixties.

Details of the formal organisation of the school are given in chapter three on the structure of teacher/teacher relations.

2.3. Concluding discussion of the methodology

Firstly, there is the issue of comparability both of this school with any other and of staff groups within this site. Comparability between schools is not a function of this research. It may well be possible to test out the same hypotheses in other schools, but the results could be very different. The researcher, through his role in in-service training, did not feel that this site was 'peculiar' or vastly different from many other secondary

comprehensive schools. In that sense, some of the research findings may well relate to what is going on in other schools. But it could never be a basis for dogmatic generalisation.

Comparability of staff groups within the site did present the researcher with the necessity of making decisions about subsites. The number of observation days in staffrooms A and B were just over a third of those spent in staffroom C, if the 'mixed' days are added in. As the data on teacher talk became more important, the number of observations in staffroom C had to be much greater, since more lengthy, detailed and 'single' conversations took place there. It is possible that a different focus, in a different location within the school might have produced quite different results. Hopefully these would be different in degree, rather than in kind.

Secondly, there is the issue of subjectivity in participant observation. The researcher was well aware that there was a barrier to objective analysis and recording. Commitment to the research might lead to either over-commitment or undercommitment to the groups which he associated with. The advantages of participant observation seemed to outweigh this problem. For example, there was much less time spent on 'entering' than an outsider requires. Also there was a vast quantity of information about the site which was available to a senior member of staff in the school. Another enormous advantage is the reciprocity of having teachers talking to the participant as a 'colleague'. Moreover, the researcher, in his participation was 'giving' to as well as 'taking' from the school. Some of the subjectivity created by the participant situation can be moderated. One way is to exclude data specific to the researcher. Another way of distancing the 'subjective' feelings of a researcher is through time. Although this research has been written up much later than

expected, it has allowed plenty of time for emotional distancing. The researcher can now feel non-judgmental, but at the same time sensitive to what happened. This should assist the analytical stages of the research.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STRUCTURE OF TEACHER/TEACHER RELATIONS

3.1. The formal structure of the school: the system.

One important premise which has come out of the literature survey (Iannaccone 1964), is that there is an informal as well as a formal structure to the life of the school. Levy (1969) referred to this as the 'counter-world' of pupils and teachers. The sociometric interview was designed to elucidate an informal structure, if it existed. However, it is important to remember that the school had a formal structure which requires some explanation before trying to decide on the existence of any informal structure.

The work of the school was organised under two formal systems, one academic and the other pastoral. The headteacher organised the academic side through an academic board, which consisted of two deputy heads, a senior teacher and the senior heads of departments. Posts of responsibility below senior heads of department also assisted in organising the academic/curriculum side of school life. Departmental staff with no particular responsibility made their views known in departmental meetings. The pastoral side was organised in two ways. First, it was through the deputy heads and senior teachers, looking after the disciplinary side of school life in particular. Second, there was the house system, which permeated through form tutors to every pupil in the school: this also controlled discipline and provided a sense of belonging in such a large school. Some pastoral care was provided through the careers master and mistress. Two diagrams are provided to demonstrate the links between staff which were thus facilitated by the 'formal' system. (See over). Throughout the diagrams there will be used a code of numbers for staff. The same numbers are used for the sociograms as well, thus some comparison may be made between the two.

TABLE 3.1

F O R M A L S Y S T E M

PASTORAL ORGANISATION

Head Teacher			71		
Deputies and Senior Teachers	32	30*	9	41	
Head of House	39*	31*	25*	50*	53*
Deputy Head of House	6*	57*	63*	62*	3*
	40	60	55	22	4
	68	18	58	49	36
	69	15	27	12	42
	37	76	19	72	43
	24	75	8	16	46
	44	7	28	66	47
	74	73	70	48	52
	10	11	33	17	
	34	45	26	29	
'Floating' Staff Members	35	38	51	13	1
	21	70	56	59	2
(* pastoral board)	5	54	65	64	67
	61	14	23		

TABLE 3.1a

ACADEMIC ORGANISATION

ACADEMIC BOARD	67	53	51	13	40	75	49	60	41	69	37	65	32	57	48
POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY		3	63		72		14	56		10	33		20	62	
		4			76		19	21			6		24		
N.B. Some of these staff taught at least one subject.					66			70							
								38							
								68							
								11							
OTHER STAFF (By Association with Heads of Dept.)		46	18		35		5	22			27	25	7	15	
		36	55		74	29	12	28			73		26	16	
		42	30			44	58	54			31		59		
		47	39				17	61			50		23		
		52					8	45			64				
		43					34								
		1													
		2													

Supporting conditions for the dual system.

The academic board was designed to deal with problems arising from both internal academic organisation, e.g. setting, to dealing with external academic pressures such as the exams at 16, e.g. C.S.E. and 'O' Level G.C.E.s. Wider issues such as homework allocation and narrow ones such as the placement of an individual pupil were also responsible areas. While the chairmanship of this group was left to the second deputy, and meetings were held regularly every two weeks, the influence of the head was often felt since the deputy would use the meeting to relay information from the head on academic matters. There was rarely much dissension about the head's decisions, though comment by the board was invited. On the other hand much of the organisation was delegated amongst senior staff so that the board received reports to it from each responsible staff member. A typical decision by the board might be that two staff should co-ordinate a particular schedule, for example, the arrival and placement of first year pupils was the responsibility of one senior teacher, who would then liaise with each head of department in turn. Thus the board was not meant to carry out the responsibilities of academic organisation which were devolved hierarchically, but to facilitate their co-ordination. Major issues were always referred to the head. Board meetings also allowed for the senior staff to ventilate on their grievances, although some of the clashes, e.g. interdepartmental, could not be solved in this arena.

In some ways the academic board was a partnership of equals. It recognised the importance of the role of the senior heads of departments and their departments. It gave them the opportunity to apply pressure in the directing of decision-making on academic affairs. This was extended as the deputy responsible for timetabling ran this

group and the timetabling was on a block basis. Thus each head of department could organise their own 'patch' with less consultation and compromise than otherwise. Nevertheless, hierarchies existed within this partnership of equals. One reason for this was that some heads of department had larger departments than others. Some had more prestigious departments than others. It was generally acknowledged that the English, Mathematics, Science and Remedial departments were of importance and others less so. Some of the hierarchy sprang from other positions which a staff member held besides that of departmental head. Extra responsibilities had differentiating effects, such as testing internally, or of new entrants to the school, organising C.S.E. entries, or O level G.C.E. entries, and responsibility for the timetable. Responsibilities held in the pastoral sphere caused further hierarchical influences. Two of the board had specific responsibility for boys' discipline and welfare, one had specific responsibility for girls' welfare and discipline. Two of the academic board had a regular role on the pastoral board. The more obvious hierarchy was between those who regularly sat on the academic board and those who didn't. Sixteen staff had a regular place on the academic board, but twenty-five other staff held 'posts of responsibility'. Thus a large number of staff could be invited to attend on occasion, though their influence and interests were obviously much subordinated to those of the permanent board. Below that rank, all staff could rely only on departmental meetings to pursue academic matters. There was another way of getting things done. This involved participation in the other system: the pastoral board and the house system.

The pastoral board was under the control of the first deputy and was commensurately a more prestigious body. It had fewer members (10) and its hierarchy was more clearly defined. It had the power to

interfere in the arrangements of the academic organisation at several points. For example, heads of house were responsible for keeping records on pupils, which were sent from the departments to them. Again, the head of house could recommend a change in the 'band' or group which a pupil had been placed in. An effective merit and demerit system was also used by everyone and this was kept by them. School assemblies were organised on the basis of house and so were the form groups. Thus each head of house had particular forms in their house. Most staff referred to their head of house over disciplinary matters. The duties of staff were also organised on the basis of their house. Circulars to pupils came through the house system and attendance was monitored by the heads of house. Heads of house were also responsible for monitoring the attendance of staff belonging to their house, even those staff without specific forms who were 'attached' to each house as 'floating' form tutors. Thus, in some ways, the school was almost a set of five smaller schools.

The pastoral board consisted of the five heads of house, their five deputies and a senior teacher, besides the deputy who chaired the meetings. The deputy was responsible for calling these meetings which might be quite frequent if some occasion, e.g. parents' days, required considerable organisation. At the same time, each head of house was expected to contact either the deputy or the headteacher in the event of exceptional difficulties over particular pupils. As a back up to the house tutor system, there were three other groups whose roles interconnected and overlapped. On health and hygiene, a matron based near the heads of houses, was expected to oversee decisions possibly requiring pupils to be sent home or to hospital. Again, the deputies and senior teachers, six in all, had oversight of discipline for girls and boys, depending on gender, so that at any

time a senior staff member was available to deal with misconduct. Only one of these was in fact a head of house, and the rest were not in the 'house' system. The third supplementary support on the pastoral side was the two staff responsible for careers guidance. They provided help in the fourth and fifth years, in conjunction with outside careers officers, making it easier for pupils to orientate to their future on leaving school. The two systems generally operated without too much difficulty side by side. Some commentators (Hargreaves 1980) have seen this duality as a source of disharmony. At this school the difference was positively encouraged in the hope that there would be fewer pastoral problems.

3.2. The informal structure of the school: the network.

It is clearly much easier to study the formal indicators of school life, e.g. number of staff meetings, than to discover the informal transactions between pupils and teachers. These transactions are referred to as being 'informal' when they occur in an informal setting, e.g. between teachers in the staff room. Although recognising that informal interaction can occur in a variety of settings, this thesis was concerned with informal interaction in informal settings. It is impossible to completely extricate an 'informal' model from the workings of the formal - they are, in practice, mutually interdependent. Nevertheless, and because of this, it is from the informal transactions that the researcher sought to derive most of the data. The interview data was designed to do this by using sociometry.

The decision to use interviews and generate from the data sociograms of teacher/teacher relations, was one of the earliest concepts behind the research. It is not necessarily the best way to discover the 'informal network', but it has the advantage of being well tested amongst pupils (Meyenn 1978). Something is quite likely to emerge from such a study, though it may not be taken-for-granted

that the results will show any 'significant' patterns. It is also possible that the questions may be incorrect or misleading, so that what is shown is not the 'informal network', but some reflection of the 'formal system'. There is also the danger of simply revealing 'friendship patterns'. This would not be the same thing as an 'informal network' either. Therefore, throughout this report on the findings and the analysis of the sociograms, there will be reference to these and other factors which may or may not distort the results. It is the view of the researcher that these 'influences' are significant, but not to such an extent that they undermined the validity of the findings.

The interview data

Interviews were held with 45 out of 65 teachers in the main school and 11 out of 11 staff at the annexe. In total 56 out of 76 staff replied to the sociometric questions which were part of the interview. 10 of the remaining staff had interviews with the researcher. This data is not included with the interview sociometric data since those interviews were not completed in accordance with the schedule. The excluded data and the 9 staff, besides the researcher, who were not interviewed, were not included because the researcher felt that the previous 56 respondents had yielded sufficient data to make a valid analysis of the 'in-depth' areas which the observation concentrated on.

The sociograms have been constructed on the basis of the first two choices for questions 6,7,8 and 10 amongst main school respondents and all choices on 6, 7, 8 and 10 for annexe respondents. All choices are shown for both main school and the annexe on question 3. This is because the diagrams of the sociometry of main school respondents would have been too complex. However, on the analysis of mutual

choice and integrated triplets there has been an allowance for all choices. Data from questions 1 and 2 have been included in the analysis at later stages, e.g. location or subject affiliation. Other questions, 4, 5, 9 and 11, were only used as background 'support' for the information from questions 3, 6, 7, 8 and 10 of the interview and to give the interviewer 'time' to digest the basic data from the other questions.

One alteration to the responses was made in order to overcome 'bias' of informal structure by the formal. Whenever respondents used a formal title to indicate with whom they would consult, the response was monitored but ignored. The aim was not to discover with whom the teacher thought they ought to talk, but with whom they actually did. This bias was an inevitable problem which arose mainly as a result of too little 'warming up' time being allowed with a few respondents. Otherwise the respondents order of choice is adhered to.

Three further points should be noted about the construction of the sociograms. One was always to state first and other (referred to as second) choices, even though on some questions, e.g. question 3, this was not essential to the construction of a sociogram. Second, the decision not to interview some staff was made on the basis of choosing interviewees according to proximity and departmental affiliation. When it was felt that enough data was gathered about some departments in particular, and all departments in general, then data collection was halted. This consideration was partly affected by the time available. Lastly, reciprocity of choice was not essential on these questions. Therefore all the question sociograms show choices rather than just reciprocal choices. Later, when the data is analised across several questions, the extent of reciprocal choice is investigated.

(a) Data from the questions

Sociogram from Question 3.

'Have you ever taught/planned any lessons with another member of staff?'

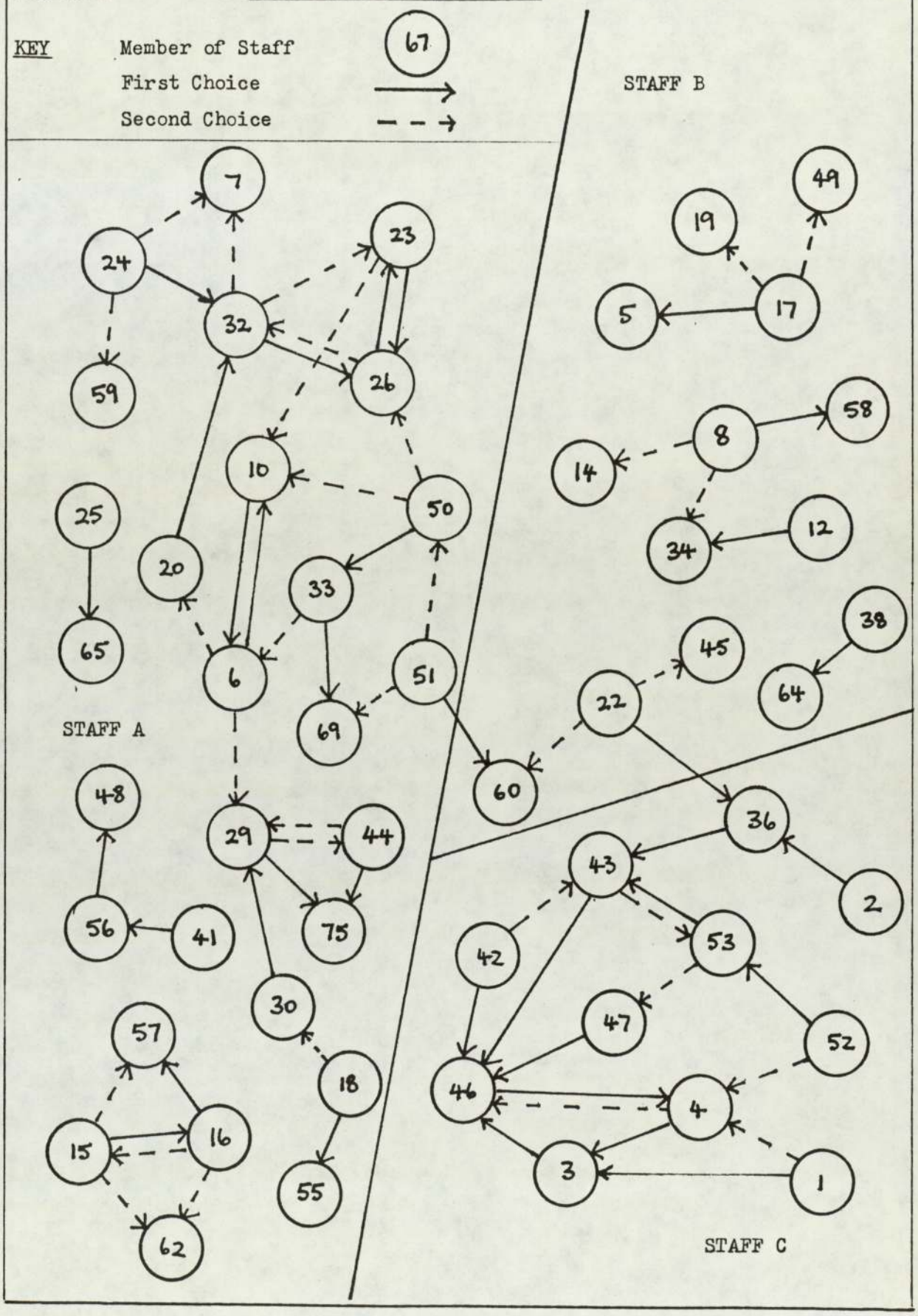
The sociogram which emerged from this question would have reflected, in some schools, a formal teaching arrangement. But this school was entirely traditional, with provision for individual teachers to take individual classes. It was worth testing whether any staff had formed relationships with other staff which might have actually altered the pattern of work in the school. It must be emphasised that this data would probably bias the overall data in favour of departmental or subject orientation, so it has been treated both separately and together with the other sociometric evidence.

The predictable subgroups of teachers are almost all of a departmental nature: 15, 16, 57, 62 (P.E.); 5, 19, 49, 17 (Science); 23, 26, 32, 7, 24, 59, 20 (Remedial); 25, 65 (Music); 50, 33, 69 (Geography). There are exceptions though: 51, 60; 6, 10; 56, 48, 41. Nearly always the cross-departmental groups were because they taught the same class, at different times, and had got together to organise a project on a theme. One teacher would cover one part of the theme, the other would teach some other dimension e.g. 6 and 10 had respective interests in religion and history.

There was another reason why these particular staff co-operated. Some of them had rooms in close proximity e.g. 6 and 10, 56 and 41. Thus it would be relatively easy for resources to be moved, e.g. visual aids, or pupils, without causing much disturbance. This was operational within departments too, e.g. 23 and 26.

Some teachers clearly enjoyed joint ventures: 23, 26, 32; 6, 10; 29, 44; which they had more opportunity for, but unlike other staff they wanted to make use of this as a resource in their teaching. The

Fig. 3.1. SOCIOGRAM FROM QUESTION 3



scarcity of this type of choice remains the overriding factor though. Thus the traditional teaching pattern prevailed intact within the school.

Sociogram from Question 6.

'Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about discipline?'

The data from this question suggests that there are groups of teachers talking about discipline, and that there are some staff who are seen as being particularly worthy of consultation on this issue. Also the influence of proximity on choice was important, though not in every case.

The identifiable groups of teachers were 7, 24, 38, 68, 39, 63, 40, 31, 6; 61, 34, 11, 54, 37; 29, 26, 23, 32; 50, 48, 27, 69, 20, 16; 41, 49, 17, 19, 28; 18, 55; 56, 25. These chains are not well-integrated networks of mutual choice but the teachers are connected by choice, and there is supporting evidence from observation as to the basis for their interconnection. The first group contain a nucleus of female staff who had been at the school some time and were of similar age and status, these were 39, 63, 40, 31. The second group were also female and shared staff area B, most of them belonging to the design department. The third group were female and belonged to the same subject area. The fourth group were male and came from the humanities subject areas, as well as staff area A. The fifth group was male and belonged to the same subject area. Two of the mutual choices were based on being female and the same subject (18, 55) and male and the same house group (56, 25). It would be too presumptuous to describe these groups in detail. The evidence for their existence from one sociogram on one issue is thin. In sections (b) and (c) some consideration of the nature of the divisions and groupings amongst staff will be analysed across all the sociometric data.

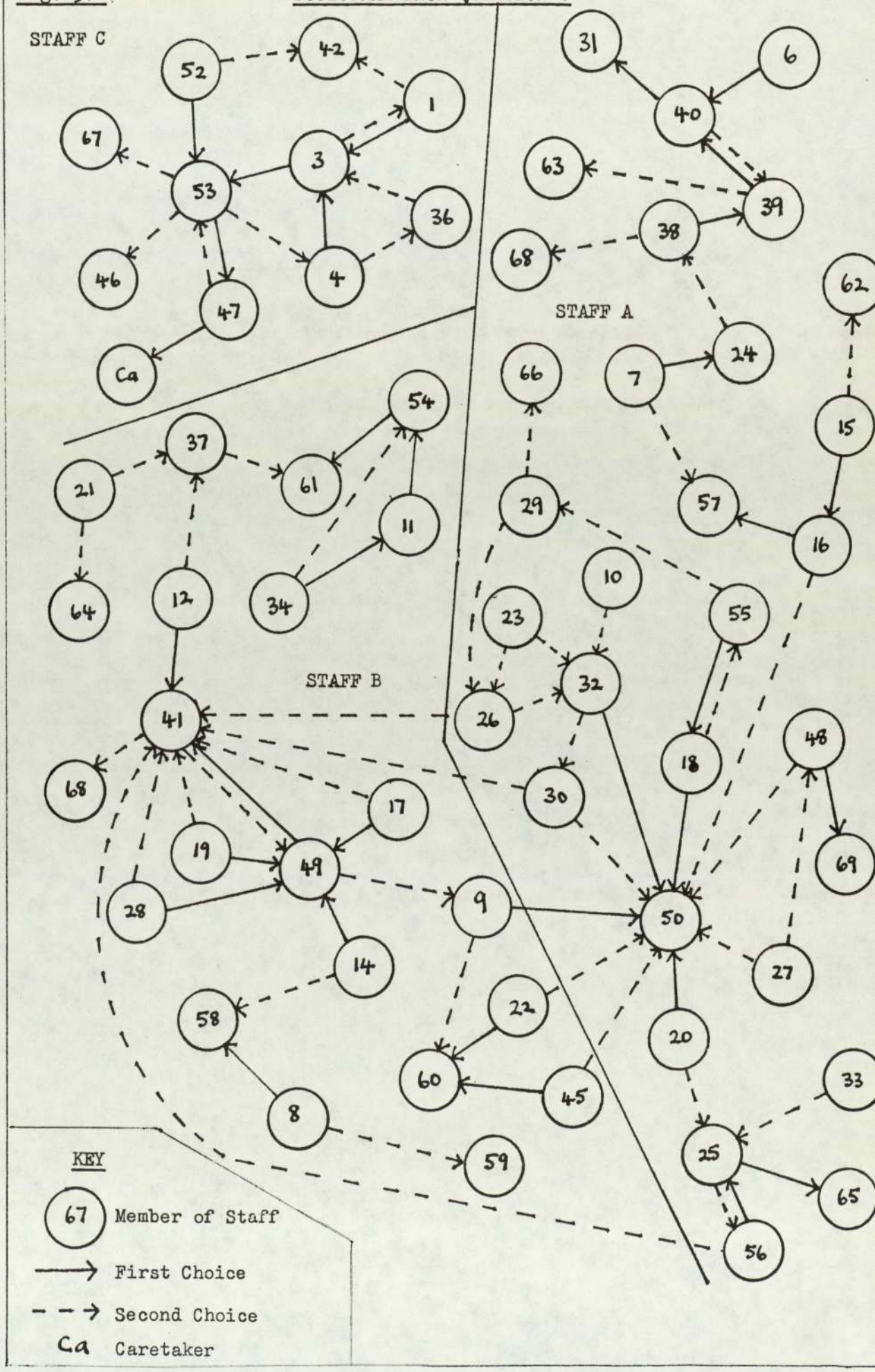
The whole sociogram displays more than the possible existence of this or that group, there is the significant influence of choice

orientated to certain key teachers. It can be seen that 50, 41 and to a lesser extent 49, are 'star' teachers. They have decisively influenced the direction of choice and drawn on a range of sex, age, department, house and staff area. For example, 50 is chosen by female (18, 32) as well as male staff, young (22, 45) as well as older (9, 32) staff, his own department (20, 48) as well as others (16 P.E., 9 Maths, 22 Art), his own house (22, 48) and others (45,9,27) as well as members of staffroom A (32, 18, 16, 20, 48, 27) and staff room B (9, 22, 45) although there were fewer choices from the second, since 50 tended to frequent staffroom A. The same is true for 41, though not for 49, who is chosen only by one staffroom.

Proximity does play an important role in dividing choice. There were only six points at which the staffroom boundaries were crossed. These relate to the choosing of a 'star' teacher on each occasion. In particular there is no link between staffroom C and the other staff rooms.

At a superficial level, it can be seen that senior male staff (50, 41, 49) are getting chosen on the issue of discipline. It is quite understandable. What is not clear is why other staff, some of them male (9, 25, 60) and some female (30, 31, 32, 39) of similar or greater (9, 30) rank are not getting their 'fair share' of choice, if the 'formal' system is actually working. Clearly staff chose 'from' staff recognised by the formal system. Their interpretation and use of it establishes the 'network'.

Fig. 3.2. SOCIOGRAM FROM QUESTION 6



Sociogram from Question 7.

'Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about motivating pupils?'

The data from this question suggests that there are groups of teachers talking about the motivation of pupils, but that there are no teachers who are seen as particularly worthy of consultation on this issue, and that proximity of staffroom area is an important factor in deciding with whom teachers consult.

The groupings of teachers on the first two choices for this question are quite 'loose', with few mutual choices (only five). The typical subgroupings which can be identified are 32, 26, 23, 29; 21, 22, 11, 45, 61, 37, 60; 19, 5, 41, 28, 49, 17; 48, 50, 69, 33. These groups are not sociometrically very integrated, but in collegial relations, as opposed to friendship patterns, this is not necessarily an 'a priori' requirement. What one should be expecting is a link of some kind between teachers who are associating in the staffroom, on the evidence of observation. From one question alone it is unlikely that the nature of staff relations will be discovered, rather, a series of questions which will elicit series of links between staff. Thus the loose ties of this question may yield little on their own, but will add to the final analysis by mutual choice. What is significant is that some of these links reappear in other sociograms. In other words there is an ongoing relationship between subgroups of teachers within the staffroom.

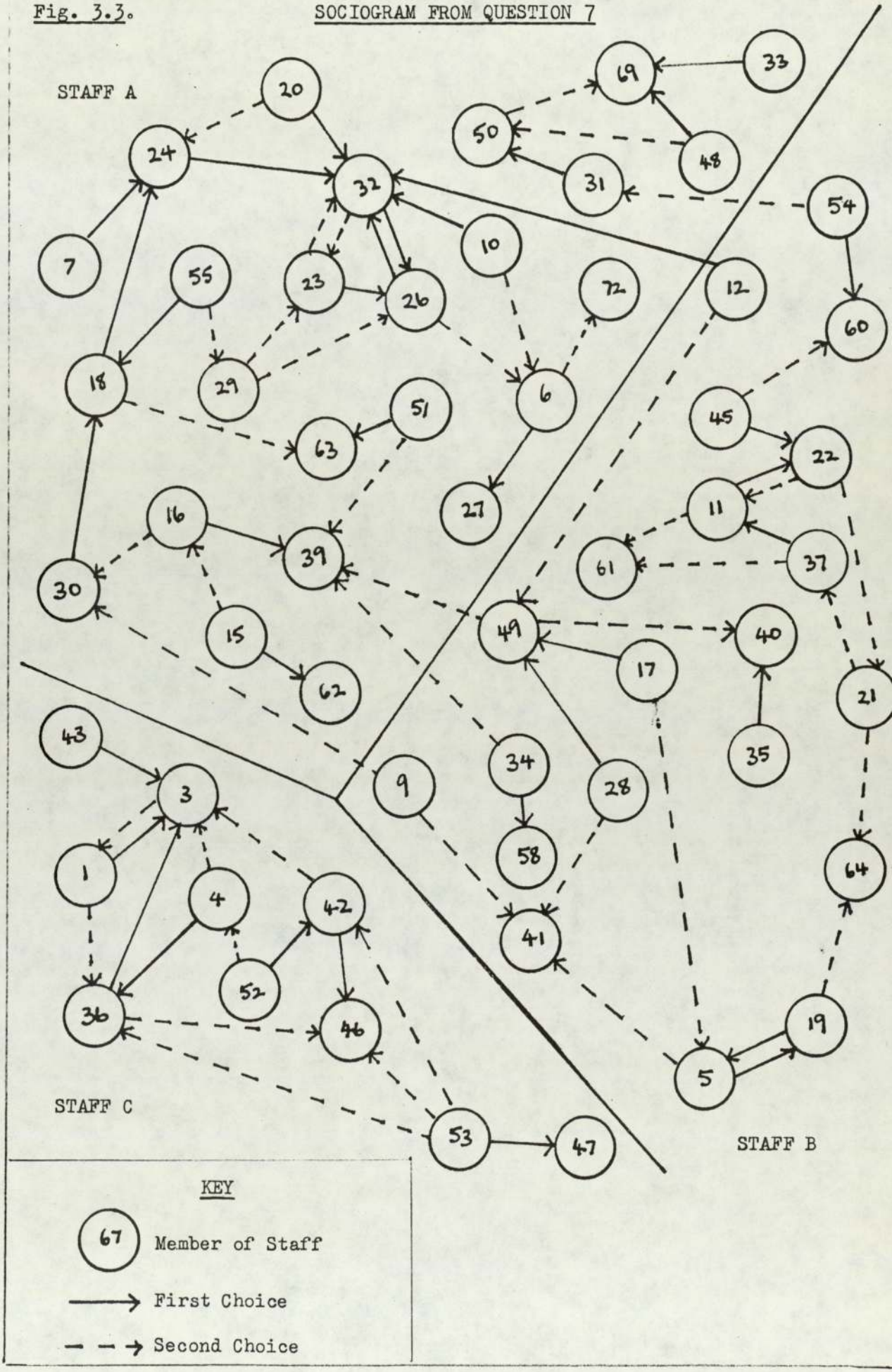
The contrast between this sociogram and those of questions 6 and 8, lies in the comparatively weak 'star' teachers. 32, 39 and 3 would appear to have been chosen at least four times. Relative to the number of possible choices this is not outstanding, at least three others got three choices and many more got two choices. An

interesting point about these three teachers was that they were all female and held positions of responsibility. Since this question is related to pastoral care it suggests that some female staff may be seen as important models in this area.

There were some choices which crossed the staffroom boundaries. These were 54/31, 9/30, 34/39, 49/39, 12/32. However, the general trend of choice was to choose from those within one staff area. The choices across those boundaries were often (4 out of 5) second choices and never reciprocated. They were usually made with at least one senior staff member, either a deputy or senior teacher, which would have emphasised the higher mobility of those staff. Thus proximity was an essential force in moulding the development of teacher/teacher relations.

The question of 'motivating pupils' brought out little evidence, on its own, of the structure of subgroups or use of model staff as reference points on this issue. Teachers clearly talk to other teachers about motivation or getting pupils interested; otherwise there would have been no data. The lack of direction on this issue may mean that it is not as significant as educationists would like it to be. Perhaps teachers do not perceive the problem except in terms of the subject they teach, when they can get direction from the head of department or the examination board. The teacher groups which emerged were bound by subject affiliation in all cases. The weak definition may also reflect the fact that this was not a problem for this school: its multiracial catchment area took in many highly motivated pupils from minority ethnic homes.

Fig. 3.3. SOCIOGRAM FROM QUESTION 7



Sociogram from Question 8.

'Which teachers, if any, are you most likely to talk with about understanding content?'

The data from this question suggests that there are groups of teachers talking about their pupils' understanding, that there are certain teachers who are seen as particularly worth consulting on this issue, and that proximity plays an important part in deciding with whom teachers consult.

The groups of teachers which emerge from an assessment of the sociogram do not appear quite as significant as the 'star' member of staff with whom so many wish to consult. Most groups would appear to have members who link them to the 'star' teacher. Even proximity does not bar the staff from B staffroom from associating with the star in A area. For example, 49 is chosen by 32 (who is also chosen by 49 on a later (3rd) choice). Nevertheless there are small subgroupings of teachers: e.g. 23, 26, 29, 40; 14, 17, 49; 17, 56, 19, 5; 6, 69, 33, 50, 48; 60, 45, 22. These are not necessarily defined by mutual choice, though there is some. Rather they reflect the possible lines of communication which may be operated by an informal network of teachers. This type of sociogram might be termed a 'grapevine' rather than a 'network'.

The star status of 32 in this sociogram is quite clear. Deputies (30, 9,) a head of department (49) and several staff from other departments (37, 34, 21, 20, 25) and staffrooms sought the advice of 32. This teacher had responsibilities on the pastoral side and as a head of department on the academic side. The nature of 32's duties took into account talking to many staff about pupils entering the first year classes in particular. Also the withdrawal of pupils with learning difficulties might depend on 32's co-operation. On the other

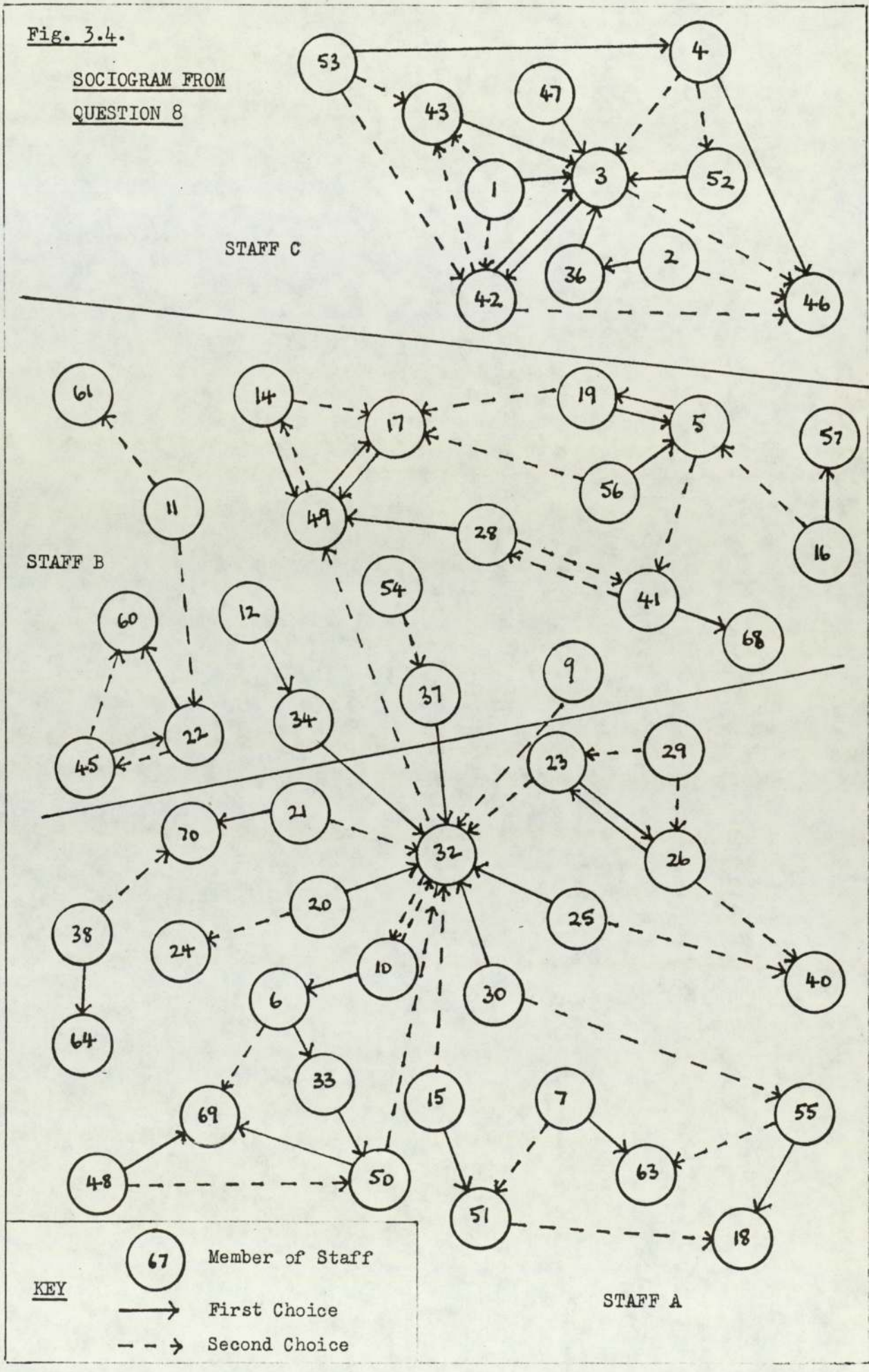
hand very well established staff with status in other areas (e.g.50) found themselves relatively obscure. Therefore 32 was regarded as formally important and informally important. The two roles coincide. The position of 3 in staffroom C is analagous.

There is one division which can be seen to be interwoven with the sociogram. Proximity of staff areas virtually cuts the sociogram in three. Subdivisions exist beyond this, often on the basis of department or subject, e.g. 64, 38, 70, 21 (woodwork and metalwork) and 14, 17, 19, 49, 5, 41, 28 (science). Whereas the division on lines of department may be loose or tight, the boundaries created by proximity are very clear cut and consistent. Apart from the choice of 32 by members of staffroom B, there were no other cross staffroom choices from the first two choices by anyone in any of the three areas.

The issue of 'understanding content' caused teachers to choose a particular member of staff with whom they had experience of useful 'talk'. The emphasis given to a head of a remedial department demonstrates the nature of the prime issue of 'understanding' presenting in an inner city comprehensive. Rarely does the formal system of any school attribute that much importance to one area of the curriculum. This sociogram on this topic suggests that, given a 'model' member of staff, the informal network may well reflect the real importance of the issue.

Fig. 3.4.

SOCIOGRAM FROM QUESTION 8



Sociogram from Question 10.

'Name three people you would introduce a new teacher to.'

This question anticipated that there are teachers whom their peers regard as more useful contacts than others. This is presumably because their contact with that member of staff has been helpful in a collegial way.

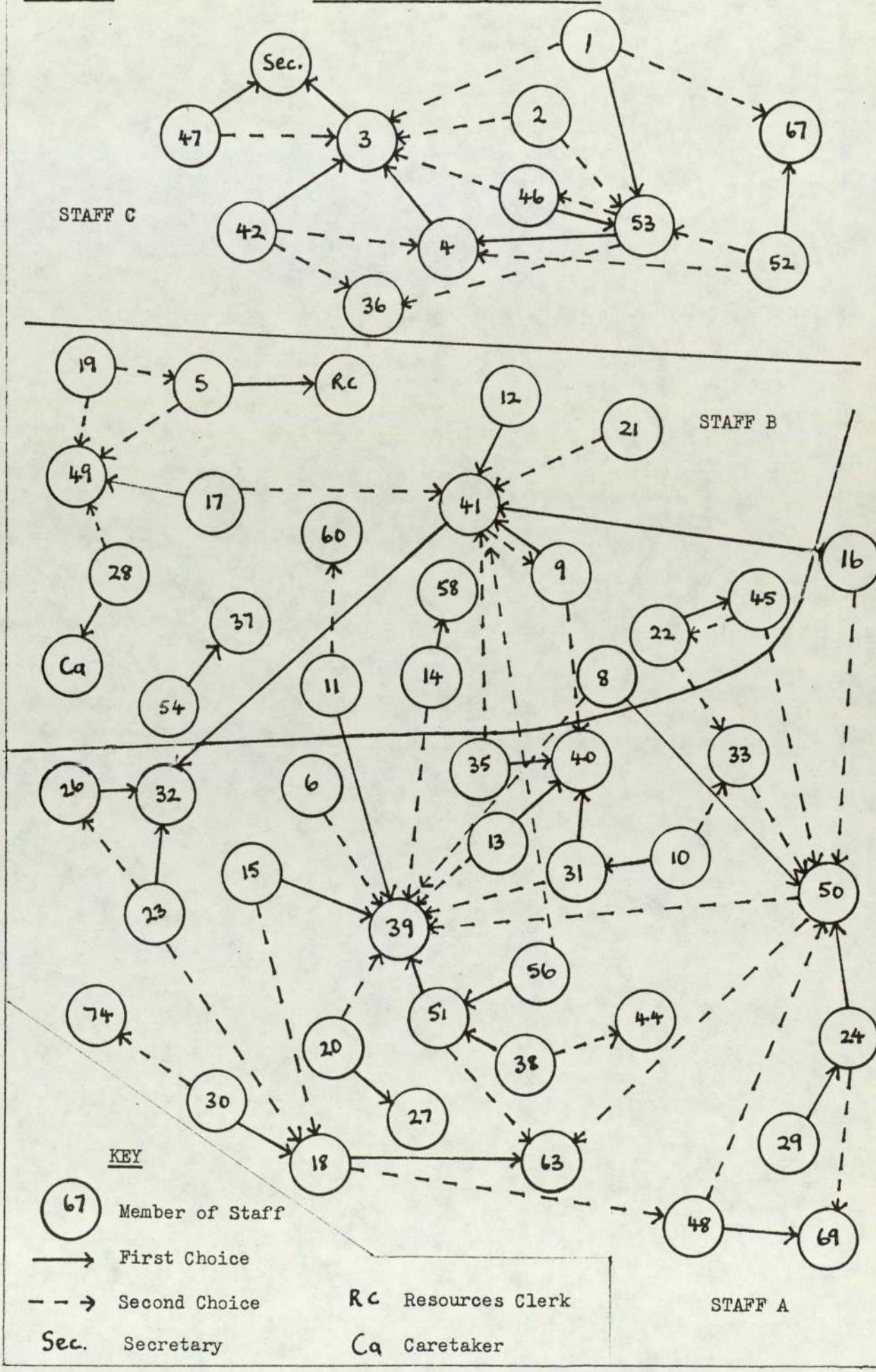
The data yielded three observable points of interest. Firstly, the groups of teachers are rather loose and ill-defined. However, some chains of interaction can be tentatively sorted out:
51, 63, 18, 30, 74; 48, 69, 24, 50; 10, 33, 22, 45; 17, 41, 49, 9; 32, 23, 26, 18; 46, 53, 3, 4. These chains are not as clear or consistent as some of the other sociograms demonstrate. The reason lies in the strong effects of the second point of interest.

There is an overwhelming distortion created by the choice of 'star' members of staff: 41, 39 and 50. Of these 39 has an immense 'pull' on the choice of staff. This is not confined to one staff area, nor one department, not even to the house or pastoral organisation of the school. It seems to reflect a general awareness that certain staff were almost 'models' or 'ideal types' which others could refer to. It was a surprisingly strong result for such a limited survey. The one exception was the staff choices from area C. These chose 3 as their 'star'. It is significant that although the stars enjoyed formal status in the school, they were not the only staff with a high formal status. It may be even more important to find out why other high status (formal) staff did not score significantly.

Proximity of staff areas was clearly an important factor in the isolation of the choices of staffroom C. The usual barriers between staffrooms A and B were less significant on this sociogram. In all there were eleven cross staffroom choices. This meant that staff in

one area were likely to choose 'model' teachers from areas which they did not normally frequent. Were there any other underlying reasons for this? The choices across the staff areas were as follows: 11-39, 56-41, 41-32, 16-41, 9-40, 35-41, 56-51, 8-39, 14-39, 22-33, 8-50. (Choosers come first). Although each choice may be explained away, for example the erratic choice of 22 actually relates to his friendship pattern with other younger males (33), those who chose the 'star' members of staff were also motivated by the fact the choice of a star teacher was usually the best way for a new teacher to key into the atmosphere and traditions of Grassybank. The factor of proximity bore on this in two ways. First, it meant that less mobile staff, such as juniors were not likely to be chosen by those from other staffrooms, while the senior staff drew on wider groups of teachers. The second point is that a new teacher would want to see parts of the school which were not readily available to less senior staff. Of course, the boundaries of proximity of staffrooms were still the norm for most choices even on this question.

Fig. 3.5, SOCIOGRAM FROM QUESTION 10



(b) Analysis of the data

Analysis of the sociometric data according to mutual choice.

All five questions (3,6,7,8,10) were analysed according to mutual choice. The resulting pairs of teachers were found from questions 6,7 and 8: 1/3,1/42,3/42,4/52,3/53,47/53,6/10,5/16,5/19,8/22,6/26, 11/22,17/19,9/30,10/32,6/39,18/30,20/32,23/32,24/32,26/32,30/32,5/41, 17/41,19/41,28/41,39/40,45/22,14/49,17/49,32/49,31/50,37/54,18/55, 56/17,25/56.

A further set of pairs were created by adding the results of questions 3 and 10 to the data from questions 6,7 and 8: 4/46,43/53, 3/4,53/46,14/8,7/24,15/16,23/26,33/6,33/50,44/29,41/56,31/10,41/9, 49/5,31/40,49/41,18/51,10/50.

The large numbers of mutual pairs suggests that the finding of Bishop(1977) are substantiated:

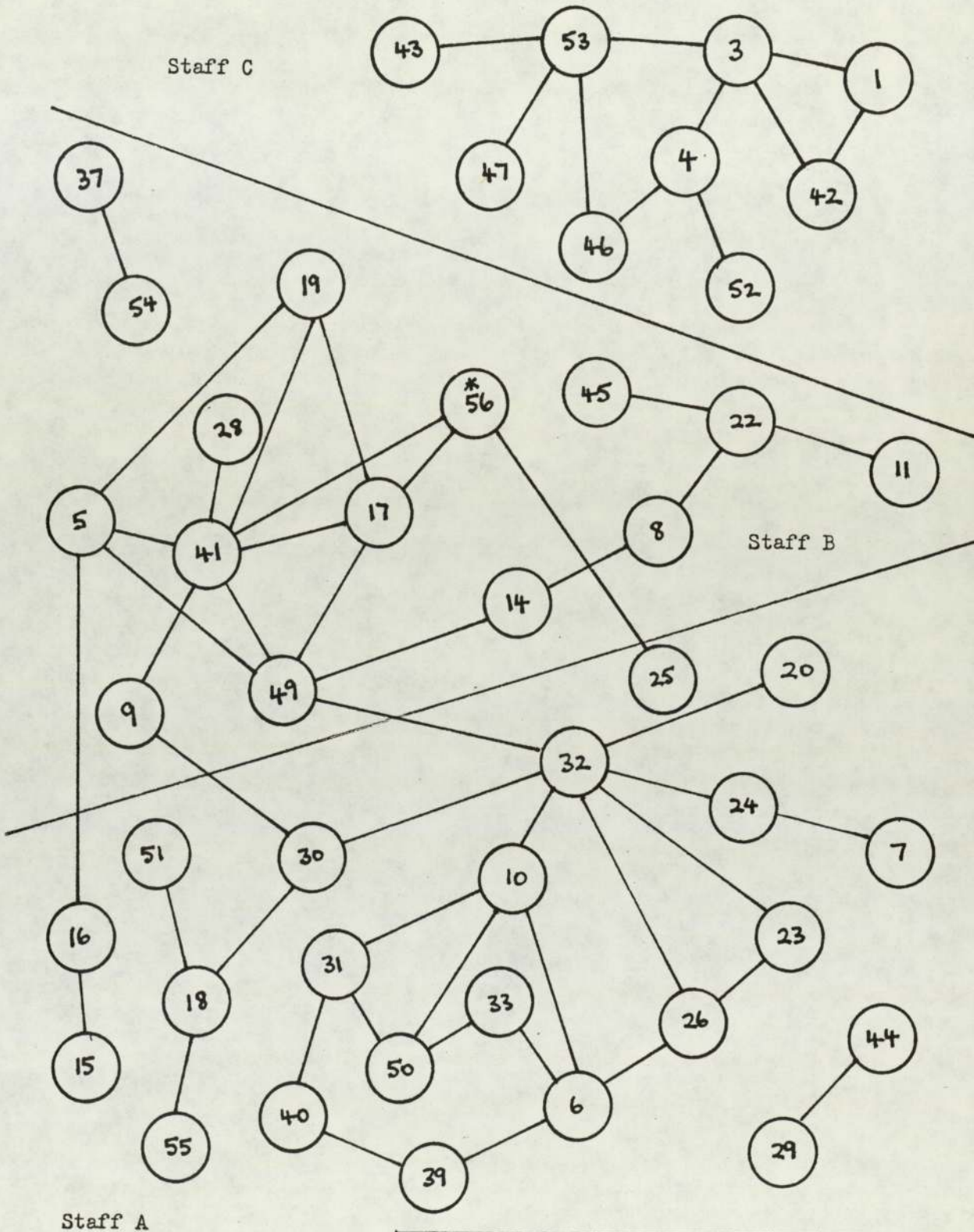
> 'The dominant pattern of self-contained schools is one of pairs of teachers engaged in friendly relations and in discussions of topics related to teaching...'

When the responses were further analysed for integrated triplets, the following triplets were from questions 6, 7 and 8: 1/3/42;17/19/41; 5/19/41.

These further triplets were from adding the data of question 3 and 10: 32/23/26;17/56/41;5/41/49;10/50/31;17/41/49.

A sociogram (see over) has been constructed for the three staff areas on questions 3,6,7,8 and 10. It shows mutual pairs and integrated triplets. It also shows the relationship of other staff, not included in the pattern of mutual choice. In all 46 out of 56 respondents had been or were engaged in mutual choice/association with at least one other staff member. A total of 15 out of 56

Fig. 3.6. SOCIOGRAM OF MUTUAL CHOICE AND INTEGRATED TRIPLETS ON QUESTIONS 3, 6, 7, 8 and 10



KEY:

67 Member of Staff

Mutual choice

* Staff A but strongly related to B

respondents were engaged in mutual choice/association with at least two other members of staff, who in turn had a mutual relationship with each other. Star members of staff could have as many as seven mutual choices (e.g. 32 and 41).

The pattern which emerges from kaleidoscoping the responses on questions 3,6,7,8 and 10 is clear in demonstrating that a high degree of informal contact may exist amongst staff, even in a 'traditional' type of school. The existence of a substantial number of integrated triplets points to the importance for teachers of co-operation with each other. If anything this result goes further than Bishop (1977) in associating teachers outside of formal work arrangements. However, when analysing the basis of these associations, there appear to be two over-riding determiners: departmental affiliation and proximity. Forty-six out of fifty-five mutual pairs were in the same department and forty-nine out of fifty-five were in the same staffroom. Sex was the next most significant factor. Thirty-five out of fifty-five mutual pairs were of the same sex. A rather lower figure than might have been expected, affected by the 'star' status of two of the senior female members of staff. Age and hierarchy both had little measurable effect on association of mutual pairs. Both had thirty pairs where the same age and formal status were present, but this meant that in twenty-five cases it was not significant. Therefore no conclusions as to the effects of age and hierarchy can be drawn. There was one other factor which was tested for. The organisation of the house system on the pastoral side was expected to have an effect. Not only did it not produce many associations, but the limited number of those associations: five out of fifty-five, suggests an inverse relationship. This is an extremely perplexing result. It is unlikely that it actually has an inverse effect. Rather, the power of association by

Table 3.2a

The influence of sex, age, department, house, proximity & status by Analysis of Mutual Pairs and Integrated Triplets

(a) Mutual Pairs

		1	2	3	4	5	6
Staffroom C	1 & 3			x		C	
	1 & 42	x	x	x		C	x
	3 & 42			x		C	x
	4 & 52		x	x		C	x
	3 & 53		x	x		C	x
	47 & 53	x		x		C	x
Staffrooms A & B	6 & 10		x	x	x	A	x
	5 & 16	x	x	x			x
	5 & 19	x	x	x		B	x
	8 & 22	x	x			B	x
	6 & 26		x	x		A	x
	11 & 22		x	(x)		B	x
	17 & 19	x	x	x		B	x
	9 & 30		x				x
	10 & 32	x		x		A	
	6 & 39		x		x	A	
	18 & 30	x	x	x		A	
	20 & 32			x		A	
	23 & 32	x		x		A	
	24 & 32			x		A	
	26 & 32	x		x		A	
	30 & 32	x		(x)		A	x
	5 & 41	x		x		B	
	17 & 41	x		x		B	
	19 & 41	x		x		B	
	28 & 41	x				B	
	39 & 40	x	x	x	x	A	x
	45 & 22	x	x	x			x
	14 & 49			x		B	
	17 & 49	x		x	x	B	
	32 & 49		x				
	31 & 50		x	x		A	x
	37 & 54	x	x	x		B	
	18 & 55	x		x		A	x
	56 & 17	x	x				x
	25 & 56	x			x	A	

From Questions 6, 7, 8

		1	2	3	4	5	6
	4 & 46	x	x	x		C	x
	43 & 53			x		C	x
	14 & 8		x	x		B	x
	7 & 24	x	x	x		A	x
	15 & 16		x	x		A	x
	23 & 26	x	x	x		A	x
	33 & 50	x		x		A	
	33 & 6	x	x	x		A	x
	44 & 29	x	x	x		A	x
	41 & 56	x				A	

From Question 3, 6, 7 & 8

		1	2	3	4	5
	3 & 4	x		x		C
	53 & 46			x		C
	31 & 10	x		x		A
	41 & 9	x	x	(x)		x
	49 & 5	x		x		B
	31 & 40	x	x			A x
	49 & 41	x	x	x		B
	18 & 51			x		A
	10 & 50			x		A

From Question 10, 3, 6, 7, 8.

KEY

x = Same category
1 = sex
2 = age
3 = department
4 = house
5 = proximity
6 = hierarchical status

Table 3.2b

The influence of sex, age, department, house, proximity & status by Analysis of Mutual Pairs and Integrated Triplets

(b) Integrated Triplets.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1 3 42			x		C	D	From Questions 6, 7, 8.
17 19 41	x		x		B	D	
5 19 41	x		x		B	D	
32 23 26	x		x		A	D	From Questions 3, 6, 7,
17 56 41	x					D	8.
5 41 49	x		x		B	D	From Questions 3, 6, 7,
10 50 31			x		A	D	8, 10.
17 41 49	x		x		B	D	

Analysis of factors influencing mutual pairs and integrated triplets

(c) Analysis of Integrated Triplets.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Same	6	0	7	0	7	0
Different	2	8	1	8	1	8

Analysis of Mutual Pairs.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Same	35	30	46	5	49	30
Different	20	25	9	50	6	25

KEY

x = Same category
1 = sex
2 = age
3 = department
4 = house
5 = proximity
6 = hierarchical status

department and the divisions created by proximity have the effect of negating the house associations which were artificially crossing boundaries of proximity and department within the school. It may also reflect problems with question design. This is unlikely, since at least two questions related directly to pastoral matters (6 and 7).

The conclusions drawn from the analysis of mutual pairs and integrated triplets may be stated. The first point is that there is a definable informal network amongst teachers. There is also a prevailing pattern of mutual choice, though staff may not always consult one another on all, or even the same issues. Thirdly, the influence of departmental affiliation and proximity are clearly decisive in the vast majority of mutual choices; sex is also a significant factor. Lastly, there are key staff members, who are usually in some senior post, with outstanding 'star' attraction on some issues. Their influence binds together many other subgroups and probably guides the network. The question must be posed: are these 'star' teachers seen by their colleagues in the same way as the 'ideal' or 'model' pupil? Perhaps the star member of staff represents the ideal model teacher which others strive to emulate. An attempt to answer this will be considered as proximity, shared interest (especially departmental affiliation) and ideal models are used to interpret the data.

(c) Interpretation of the data

In analysing the sociograms there seem to be three criteria for association between teachers.

Proximity of staffrooms

The first is proximity, which was important because there were three staffrooms at the school. Therefore at least three sets of teachers emerge. The strongest indication of this was the almost complete separation of the annexe staff from the main school. Although only a $\frac{1}{3}$ mile away from the main buildings, no one at the annexe chose anyone at the main school and no one at the main school chose anyone at the annexe in Qs. 3, 6, 7, 8 & 10. In all 5 sociograms there can be seen distinct groups of A and B staffrooms, with more tenuous links between them.

However, the separation is not only along the lines of proximity. If proximity were overriding then two separate camps would be seen, which is almost what sociogram Q7 shows. But the principle of proximity is clearly a force to separate groups rather than to build them up. So staffroom A has at least two factions on the issue of discipline. On the question of understanding, groups from staffroom B relate to a key figure from Staffroom A. Proximity on its own appears to be significant if a simple analysis to the replies for sociogram Q6 is looked at. These show that a first choice of someone from another staffroom was made only 1 out of 56 times, i.e. just one in fifty-six staff thought first of someone outside their staffroom. Moreover, this was an issue of discipline which often transcends other school boundaries.

Proximity of teaching area.

In order to weigh exactly what kind of importance proximity has in informal teacher networks, it is necessary to examine sub-staffroom levels, i.e. classrooms. Possibly adjacence of classroom or teaching

Table 3.3

CHOICE AMONGST STAFF DESIGNATED BY STAFFROOM

A	B	C
6	5	1
7	8	2
10	← 9	3
13	11	4
15	12	36
16	14	42
18	17	43
20	22	46
(21)	19	47
23	28	52
24	34	53
(25)	37	
26	49	
27	54	
29	45	
30	(41)	
31		
32		
(33)		
35		
(38)		
(39)		
(40)		
44		
48		
50		
51		
55		
56		

KEY

This table shows first choices from Q.6.

(1) Staffrooms A and B almost always choose within each staffroom.

(2) No choices go to staffroom C.

(3) Only 1 exception to choosing 1st from the same staffroom.

(4) → direction of choice.

(5) ( ) means that this teacher may not always be based in the designated staffroom.

area might influence the sub-staffroom groupings. The groups/choices are sometimes based on people having adjacent classes. So regular choices such as 23, 26 or 10 and 6 relate to their teaching areas. But are there examples of where this does not apply? In the laboratories there are four teachers in close proximity: 49, 17, 14 and 12. 12 gets no choices from the other three (see sociograms). 49 only chooses 17 and 14 on question 8, on the other questions they choose 49. Another group which suggests classroom proximity is not essential is 23, 26 and 32: 23 and 26 choose each other because they are both female and less experienced. 32, their head of department, consults with them: this could reflect the fact that 32 is also female, or has a consultative style with her department, or a difference of subject matter (from 49).

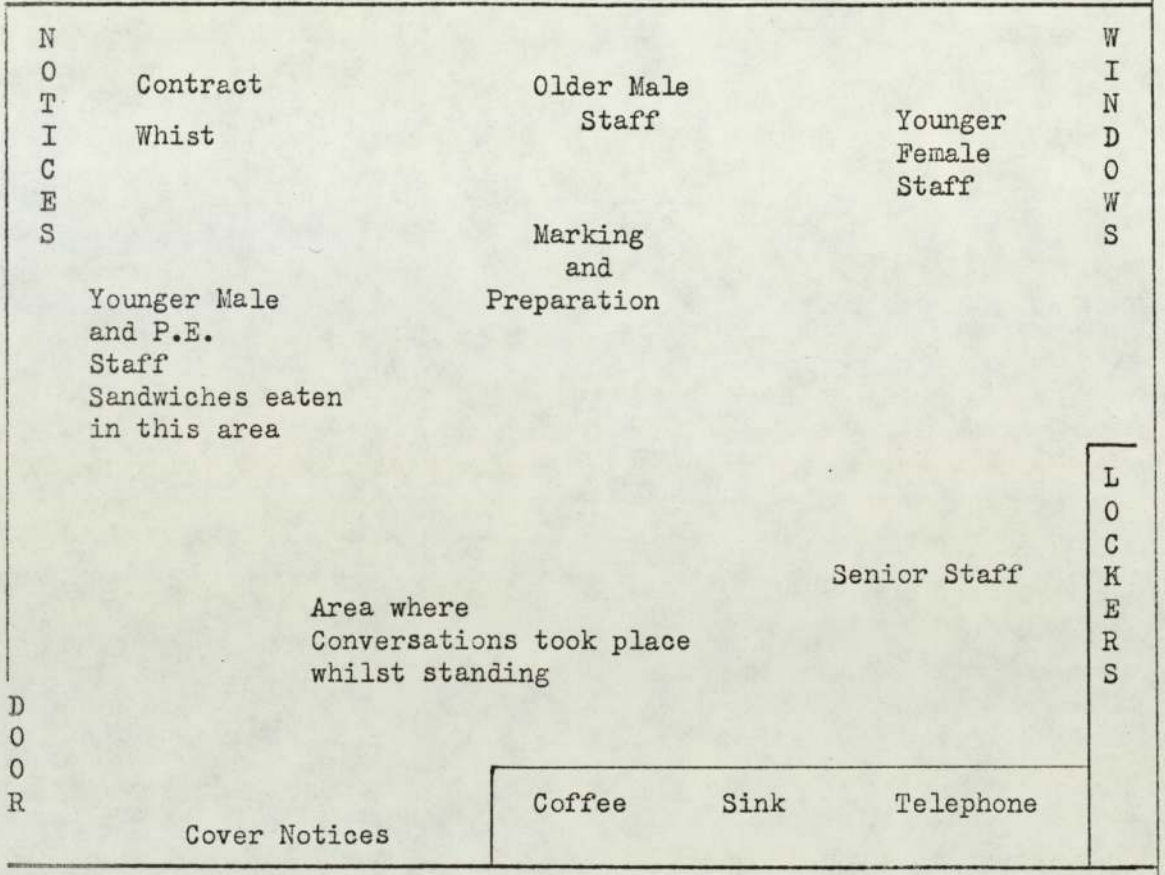
This is the nature of proximity choice: it is usually decisive only in terms of separating staff, e.g. within staffroom C, on questions 3, 7, 8 and 10 there is little relationship to classroom proximity. Strongest choices in staffroom C rarely seem to go to the neighbouring class teacher, e.g. 42 and 3 (Q8); 46 and 53 (Q10); 43 and 53 (Q3). This may be because each person could get face to face contact with the other staff easily. In staffroom C, the main proximity choice lay in not referring to main school staff. Although 46 taught at Main School and had shared two classes with 26, they did not choose each other. Indeed both made references to problems of seeing each other and coordinating their timetables. Surprisingly none of the staff - 53 or 3 - mentioned Main School staff, despite formal (53) and informal (3) links.

Proximity of seating in staffrooms

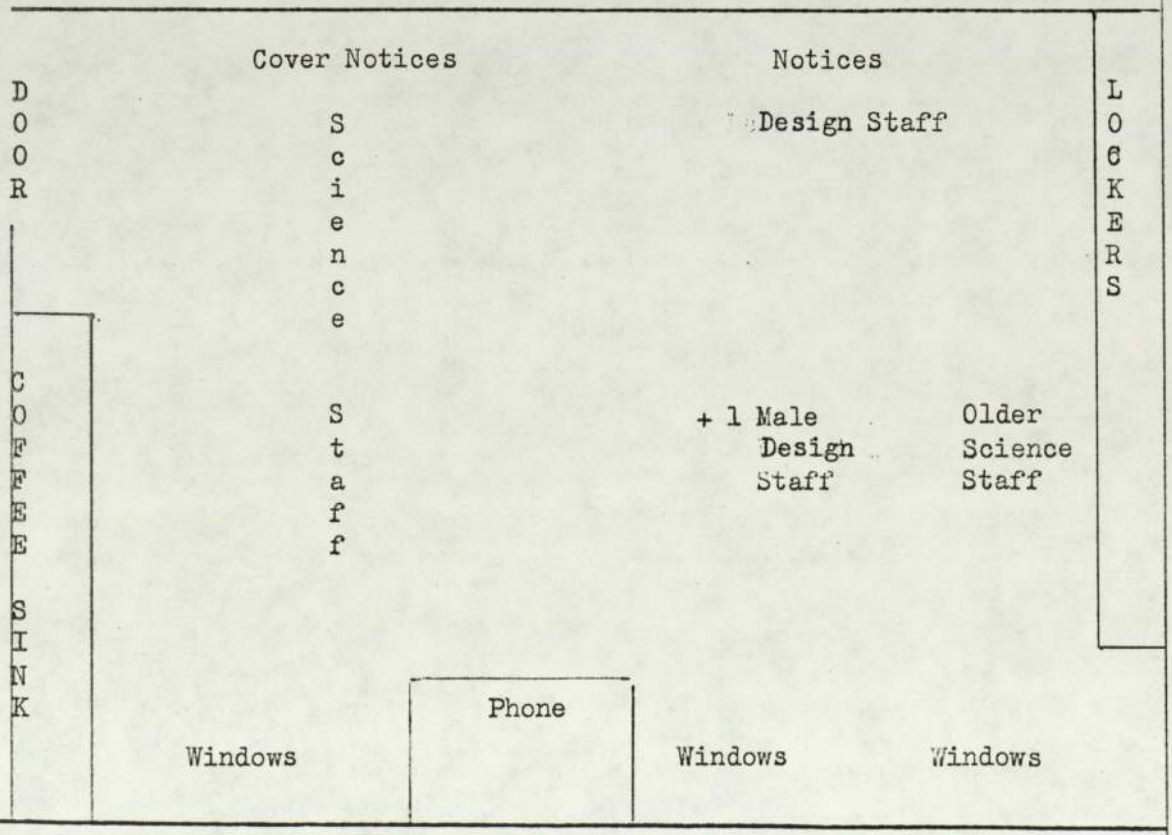
Perhaps the fact that certain teachers sat together was an indication of groupings within a staffroom. Certainly there were several generalised seating positions within the large staffrooms

Fig. 3.7

STAFFROOM A (General seating analysis)



STAFFROOM B (General seating analysis)



which often reflected clear sex and age divisions within the staff. This influence on whom staff talked to was not as rigid as traditional concepts of staffrooms where 'X always sits there'. During free periods the tables in the centre of staffrooms A and B were usually in demand because staff would be marking or preparing work. During lunchtimes or coffee break, many staff did not even occupy a comfortable chair - they would 'hover' with a cup of coffee. The busiest staff usually congregated in the actual areas under heaviest use - near the door, phone, sink and coffee maker. This sometimes made movement in staffroom A rather difficult. For example, one might need to actually 'squeeze' into the staffroom past groups near the door, or one might end up leaning (almost crawling) over staff sitting by the phone. Some of the less experienced staff may have found this inhibiting.

During lessons there were never more than five staff present. After lessons numbers fluctuated according to the day and time:

> 'a dozen staff were sat down, or collecting gear from lockers..' (d7)
> 'there were several staff leaving in cars with pupils for a match away at another school.' (d 9)

The most important point about the school was the fact of divisions between the staffrooms and their staff. The tendency to have a cup in one of them meant that certain sections of staff rarely met others. This reinforced departmental boundaries. Staffroom C was completely isolated and the department there made an interesting 'small staffroom' situation. It frequently behaved as if the rest of the school was of no consequence. From staffrooms A and B came 30, 9, 26 and 37, but rarely any others. The only members of staff C who visited staffrooms A and B regularly were the researcher, 46 and 36. But for this thesis, the researcher would not have been so frequent a visitor either. None of these seven staff were 'model teachers'.

As can be seen from this analysis, there was a certain amount of consistency about seating choice. The number of occupants of each seat shows which were the most 'open' seats and which were the most 'closed'. Altogether, there were 17 occasions plotted including both break and lunchtimes.

Fig.3.8

Detailed seating analysis of STAFFROOM C

H	C	A	E	E	G	H
67/1	42/15 52/1	67/2 36/1 43/7 3/1 2/6 52/1	46/2 67/3 1/2 3/1 43/4 2/1	67/2 1/10 43/1	3/1 52/1 67/1	47/1

F	43/1 3/2 52/4 36/4		43/2 (Stood)	KEY A-H - Rank order of use of seat. □ = one seat First number = Teacher Ref.No. Second number = No. of times in that seat.
D	3/7 52/2 47/5			
F	46/3 3/1 36/2 67/1 47/4	B	47/3 67/7 43/1 46/6	

Model Teachers

(Note: The 'star' status of some staff suggests that they have 'charisma'. These teachers will be referred to as 'model' teachers, since it was noted that these staff were reference points for their colleagues.)

Teacher models were the second most promising line of analysis for the sociograms. They can hardly fail to attract one's attention. Some sociograms clearly demonstrate the 'pull' choice-wise of some staff, e.g. sociograms from questions 6, 8 and 10.

However, an analysis of these key staff suggests important rules for an informal network amongst staff. These 'star' staff are clearly seen as reference points on technical or work oriented issues. But

they change from question to question, e.g. the sociogram from question 6 - 41, 49, 50 and 39; the sociogram from question 8 - 32, 49 and 3; the sociogram from question 10 - 39, 41, 50, 53 and 3. They are obviously in an excellent position to influence staff policy. They are all from the middle-aged group. They are all at least head of department status. They are not all one sex but divided evenly - 39 and 32 female, 41, 49, 50 male. In staffroom C they were almost always female. It is interesting to see whom they consult on these issues. (See Fig.3.9)

FIG. 3.9 Model teachers from staff C - whom they consult.

	Interview Questions					
	3	6	7	8	10	
Star Teachers 3	46	53	Anyone	42	Secretary	
From Staff-Room C 46	4	Anyone	Anyone	Anyone	53	First Choices
53	43	47	47	4	4	

Both star teachers and first choices are represented by their sociometric code numbers.

Clearly there are 'hidden' persuaders on a staff: 4 is chosen by at least two of the analysed 'stars'. There is another point. When one says 'which teachers are you most likely to talk with about' it can be taken as 'have you had cause to talk with.' A conscientious head of department often gave this sort of reply. (See Main School 32 with 23 and 26). This requires an observation from the participant observer's report to clarify motives. There can be little doubt from the observation records that 42 sought 3's aid and 3 felt obliged to give it. Nevertheless, the formal system's influence on replies was really inevitable, when one

did not cross departmental boundaries, or where the respondent was the head of department or deputy head of department. The vague reply 'anyone' from some staff was proof that the discussion of such a subject is not seen as specific to a formal role.

A number of pointers to the relationships amongst staffroom C lie in the ranking's for choice amongst staff (see Fig.3.10)

Fig.3.10

Analysis of choosers and chosen in Staffroom C.
(In rank order of chosen)

(Teachers by Interview Reference Nos.)

Teachers	3	46	36	4	53	43	42	1	47	52	2	67
No. of times chosen	23	16	12	10	9	6	5	3	2	1	0	0
No. of times chose	8	3	5	12	15	4	10	11	4	9	6	0

3, and to a lesser extent 46, are star figures - they have 39 out of 87 choices amongst the staff. A member of staff does not have to make several choices in order to contract star status: in the case of 3, who was chosen 23 times as against choosing 8, and 46 who was chosen 16 times but only chose 3 times. Of annexe staff who were chosen a reasonable number of times, 36 was chosen 12 times but chose only 5 times; 4 was chosen 10 times but chose 12 times; 53 was chosen 9 times but chose 15 times. The rest have low scores. 1 and 2 are student teachers and can therefore expect to have low scores. 42's and 43's scores were low, considering that they were regularly in the staffroom and were always amenable to holding conversations. 47 and 52 were hardly chosen because 47 was less available (he spent time in the workshop) and 52 held strong views which were only consulted when others wished to 'stir it'. 67 was deliberately excluded from the sample because he was the researcher.

Comparing this with the results from Main School, the significant factor seems to be the lack of, or 'limited', choice by the 'star' figures. Perhaps they find their time is taken up by being chosen! They may be aware of their informal status and therefore realise that since they are chosen to lead, they must be careful with whom they consult. Whatever the reason, all of the highest scoring staff (choice wise) did not make many choices: e.g.

Fig. 3.11

Analysis of choosers and chosen in Staffrooms A & B: among model teachers

(Teachers by Interview Reference Nos.)

Model Teachers	32	50	41	49	39
No. of times chosen	23	20	21	16	15
No. of times chose	8	4	4	7	1

There is a distortion here. Several opted for staff outside of those who chose, also some, like 39, were reluctant respondents, i.e. they 'hid' their responses. Nevertheless, the broad generalisation seems to remain intact. These star members of the staffroom were all very 'busy' people - some of them admitted that when they did get to sit in the staffroom it was brief, and people invariably sought them out. Therefore they were often found in their offices or 'bases'. Two of them were heads of house, one was a senior teacher and the others were a deputy head and the head of the Science department.

The major question is really how far were their formal responsibilities contributory to their status in the informal network? It clearly is related. Vice versa one might say that their informal position was a reflection of their ability which had got them posts of responsibility. Which staff do not enjoy the informal status which

their formal role would presuppose?

Fig. 3.12

Analysis of choosers and chosen in Staffrooms A & B: among high (formal) status staff

(Teachers by Interview Reference Nos.)

Teachers	25	9	31	30	51
No. of times chosen	5	5	3	4	3
No. of times chose	2	6	4	7	2

25 and 31 were heads of house, 9 and 30 deputy heads and 51 was head of English. What makes some senior staff unquestionably more important on the informal network, than on the formal system where they may, in theory, be equal? This may best be studied by an examination of three model teachers.

Model Teacher - 50

One reason for the success of some staff may be that they personify certain views prevalent amongst colleagues:

> 16: 'It depends on whether you are child/teacher orientated. 39 is child orientated, 50 is teacher orientated. Is discipline for the child or for the teachers?' (d 157)
>
> O.C. On the sociogram Q6 it is clear that the two groups of staff are completely divided.

Clearly there is a large divergence amongst the informal network on the issue of discipline. Possibly such an extreme division was helpful in reinforcing the norms in the two poles of opinion. It was significant that 50 realised his real importance on this issue:

> 50: 'I am seen by my colleagues as influential on discipline. I suppose I am an authority figure in Grassybank.' (d 164)

Thus both other staff and this teacher saw that he had become a reference point or model for colleagues on this issue. He was also consulted on other issues:

50: 'Staff tend to raise specific problems!' (d 164)

He reacted to this responsibility by making what might be termed organisational choices, except where referring in general to a whole staffroom. Thus he merged his formal and informal roles to such an extent that they became almost identical. That is not to say that he did not socialise informally with other staff, but that he tended to give over a great deal of breaktimes to the formal role, or was made to because other staff saw him in that role.

Model Teachers 41 and 49

Two examples of model teachers are 41 and 49. The evidence of the sociogram from question 6 is about the roles of these two staff in the school. 41 had eight choices, 49 have five, 41 made a reciprocating choice with 49. Several staff chose both of them e.g. 28, 19, 17. Thus clearly the opinions of these two were as important informally as the influence of 50. One of these was a deputy head, but in the formal structure only the third deputy. (41). Both 9 and 30 related to 41 who seemed to occupy a much higher place (status) amongst staff. This is clearly due to the informal 'network' support which 41 gave and received. 41 did not hold this position on his own. He reciprocated a choice with 49, who was not a deputy, but the head of a large (science) department. Their relationship in this sphere related to several overlapping areas of interest. 41 taught in 49's department and spent a significant amount of time in staffroom B. Other choices by 41 included members of staffroom B and this suggests that the INFORMAL network amongst a staff can be strongly influenced by proximity. Some reservations need to be made on this point. Three people, 30, 26 and 56 did not have proximity in common with 41. A large enough group from staffroom A to show that 41's influence was felt throughout the staff and school. 49's influence was entirely

related to his own department. This might reflect on the formal system within the school. It might reflect the principle of proximity. However, if it shows the influence of the formal system it would certainly not give a guide to some heads of department who had far less influence on the informal network. 51, who doesn't even appear in some sociograms and 40, who generally seems to be an outsider - even the researcher found it hard to contact 40, who seemed to spend all her time in her classroom with books or pupils - are of much less or no significance.

Models of 'non model' teachers

Although both the other deputies ought, under the formal system, to have the same if not more prestige in discipline matters, in the informal network, they were relatively cut off from other staff. The formal system seemed to have almost completely cut them off from their colleagues. They operated in a sort of vacuum. Possibly their isolation reinforced their lack of influence on an informal level. 30 certainly recognised her isolation and as a result of the interviews started to worry about her relationship with staff!

Undoubtedly factors like discipline over other staff and 'control' of the timetable suggest that 30 and 9 were not regular contacts of many staff at an informal level. Certainly they both emphasised the demanding formal role of their posts. The suggestion is that they did not have any time left for informal contact. Indeed breaktimes, lunch hours and after school were those times when they were more often than not seeking out staff or being sought by staff for formal reasons. 30 had to spend the early part of each day arranging cover for teachers. This meant that it was always breaktime before much informal contact could be made.

This isolation was expressed by 30:

> "It would look strange if I asked their advice - I am supposed to know all about it (teaching)." (d 169)

It was interesting to see that the deputies did not work as a team, but 9 pointed out that he and 30, a recent appointment to the staff, were not really "seeing eye to eye" on issues. One problem is the definition of informal and formal as regards discussing work-relevant topics. For more senior staff the distinction may be hard to make. They feel that they are paid to work all the time - they don't get a chance to have 'informal' conversations. But some senior staff do get more exposure with colleagues and find it easier to discuss things informally. At least all the sociograms would suggest this. Perhaps the answer lies in their attitude towards colleagues. Some staff find it a relief to hide behind their formal position. Others don't use it as a shield, but continue a dialogue about practice and craftsmanship which goes on throughout their teaching career. These are truly 'model' teachers.

Choice amongst Model Teachers

One cannot make this generalisation though without making a further point. The sociograms reveal a large degree of movement in choices from one topic to another. Teacher groups move and so do choices for 'model' teachers.

Here is a list of the questions with the model teachers (indicated by sociometric reference numbers) from staff A, staff B and staff C compared.

FIG. 3.13. Identified model teachers

Sociometric questions	Staff A	Staff B	Staff C
Q3	-	-	46
Q6	50	41 (49)	-
Q7	32 (39)	(49)	3
Q8	32	(49)&(17)	3 (46)
Q10	50 & 39	41 (49)	3 (53)

Clearly the movement between model teachers is not as great in smaller staffrooms (B and C) as in larger ones. But there is movement in all of them. The logical conclusions must be that

(a) staff are giving 'reasoned' replies to the questions used.

(b) staff are choosing models according to the topic.

(c) the formal system does not allow for that degree of choice, this must reflect another system, i.e. an informal network.

(d) the formal system does emphasise certain staff in certain roles, but the teachers will select which ones they follow in which topics. For example in the sociogram from question 6, at least 4 other staff qualified in the formal system for choice by the teachers. But only two, and one which didn't, were selected from staffs A & B (N.B. non-choice for Staff C).

The most interesting conclusion is (b), it opens up the area for examination with the sociograms which are included. (3, 6, 7, 8 and 10). The degree of movement in choice of individuals (see above) suggests not only proximity (negative) and models (positive) as factors in staff informal networks, but shared interest as a guiding force in whom staff consult.

Shared interest

Shared interest can be divided into several subcategories: sex, age, subject area, staffroom activity, pupil based problems and many more. The probability is that all of these play a part in the choices which teachers make about whom they talk with.

Sex and age

Analysing the 1st choices by sex and age, the researcher used the categories M1, M2, M3 and F1, F2, F3. These tie age and sex together, since they are easy to read on tables (like those shown) and are

TABLE 3.4a

STAFFROOMS A and B (MAIN SCHOOL)

First Choices Questions 3, 6, 7, 8 and 10 By Sex/Age Categorisation

RESPONDENTS BY NUMBERS	M1	QUESTIONS 3	6	7	8	10
	5	-	-	M2	M2	M2
	6	FI	F2	M2	MI	F2
	7	-	M2	M2	FI	-
	8	MI	MI	M2	-	M2
	16	M2	M2	F2	M2	M3
	22	M2	M2	F1	M2	MI
	28	-	M2	M2	M2	M2
	33	M2	M2	M2	M2	-
	45	-	M2	M1	MI	F2
	48	-	M2	M2	M2	M2
	20	F3	M2	F3	F3	M2
	56	MI	M2	M2	MI	M3
	M2					
	9	M2	M2	M3	F3	M3
	13	-	-	-	-	F2
	17	M1	M2	M2	M2	M2
	19	-	M2	M1	M1	M2
	24	F3	M3	F3	-	M2
	25	F2	F2	-	F3	M2
	27	-	M2	-	-	-
	35	-	-	F2	-	F2
	49	-	M3	F2	M2	M3
	50	M1	-	M2	M2	F2
	M3					
	21	-	F3	M2	M2	M3
	38	M2	F2	-	M2	M3
	41	M1	M2	-	M2	F3
	51	M2	-	F1	F2	F2

RESPONDENTS BY NUMBERS	F1	QUESTIONS 3	6	7	8	10
	10	M1	F3	F3	M1	F2
	11	-	F1	M1	M1	F2
	12	F1	M3	F3	F1	M3
	14	-	M2	M1	M2	M1
	15	M1	M1	F1	M3	F2
	23	F2	F2	F2	F2	F3
	29	M2	F2	F2	F2	M2
	34	-	F1	M1	F3	-
	44	M2	-	-	-	-
	55	-	F2	F2	F2	-
	F2					
	18	F1	M2	M2	-	F1
	26	F1	F3	F3	F1	F3
	30	F1	M3	F2	F3	F2
	31	-	-	M2	-	F2
	39	-	F2	-	-	-
	40	-	F2	-	-	F2
	F3					
	32	F2	M2	F2	F1	-
	37	-	F1	F1	F3	-
	54	F1	F1	M2	F3	F3

KEY

M = Male
F = Female
1 = 21-32
2 = 32-49
3 = 50-65

Table 3.4 (b)

STAFFROOM C

Analysis of sex/age categories on first choices from Questions 3, 6, 7, 8 and 10

		QUESTIONS BY NUMBER						QUESTIONS BY NUMBER				
		3	6	7	8	10		3	6	7	8	10
RESPONDENTS	M1						F1					
	1	F3	F3	F3	F3	M2	4	F3	F3	F2	F1	F3
	2	F2	-	F2	F2	M2	43	F1	-	F3	F3	F1
	42	F1	-	F1	F3	F3	46	F1	-	-	-	M2
	47	F1	M2	-	F3	F3						
	52	M2	M2	M1	F3	M2						
	M2						F2					
	53	F1	M1	M1	F1	F1	36	F1	F3	F3	F3	-
							F3					
							3	F1	M2	M1	M1	F1

Chosen By Category (Staffs A & B)

CHOOSERS By CATEGORY		F1	F2	F3	M1	M2	M3	Non Choice	Total
	M1	3	4	3	8	31	2	9	60
	M2	0	7	4	4	14	5	16	50
	M3	1	3	2	1	7	2	4	20
	F1	5	13	5	9	5	3	10	50
	F2	5	6	4	0	3	1	11	30
	F3	5	2	3	0	2	0	3	15

	F1	F2	F3	M1	M2	M3	Non Choice	Total
Totals (Staff A & B)	19	35	21	22	62	18	53	225
(Staff C Totals	13	4	17	5	8	-	8	55
A.B & C	32	39	38	27	70	13	61	280

KEY M = Male
F = Female
1 = 21-32
2 = 32-49
3 = 50-65

unlikely to be mistaken. M and F stand for Male and Female; I stands for the 21 - 32 age range, 2 for the 32 - 50 age range and 3 for the 50+ age range. The split is arbitrary, though it reflects categories of responsibility as well, e.g. with the exception of 35, 17 and 19 the M2 band held senior posts of responsibility (Scale 3 and above). Here is the breakdown of choice for main school: (see TABLES 3.4a & b).

The first point is that although there are some choice 'trends', the staff displayed a wide variety of choice. Where they did not, there can be seen to be clear reasons e.g. M2 category did not choose F1, vice versa F2 and F3 did not choose M1. (N.B. only one M3 chose F1 and that was a departmental choice - head of department for deputy in department). F2 and F3 only chose M3 category once. Whereas the first non choices reflect sex-age differentials which group people in society, the latter reflects a small sample situation where there were other factors, e.g. two of M3 worked exclusively in the metal/woodwork area away from female staff.

On the positive side there were distinct preferences by M1s for M2s (almost 4 times greater than their next choice). This must reflect a social tendency. (The 'model' theory based on a 'star' is suggested here.) The M2s and M3 to a lesser extent followed this trend. Perhaps the middle aged male teacher is seen by younger, similar and older males as the ideal model of the male teacher. Amongst female choices there was no such clear tendency. F2 were most popular with F1s and themselves. Interestingly enough F1s were happy to choose M1s as their next most popular category. The compliment was not returned. However, all three categories of Fs gave some support to the F1s.

Fig. 3.14

These are the rankings for popularity of sex/age category amongst staffrooms A and B (on first choices)

Category	Size of Category	Numbers Chosen
M2	10	62
F2	6	35
M1	12	22
F3	3	21
F1	10	19
M3	4	13
No choice		53
Total choices		225

The marked optings for M2 (27.6% of all choices) compared to the nearest category (F2 - 15.6%) seems to show that there is a preference for one category, though by the same sex and a younger age group (i.e. the M1s). The next significant group lies in the non-choice. This category reflects staff who were reluctant to choose or who felt that these questions did not enter into the way they thought about teaching. F2 as a category had most respondents in this group. At 23.6% of responses it is obviously disappointing, but since it mainly reflects only six staff who were 'unhappy' about (quote) 'naming names' the general sample ought to retain its validity.

It might be concluded that the 'model' teacher analysis gains most from this, because the total of M2 and F2 responses gives them 43% of all choice. If the premise that M2 and F2 categories are seen as models holds true, then this response would back that premise. Does analysis of the annexe staff response support this?

Fig. 3.15

These are the rankings for popularity of sex/age categories amongst staffroom C (on first choices)

Category	No. of Times Chosen	%
F3	17	(30.9)
F1	13	(23.6)
M2	8	(14.5)
M1	5	(9.1)
F2	4	(7.3)
Non-choice	8	(17.8)

These were remarkable in a way, completely in contrast to the main school. Yet they still reveal a real tendency to look for a 'model' teacher. The category F3 (which contained only one person) took 30% of the responses. Compare this to F2 - another one person category, with only 7.3%, or M2 (with only 14.5%). Even more dramatic is the lack of choice given to M1s (three people). The M1 category chose females rather than males, though it was from M1s that M2 still got most of his support. This agreed almost exactly with F1 choices (again three choosers) as to which groups (F1 and F3) were most consulted. This contrasts strongly with Main School results. (See TABLE 3.4b) There were marked preferences for certain people on certain questions - a pointer to the model idea. This can be seen from the single categories which dominate some question columns e.g. F1 on Question 3, F3 on Question 8. This was also true for main school, e.g. M2 on Questions 6, 7 and 8 and F3 on 8. In these cases M2 was usually 50, 49 and 41 and F3 was 32. There is a reinforcing tendency here. M2s are a popular category because they are seen as model teachers and because model teachers are in the M2 category. Likewise with the F3 or the F1s (annexe) category.

Fig. 3.16.

The total for the analysis of sex/age categories rank choice in all three sections of the school as follows:

Categories by sex/age	Category size (of choosers)	Number of Choices From 280	%
M2	11	70	25
'non-choice'		61	21.8
F2	7	39	13.9
F3	4	38	13.6
F1	13	32	11.4
M1	17	27	9.6
M3	4	13	4.6

Whereas the rankings by numbers (of staff chosen on these questions) in each category are:

Categories by sex/age	Total Number of Chosen Staff (68)	%
M1	18	26.5
M2	18	26.5
F1	17	25
F2	7	10.3
F3	4	5.9
M3	4	5.9

Clearly the category which gained out of all proportion to its size was that of F3. The categories which lost out of proportion to their size were M1 and F1. Category F2 gained a little. M3 and M2 are roughly in proportion. There can be little doubt that this result reinforces the theory of a 'model' dominated 'network'. But the general fact that M1 and F1 categories get fewer choices than they receive also reinforces the formal system - does the formal system

acknowledge this? There are rewards in the formal system - scaled posts are much more plentiful in M2, F2, M3 and F3 categories. Therefore the formal and informal system can be seen to interact. Perhaps the most interesting feature is the lack of 'dynamic' which the M3 category has compared to F3. The F3 category was a strong element in this particular school. 32 in staffroom A and 3 in staffroom C consistently gained male choices. And this again reinforces the point about models - perhaps with the additional fact that male/female choices are not so hide - bound by sexism as is generally agreed, at least in the case of model teachers.

Departments (subject areas) as a shared interest

Shared interests outside of sex and age might explain some of these results. It is worth looking at the formal system to see if that is what has influenced the responses. Does similarity of subject area enhance choice?

There is a distinct leaning towards choosing intra-departmental staff. Of 286 choices from staffs A and B (i.e. the first two choices on Questions 3, 6, 7, 8, 10) 153 were for those in the same department, 22 for those in associated departments and 111 for extra-departmental staff. Such a result suggests several points:

a) Most teachers discuss and work with staff in their own departments. But approximately 40% of staff choices went to non-departmental members of staff.

b) There are reasons for this other than the theory of an 'informal network' of teachers. For example, the house system and the disciplinary roles of the heads of houses. But even excluding these, there were 60 choices to others in the school.

If the pattern of choices is looked at, amongst the extra-

departmental staff, then the same preference for certain key figures is shown.

Fig. 3.17

Rank order of choices to model teachers from staff in other departments

Model Teachers	No. of choices from extra-departmental staff
39	14
50	13
41	12
32	9

(The other teachers' scores were not numerically significant).

The point is that 49 gets little choice from outside his department. He has disappeared from the top ratings. On the other hand, two heads of division, the head of the remedial department and the third deputy all rate better than the first or second deputies (30 and 9). 32, 50 and 41 have all lost heavily from amongst choices made by members of their departments. However, they are clearly getting choices across departments. Figures for the annexe would not help in this analysis since they all chose departmentally, almost certainly because of the factor of proximity.

Conclusions from this analysis must be that teachers are likely to choose to talk to intradepartmental colleagues 60% of the time. That they are more likely to choose a colleague within the department than the head of that department (e.g. Science: 27 choices to staff, 11 for head of dept., Remedial 13 to staff, 12 for head of dept., Art/H.E: 12 for staff, 2 for head of dept.). Star or model teachers transcend departmental boundaries, though some model teachers are departmental heads, which boosts their standing. (e.g.32). The head

of a large department may also be expected to draw choices, though not necessarily enough for 'star' status.

Other shared interests

Another variable which may affect staff choices is that of choosing from other shared interests. There were 23 other interests revealed in main school during the course of the interviews ranging from bridge to C.B. radios. (See Table 3.4). The groups and choices revealed were compared to see if they affected informal choices.

Individuals who took part in social activities, or had some other point of interest with staff, were not necessarily those who were chosen for informal discussion on the topics covered by the questions. From the top ten places in terms of involvement with other interest groups, 50, 29, 37 and 46 were the only ones who were chosen by many other staff on the interview questions.

Fig. 3.18

Ranking for other interests. (Top ten only.)

20	8
50	7
27	7
29	6
36	6
37	5
46	5
24	5
52	5
48	5

Key: Teacher by ref. no. - No. of interests

(These are a minimum number of 'other interests'. There were undoubtedly more which were not revealed by the interviews.)

This means that 39, 41, 49, 32 and 40 were model figures despite few other interests. Perhaps their roles were such that teaching took over the extra time for other activities. Certainly these staff were involved in other activities (not shown) - usually with children in classes.

From Table 3.4 Main School, the choices of staff according to other interests suggests that although these interests may affect

TABLE 3.4

Other shared interests amongst teachers from staffrooms A, B & C.

Knockout Whist

Bridge

Squash

Rugby Union

Golf

Trips (with pupils)

Lifts A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J.

Eats/sits with (lunch times) A, B, C, D.

Pub

Christian Camp

At same college

Pets

Reading, Dance, Theatre, S.U., Radio — Clubs run for pupils which staff share in.

Visits to home

Badminton

Baby-sitting

Christmas Party

Chess

N.B. Each letter of the alphabet under 'Lifts' and 'Eats/sits with' is a separate group.

choice, this is not a decisive influence. Only 45 out of 155 correlated choices coincided with, (i.e. only 29% of teachers chose according to) other interests, as far as it was possible to deduce. At the annexe the percentage was much higher, because the small numbers of staff made any joint activities likely to involve everyone. Many activities at Main School did not exist at the annexe, this reinforced the 'joining in' when the other interests were so limited.

d. Summary

a. That proximity, model teachers and shared interests were relevant to an analysis of teacher groups.

b. That proximity has a largely negative role. It can separate staff, but it is not likely to bind them together.

c. That model teachers are not just those senior teachers in the most responsible positions. But that a model teacher is likely to be in a senior position.

d. That model teachers need not be involved with many 'other' interests, nor do they choose many staff as confidants.

e. Some model teachers derive support from large departments. Others - 'super models' are chosen by staff from several departments.

f. These model teachers affect choices made by staff across social interest categories e.g. age and sex. Excepting the M1 and F1 'stars'.

g. Shared interest in subject areas is important in deciding with whom one talks.

h. Shared interests other than age, sex and subject area, may have some affect on choice of teacher group.

i. There is enough variation of choice according to question topics, to make it clear that teachers neither follow the 'system' nor their friendship patterns alone, when choosing a reference group or colleague on educational topics.

CHAPTER FOUR

A TYPOLOGY OF TASK-RELATED TALK

4.1. Introduction

Several analyses of teacher talk have examined the vocabulary used in staffrooms and shown that it seems to contain little 'technical' talk. However, if one discards simple counting of 'technical' words and looks for a whole or part conversation which has a 'technical' function, then there is evidence of 'technical talk'. As has been shown, there are times in the conversation of teachers when they talk about their work. If these instances are looked at on their own there is a clear division into topic areas: pupils, events, and what might loosely be called 'skill resources'. However, there is another way of looking at these instances of 'technical talk'.

Two analyses of role functions undertaken by educational sociologists used a formula for analysing the role functions of a Training College Principal and a Head of Department in a secondary school. The authors, Lambert (1975) and Taylor (1964), use a form of analysis which derives from work by R. Bales (1953) on the difference between expressive and instrumental role functions in the small group. This is also taken up by Parsons and Bales (1956). The basic assumptions are that the instrumental or 'task related' function differ significantly from the expressive (consummatory) or person centred function. This provides one axis for analysing the roles of a small group, or for Taylor and Lambert, the role functions of individuals, within the education 'industry'. Furthermore, Taylor agrees that there are two fundamental areas which affect principals: the institutional and the academic. Lambert assumes that this applies to heads of department. This can, no less, apply to a teacher. Therefore one has, as Taylor illustrates, a diagrammatic way of representing the areas of role

function of, for him, a principal. Here this is equally useful for examining the teacher, when one is looking at teacher/teacher relations. Although it may be inadequate in terms of a teacher/child analysis.

Of course, it is necessary to argue a connection between a role analysis and the use of 'teacher talk' to illustrate a technology common to a teacher group. In the first place there is the premise behind most theories of action, that the actors' own comments are the real evidence for exactly what their role is. Secondly, the researcher has collected together instances of a construct (technical talk) which demonstrate the existence of the construct. Lastly, this construct, being that related directly to their role, should also be capable of the same analysis as a theoretical model of their role (Academic/Institutional, Instrumental/Expressive).

One issue needed defining before making an attempt at this analysis. This was exactly what one might mean by an example of technical talk. The unit which has been selected is the 'instance', rather than to refer to an example or reference or any other such comment. The reason for this is that all of the 'instances' quoted actually occurred and are not just arguments from a general over view. Therefore throughout this chapter they will be referred to as 'instances', despite the fact that they may vary in length, number of participants and content. It is impossible to make a really accurate analysis of length. During the observation there was no attempt to measure how much time was spent on technical talk except by frequency. But the number and content have been recorded. Also there has been an attempt to record who said what to whom and who else was present. Both the number of instances and the context (whom to whom) of instances will be analysed elsewhere. But the most important attribute of the instance, which this chapter is about, is an analysis of

the content of each instance.

Another issue which must be explained is why this analysis, as opposed to others, is applicable to the instances collected from the observation data. First of all, it was found that Lambert's four categories of analysis were all concerned with similar 'content' to the instances which had been observed. To quote an example, "arranging visits of educational interest" (p.30, Instrumental/Academic Role Function No.12) agrees strongly with conversations which were recorded about trips and visits arranged by the staff. Again under 'Fostering and running out of school activities' (P.33, Expressive/ Institutional Role Function No.3) the conversations held about such things as school dance groups and needlework, music and art extra-mural sessions were a constant reminder of their significance. There was much that 'rang true' about the generalised qualities/duties he ascribed to the head of department's role function.

Secondly, when examining Taylor's article about the training college principal, it was felt that the problem of institutional versus academic life was true too for the practising subject teacher. Naturally the subject teacher could be seen as aligning more closely with the academic than the institutional role which Taylor portrays as 'bureaucratising' the principal. Taylor uses his analysis to emphasise discrepancies like 'experience versus the job demands' pointing out that the principals were rarely trained for such work. The analogy for the secondary subject teacher is still strong, even when that teacher carries no responsibility for departmental work. They have to 'compromise' with certain outside factors - the timetable, external exams, the type of resources available to teach with, the special events which put milestones on the history of each school, the physical layout of a classroom or proximity to other rooms or staff and so on. For

those staff with 'responsibilities', they got the above, plus a small chunk of the work which in theory the head teacher is responsible for. They are all faced with the extra forms to fill in, lists to make, resources to collect or sub-timetable to prepare. Eventually these options for getting better paid bring major responsibilities. For example a deputy head will usually be responsible for the timetable and the head of English will usually 'produce' the school play. Increasing accountability and the spread of Mode III C.S.E. or G.C.E. type work all involves the subject teacher in more work 'outside' the traditional academic mould.

However, even given the broadly similar content between the 'instances' observed and Lambert's tables or Taylor's chart (axes), it is still necessary to look at the analysis in detail to see if it will really be applicable. The only way to do that is to apply to the instances the same four areas: instrumental or task centred, academic, institutional and expressive or person centred.

The following itemises some of the instances and groups them into common sense categories. Each typological category is not fully documented, but the instances quoted illustrate the sort of 'technical knowledge' which each category might contain.

4.2. Instrumental/Academic Instances

(a) Lesson plans and syllabus

Teachers do discuss what they are going to teach in lessons, even when they aren't actually teaching together. The following is extracted from a chat over coffee one breaktime:

> Humphries: How does silica dioxide work in glazes?
>
> Bolton: Their melting point is lowered dramatically. The whole business of ... er ... when the body reaches about 1000 you start to get gas decomposition on the surface of the body .... depends what you put in the firing cycle.
>
> Humphries: I find it interesting 'cos a lot of what I've done in the last few weeks relates to what you're doing in Ceramics. Does the glaze have a much higher silica dioxide content?
>
> Bolton: The silica actually makes the glaze ..... You've got to have enough silica over the glaze ..... you've got to get the ratio between the two correct. (d 175).

Apart from demonstrating the more obvious 'academic' or 'technical' nature of some teacher talk, this passage also shows how a science (chemistry) teacher (Humphries) and an art (pottery) teacher (Bolton) come together over a 'shared interest'. (See chapter on sociometry).

Instrumental/academic questions were often raised by student teachers. Conversations were not only about what should be taught/learnt, but how the lessons should be prepared. Duplication of material was always a burning issue:

> Thacker: We were fed up with what Bernard said. We got so annoyed that after he left we sat around planning how not to use the Resources room. We even said we would get a duplicator for the staffroom. It was a joke at first ..... but now, I wonder ...
>
> Ashurst: The main thing is .... we haven't agreed to it. I don't object to the idea, but no-one asked us.

> Podmore: It's the idea that's wrong! I know what will happen. Our work will get pushed back in the queue. Anyway, I'm not going to have my work vetted by another scale two teacher! (d 172).

While it could be argued that the administration of resource production was strictly in the instrumental/institutional sector, the issue of "vetting" or similar constraints suggests an academic premise for judging material produced by teachers. Therefore it is included in the instrumental/academic sphere.

(b) Reports and record keeping

During 'non contact time' and on an informal basis teachers would keep each other 'primed' about various activities. One of these was the issue of reports and record-keeping, which tended to increase at the end of terms, when the needs of justifying pupil movements increased. While there was room to manoeuvre teachers would discuss informally the placing of this or that pupil:

> Podmore: I don't think Rajan should go into Class 4. They're all too young in there.
>
> Gilroy: I thought Bernard said he wanted him to go in Class 5.
>
> Gerrard: That's all very well, but Class 5 is full. There won't be any room in 5 until September.
>
> Podmore: Well, where else can he go? .... (d 127).

It might be difficult to claim that such talk was 'informal'. The use of such informal discussion in teaching, especially with a 'model' member of staff, provided some of the key to their success in the eventual decision making. No-one would lose face when 'difficult' decisions were being made. They had aired their points of view and if they lost out on one decision, they might gain on the next. The opinion of each teacher ranks as a real point of the 'technical knowledge' required of an educationist.

As with lesson planning there is a discussion of the 'how' of

organising records:

> Cook: We have a system of report slips which are filled in and sent to the Form Tutor. If you make a mistake on an entry, you just fill in another slip.
>
> Gilroy: Where I was we had just one report, in triplicate, for each child. Everybody wrote on it and 'watch out anyone who cocked it up!'
>
> Cook: Well, it's not all roses with report slips. You can easily lose them and then you have to rush off to get another one. (d 75).

(c) Examinations and testing

It is quite usual for staff to spend time on the organisation of examinations at certain points in the school calendar. Some staff, of course, regularly give little tests as revision and reinforcement to their pupils. For secondary school teachers there are several informal rewards which external (and even internal) examinations provide. Thus there was from time to time a substantial number of discussions about examinations, and assessment.

> Mercer: Now that makes me really annoyed. If someone doesn't mark the folios properly then it's the pupils who suffer.
>
> Smedley: Why did he say that Kevin couldn't enter?
>
> Mercer: He said that he didn't have his folio and therefore he couldn't recommend that the pupil be entered for this C.S.E. examination.
>
> Smedley: What did you say?
>
> Mercer: I asked him if Kevin was capable of taking C.S.E. He said that some of the pupils were struggling, but that this one was 'up to the mark'!
>
> Greenwood: Can you suggest any way round this though? After all, this pupil has lost his own folio.
>
> Mercer (in more strident tones): Well it seems obvious to me. If each member of staff keeps a correct list of each marked piece of work, then even if the folder is lost an assessment can be made.
>
> Greenwood (quietly): That certainly seems a reasonable suggestion. Perhaps we ought to make this policy; I'll raise it with the academic board when we meet next week. (d 38)

It seems to be a general phenomena that not only the practice of marking and assessment, but the idea of 'levels' or 'standards' of a particular group exist amongst teachers.

> Ashurst: What do you think to Group 1? I took them this morning and they seem to be very slow.
>
> Torevell: You can say that again. I can't seem to get them started. I come in one day and they've forgotten all they learnt yesterday.
>
> Podmore: The worst group we've ever had if you ask me. Their maths is atrocious; they're way behind the other groups.
>
> Torevell: It wouldn't be so bad without Jotesh in that group, but he distracts them so much .... (d 120).

These sort of comments reinforce the teacher who is perhaps feeling frustrated - the class won't make the 'progress' necessary to give the teacher some of the 'informal' rewards expected by teachers. Instead the pupils in a particular group, or a section of a particular class, or just an individual pupil, get labelled as in some way 'inadequate'. This is important for all the teachers on the staff to know, and thus becomes 'technical knowledge'.

(d) <u>In-service training for teachers</u>

Not all of the concern about progress was confined to the pupils. Staff did see the need to keep themselves educationally awake.

Thus the in-service courses being run from the teachers' centre were of interest, like subject choices for pupils, popularity counts:

> Thacker: Theresa is coming over here this lunch time.
>
> Gilroy: I heard that they haven't had many replies for their course. There were only eight schools.
>
> Thacker: We don't like to think about disagreeable things here .... I wonder if she wants to drum up trade.
>
> Torevell: How is the questionnaire progressing? She might be coming here to talk about that. They've got a conference on that soon.
>
> Thacker: Yes, but there's problems there. Some of the committee thought they ought to have been included in organising the conference. (d 189).

Teachers were not only interested in local courses, conferences and general developments in their 'field' of education. They like to get 'higher' or more prestigious qualifications - to advance their career or make a new career. For junior teachers who may be teaching more than one subject - the general subject teacher - the possibility of developing new specialisms is one of the recognisable ways of contributing to the development of their career. Local courses and school-based in-service training might be argued to be closer to the task of the teacher (instrumental) than the more 'remote' qualifications of academic institutions.

4.3. Expressive/Academic Instances

(a) Other courses for teachers (i.e. not-local in-service courses).

Humphries: How many credits have you got now Dan?

Horner: Only three, but I'm doing two more this year.

Humphries: Well I'm not doing any this year. I've got four and I felt I needed a break.

Horner: I've put in a claim to the authority for my expenses. What do you think I'll get?

Humphries: Well I got my residential fees back. But they don't pay for books or the local tutorials.

Jones: What made you take it up?

Humphries: I wanted to know a bit more about what I was teaching. I thought I would do an extra C.S.E. group in another subject area. Otherwise I can do Chemistry but that's all.

Horner: Well, I've got to be honest ... it's the extra £300 a year for being a graduate that I'm interested in. It might get me a head of department post too.

Jones: Are any other staff doing courses?

Horner: Oh, lots ... how many do you know Dan?

Humphries: At least six or seven; there might be more. That's at this school alone. (d 46).

It seems to be a generally accepted criteria that more qualifications are a good thing. It would be surprising if teachers didn't

believe in education. But there were two motivating factors and the balance of promotion/additional knowledge allowed the individual teacher a subjective view of his own development. The exact balance between these two factors and the knowledge of how to carry out their own in-service training, e.g. getting financial help, forms a sort of technical knowledge.

(b) Career prospects and ambition.

Closely allied to qualifications is the question of career development, which most teachers have. As this is different for each career, a knowledge of this area must exist before a member of staff can start to make decisions about the direction of that career. Teachers would worry about the place of their subject in the curriculum:

> Observer: What subjects do you teach?
>
> Laing: Maths and P.E. I went to Sing Land College and did P.E. main.
>
> Observer: Well there's plenty of Maths jobs going, what's it like getting P.E. posts?
>
> Laing: Very difficult. There's lots of other good candidates and there's less P.E. about.
>
> Observer: Less?
>
> Laing: Yes. I think it's becoming too optional, like R.E. has. Look what's happened to R.E. P.E. was the other compulsory subject under the Education Act.
>
> Observer: I hadn't thought of that before. Have you got any interviews coming up?
>
> Laing: Yes, one, but not with P.E. main.
>
> Observer: Well, good luck. (d 139).

But the issue of the Burnham scales and the responsibility of any job was a serious issue which was aired from time to time:

> Gilroy: I noticed that Smith's job is advertised. For a scale three it seems a lot of work. I'd say it was an extremely demanding job.

Gerrard: His job is what he's made it. There needn't have been so much to it; he's worked hard to develop it. It depends who gets it next as to what it is.

Gilroy: I think this scales business is all wrong.

Gerrard: I agree. I remember at my old school. Dan's was a four and Brown was on a three.

Patton: What's that? On Houghton?

Gerrard: Yes, but I was on an old scale 3. It upset me. Some folks got an extra allowance just for saying they were running netball or something.

Torevell: Yes, it seems to be illogical to me. (d 190).

There was little point in getting too irate about the scale system. Some staff thought it was insidious, but all staff kept an eye out for an 'extra' scale. The ability to exploit this 'system' and go 'up' the ladder was seen as a desirable objective. Therefore knowledge of the scale system and how it had worked for others was seen as 'useful', even 'essential' information. Sessions like this where a story or experience was recounted built up this kind of knowledge or expertise.

(c) Staff relationships with other staff.

Staff did talk about each other, both in front of them and behind their backs:

Gilroy (to Podmore): He sits there dictating to me. He does bugger all. If I get Bernard near the side of the baths he might just accidentally fall! (d 177).

These sorts of comments are dealt with more fully under the chapter on fronting. It was important for a member of staff to know any underlying feelings amongst other teachers, if they wished to negotiate successfully for co-operation with colleagues and to avoid being the brunt of too much criticism. More important, staff need to know the boundaries of other staff, particularly non-teaching:

Ashurst: Well, the caretakers' strike is on Monday. That's one day off I didn't expect.

Jones: Is that official? Doesn't the Head have to make a decision on that?

Torevell: 'Course not. It depends on the building. Not the Head.

Ashurst: Jack won't open it. He's already said so. (d 147).

(d) Staff/Pupil Relations.

Whereas a member of staff needed to know about other staff and their 'territory' because it might be inconvenient not to know, or be helpful to know, it was absolutely essential for them to have a thorough going and detailed knowledge of the kind of staff/pupil relations expected in the school. One clear way in which teachers dealt with pupils was by stereotyping:

Magnall: It's frustrating when you seem to spend most of your time teaching 'drop out' fourth year girls.

Murray: Yes, I've just had to shout at them again this lesson. (d 9).

Another way was to discuss a particular lesson and the way pupils had behaved, referring to a particular pupil.

Torevell: That little one in Sally's group is a bossy little sod isn't she ..... Kalsoom I think her name is.

Thacker: Yes, that group don't seem to get on with it.

Torevell: They were really noisy. Once I'd settled them down we got quite a bit done in the time that was left. I had them sitting with their arms folded and I kept adding on a minute for everyone who talked. They soon stopped, once they realised how much of break was left. (d 187).

Teachers frequently refer to individual pupils and the observation is littered with names of pupils who had, for good or bad reasons, stood out from their classes. Teachers also kept a sort of history of notorious incidents to air and recall in order to make the strain of everyday contact with pupils seem less arduous:

Boswell: Have you seen those leaflets. Do you think this means we're going to get 'racial' trouble?

Greenwood: That's nothing new. About two years ago we had a lot of racial 'gang' fighting. A crowd of about a hundred coloured lads came over here from Everhard school to 'sort out' a white kid who was an N.F. supporter. I took him home in my car to avoid any trouble. I told him it was his own fault. (d 161).

Teachers do get some sort of rewards from teaching pupils. They enjoy the experience of 'enlightening' the next generations, even when some pupils don't co-operate.

4.4. Instances with an Expressive/Institutional bias.

(a) Extra-curricular timetable.

Many teachers who have completed their timetabled pupil contact time devote a substantial amount of their own 'free' time to running what might be termed the 'extra-curricular' timetable. Apart from school teams and functions there are always activities which occupy some staff and some pupils alike in breaks, lunch-times and after school.

(b) Visits.

Teachers were committed to extending the curriculum not just through regular extra-curricular activities, but by formal trips, excursions and residential work which would benefit the pupils. These formal activities usually led to a redistribution of the timetable. Most staff tolerated this as long as the 'burden' on other staff was reasonable and the 'visit' useful.

Cook: (getting up from marking her books) Have you seen this? (indignant, pointing at notice).

Jones: No .. what is it? (Walks over to look at notice board).

Cook: It's the trip to Germany. They're going to have three teachers away for at least a week. But most children aren't in the German or even the French sets. I mean, 60% of them don't speak English very well, being from the minority ethnic groups.

Jones: Have they set work for their classes?

Cook: Yes, they have. Even so, the cover timetable is pretty full. I'd have thought they would have managed with either less staff or a trip out of term time. (d 5).

(c) Parents and the community

The fact that teachers are concerned mostly with their 'in-school' activities does not mean that they have no interest in the 'out of school' pressures on their pupils. Whilst inclined to scapegoat the other adults responsible for pupils at their school, they do consider all the elements of the community. For example, an effort was made to bring in other agencies, such as the police, with whom they might have less contact than usual.

e.g. Gerrard: What did you think of the police film today?

Gilroy: Very good. I'm not sure that all children understood what the views of the cows in the meadow meant.

Ashurst: It's hard to know how to tell them not to talk to strangers. We spend so much time getting them to talk.

Gerrard: It's up to parents really. My youngest wouldn't come home from school in a taxi when he was ill in the infants! Even though the head teacher said it was alright.

Ashurst: Yes. I've always told my daughter not to talk to strangers. She's not very keen on the police either. What I'm really concerned about is when she's older - how late she ought to stay out.

Gilroy: I know my parents get worried sick about my sister. She stays out till all hours. At my grammar school we were given hints about what to do with awkward customers. We called it knee 'training'! (d 164).

(d) Tutoring

The area of pastoral care is vague and covers a lot of different activities: for example organising thorough investigations of a child, physically and socially, or home visits. Teachers are still unlikely to agree on the level of involvement which they reasonably might be

expected to have. The teachers at this school did not draw hard and fast rules, but tended to act as they saw fit for each situation.

> Bridle: I'm glad I went round to Suresh's house last night.
>
> Thacker: How's his leg then?
>
> Bridle: Well, it's not going to be out of plaster for quite a while but I gave him some work. He'll be back at school in about a month. I met his brothers and sisters. They're a nice family.
>
> Thacker: What about crutches, can he manage them or hasn't he got any?
>
> Bridle: Oh, I thought of that, but when I saw his mother they said they wanted a chair. So I rang the hospital and it seems he's going to get one later this week. Isn't that good! (d 83).

4.5. Instances with an Instrumental/Institutional bias

(a) Timetable

The most exalted text inside education is 'the timetable': around it everything else seems to revolve. The most urgent problem for teachers is the allocation of 'free' time - whether it will be eaten away by 'cover' periods for other staff. The other significant element is what could be called 'balance', how one thing (an extra?) can be achieved without sacrificing too much else.

> Torevell: I don't think there's going to be enough staff to cover er ....
>
> Ashurst: Can't Bernard get a supply or someone from main school?
>
> Gerrard: Who else is off on the 25th?
>
> Torevell: Well, Bernard and Adrian and you for a start.
>
> Podmore: I think you suggested I went too didn't you? (To Gerrard). What about the ones who are off ill?

Gerrard: They'd better be back by then! Still it's up to Bernard to sort it out.

Ashurst: I think he should get a supply. (d 36).

(b) Rooms.

Because rooms were the most important resource outside of teachers and children, the issue, of how rooms were used and what rooms there ought to be, occasionally flared up. Only 'occasionally' though, because the staff knew that one can't get a 'quart out of a pint pot'. It could be awkward if rooms became accidentally locked at inappropriate times, though security was always a concern. Extra rooms are a bonus:

Eccles: I wish all schools provided a workroom.

Patton: I don't know. I often sit here and work a double free without seeing anyone!

Gerrard: In my experience most secondary schools haven't got one, even the big ones. (d 161).

(c) Equipment.

Each teacher decides what they will teach in the rooms allocated, sometimes with the guidance of a head of department, or in consultation with colleagues. At an informal level, the need to know about equipment around the school, from the sets of text books to the 16mm projector, was seen as being essential to efficient (professional) teaching. Different teachers might be more familiar with different equipment, or sets of books.

Thompson: Of course you can use the episcope - it's in the next room ... Do you know much about videos?

Jones: Why is that? Have you got a problem on the recorder?

Thompson: Well, I'm having trouble with the monitor. Mrs. Witcombe normally does this, but she's away today, at a funeral. I've only done this a couple of times before. (d 112).

As the use of aids in schools increases, the need for teachers to become specialists with some degree of technical knowledge is inevitable.

(d) Stock

This includes all forms of software such as unused tapes, exercise and text books, even down to the basic chalk. There was rarely more than a passing reference to stock since it was not usually a matter for great debate. It was either there or not there. Small 'snippets' of conversation usually hinged on where or how many.

> Ridgeley: Where are the set of green books?
> Cook: In the big cupboard. (d 103).

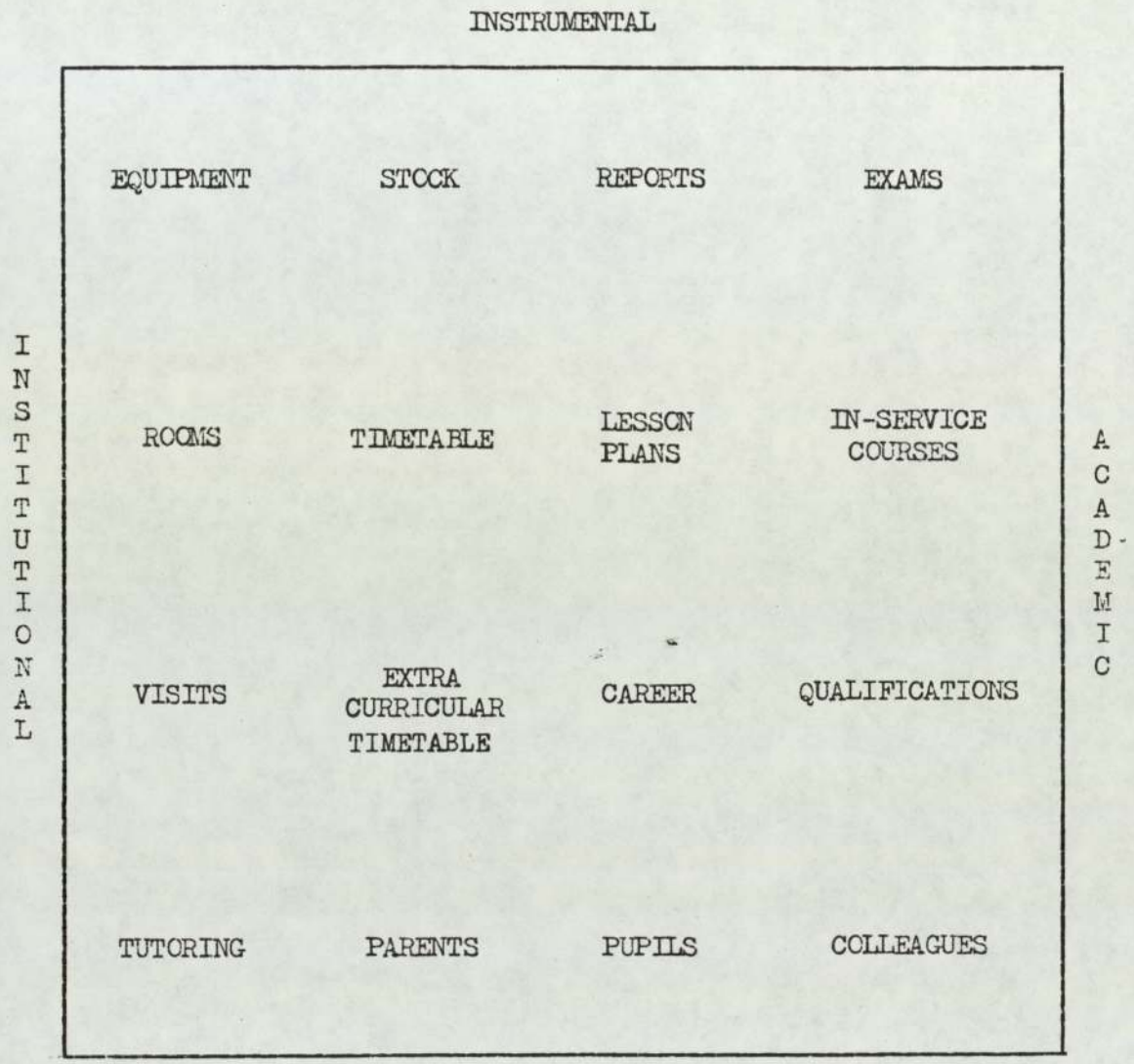
There were certainly occasions on which stock was discussed, though it was not such a large issue on the informal menu, since when something was wrong or needed doing about stock it usually became an issue to be dealt with formally. Stock belongs to the 'system' more than to the 'network'.

4.6. The typology: a possible model

Each of these areas/factors is a kind of base line which touches every part of the matrix of technical knowledge which a teacher possesses. Rather than plotting instances exactly as a group type of diagram (moving axes) suggests, it might prove more instructive to use the idea of a matrix with relative positions for each instance. In that way it ought to be possible to work out a typology, or several typologies, for technical knowledge. Each area/factor is useful in highlighting the properties of each instance. Each instance may require a debate as to where it goes in the matrix. This reflects the complex and interwoven nature of an area of technology or type of technical knowledge so dominated by people.

Fig. 4.1 shows the proposed matrix in which the four areas

Fig. 4.1.



MATRIX OF TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE
(SHARED BY TEACHERS INFORMALLY)

defined are set as boundaries. They influence every element of the technical knowledge which teachers possess, but to greater and lesser degrees. The matrix shows the institutional factor is juxtaposed to the academic factor, so that there is a sort of sliding scale or spectrum of instances, and an instance high in the academic factor will be low in the institutional factor, similarly with the person and task centred one. On this figure there are sixteen identified instance 'patterns' or groups of instances. There could be many more, if one wanted a more detailed breakdown, but it would appear that these groupings are useful as long as they remain flexible.

To take a specific example, an important area of knowledge to the teacher is the timetable. This is rarely open to much 'negotiation'. The timetable in a large secondary school is usually set by one of the senior staff with the head's direction. However, once one has agreed that it is set by 'institutional' factors it must appear 'near' the institutional boundary of the matrix. It is also directly related to what a teacher does, that is the timetable is quite definitely task-centred. But it is not as 'institutional' as the rooms which shape the timetable, nor as directly task-centred as the stock or software which a teacher uses, e.g. chalk and paper. Therefore, for the practising teacher, instances where the timetable is discussed ought to find themselves in a position with an instrumental/institutional bias, but also fairly central and therefore linked to most of the rest of the matrix. It is intended that an argument for the placing of any of the instance groups should revolve around the relative position of each to the whole matrix.

There are problems with developing such a diagrammatic representation of a typology of task-related talk (the matrix). It gives a false sense of definition. While there are no boundaries between the sixteen

categories, the diagram's construction almost suggests the existence of sixteen box-like sub-sections. This is far from the truth. The fact is that it is not possible for these sub-sections to be bounded. There are good reasons for this.

There is the question of the category headings themselves. In the first paragraph of the analysis,attention was drawn to the fact that there were three general classes of teacher task-related talk. The final sixteen as illustrated in the matrix are not neat sub-sections. Consider the sub-section on tutoring. The issue of tutoring is not separate from the rest of the issues. While it may be argued to have particular links with an expressive/institutional orientation, some aspects of it are affected by the other boundary criteria. For example teachers talked about report making (see page 138). But report making was very much the preserve of the tutor. The tutor had to collate the separate subject area reports. Therefore an academic/instrumental orientation is part of the spectrum of the tutoring category. What decided the placing of the categories in the matrix diagram was the specific instances which the researcher had as data. It is extremely unlikely that any category will actually be tied to one orientation. Hence the idea of separate 'lists' was dropped. Rather there should be a separate consideration of each instance as to its relation to the matrix as a whole. The important point is that all four boundary factors were seen to be reflected, to some degree or other, in each instance. Therefore the four boundary factors are a useful tool for describing and making sense of what teachers talk about. The category headings were collations of instances - but not rigid constructs in themselves. It is suggested that any emphasis should be on the boundary factors and the inter-relation of the instances than on the sixteen categories. They are purely an illustrative device, derived from

areas of commonly occurring instances.

4.7. Summary

The main theme, of this chapter, has been that it is possible to construct a typology of task-related (technical) talk. This was not a foregone conclusion. There are many kinds of talk amongst informal groups of teachers in the staffroom. Task-related or technical talk is generally recognised as being a significant part of staffroom conversations. However, it is difficult to disentangle from the other talk and therefore not readily recognisable as a structured body of knowledge. By reviewing the observation notes and sorting out task-related data some 175 'instances' of technical talk were identified. The possibility of being able to do more than generally categorise them, as talk about pupils, events and skill resources, etc., was not immediately clear, but eventually common-sense pigeon-holing produced sixteen similar type categories. These categories were then arranged in relation to the instrumental/expressive and institutional/academic spectra. There may be other important criteria for linking task-related talk which this chapter has not mentioned. This matrix simply provides an outline and a context in which instances of technical talk can be discussed. It is not the intention of the researcher that this should be a rigid pigeon-holing of teacher talk, but that through discussion of the placing of single instances, a better understanding of the contribution of teacher talk to the task of the teacher may emerge.

It is at this point that the concept of a 'technology of teaching' should be reviewed. If technology is, as Randolph and Finch (1977) suggest, inclusive of the task communications involved, then an analysis and typology of task-related talk is a significant part of

that technology. This is particularly true where the technology contains fewer inputs from the industrial revolution: teachers interact with pupils more than with machines. Thus task-related talk is arguably one of the most important contributors towards the technology of teaching as it is today. Surprisingly then it has been relatively ignored or dismissed without due consideration. The implications of structuring it in a typology will be discussed in the conclusions to the thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHER/TEACHER RELATIONS

A DRAMATURGICAL ANALYSIS.

5.1. Introduction

When looking at the interaction of teachers in their workplace, it seemed likely that not only were there dimensions of analysis in terms of formal and informal groups, but also in terms of the 'dramaturgical' interpretation of interaction between groups and between colleagues. This approach has been pioneered by Erving Goffman (1969). The underlying assumption behind this form of analysis was put thus:

> I assume that when an individual appears before others he will have many motives for trying to control the impression they receive of the situation. p.26.

> It seems to me that the dramaturgical approach may constitute a fifth perspective, to be added to the technical, political, structural, and cultural perspectives. p.233.

The strength of this approach can best be seen in those areas where discontinuities of 'performance' may be highlighted or need to be explained:

> Performance disruptions, then, have consequences at three levels of abstraction: personality, interaction, and social structure. While the likelihood of disruption will vary widely from interaction to interaction, and while the social importance of likely disruptions will vary widely from interaction to interaction, still it seems that there is no interaction in which the participants do not take an appreciable chance of being slightly embarrassed or a slight chance of being deeply humiliated. p.236.

Whilst it would be impossible to cover the outline of Goffman's work in detail, there are certain areas of interest which ought to be noted. One of these is the concept of 'team' productions:

> A team, then, may be defined as a set of individuals whose intimate cooperation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained. A team is a grouping, but it is a grouping not in relation to a

> social structure or social organization but rather in relation to an interaction or series of interactions in which the relevant definition of the situation is maintained. p.108.

Goffman recognised that there are important differences for some groups of performers (actors). They do not appear before the 'audience' (clients, or pupils in this case) together. These individual shows do have things in common, time and purpose, so that Goffman allots a slightly different categorization to such groups of actors:

> Colleagues may be defined as persons who present the same routine to the same kind of audience but who do not participate together, as team-mates do, at the same time and place before the same particular audience. p.158/9

Goffman also noted the importance of location and proximity. He refers to 'front' and 'back' regions, where front regions are viewed by the audience and back regions are where the team may relax and get on with other 'hidden' aspects of their tasks. He points out that the division between front and back stage is not necessarily clear cut. In other words one cannot assume that because a conversation took place in the staffroom that it was necessarily 'informal'. There are reasons why formality may enter teacher/teacher relations:

> First, when the audience is not present, each member of the team is likely to want to sustain the impression that he can be trusted with the secrets of the team and that he is not likely to play his part badly when the audience is present. While each team-member will want the audience to think of him as a worthy character, he is likely to want his team-mates to think of him as a loyal, well-disciplined performer. Secondly, there are often moments backstage when the performers will have to sustain one another's morale and maintain the impression that the show that is about to be presented will go over well or that the show that has just been presented did not really go over so badly. Thirdly, if the team contains representatives of fundamental social divisions, such as different age-grades, different ethnic groups, etc., then some discretionary limits will prevail on freedom of backstage activity.p.130/31

Whether it is considered to be formal or informal, there is a definite type of talk which takes place backstage and which Goffman terms

'staging talk'. It enables the performers to devise better ways of production and analysing what has already been produced. The 'content' of this is examined in chapter four. Goffman also terms this 'shop talk' and recognises the link between this concept and the development of collegial relations. He also emphasises the way in which teams may vary according to their purpose and audience, with 'fraternization' taking place between opposing teams when specialists cooperate. Similarly the conflicting requirements of departmental teams may lead to a certain fluidity of teams as groups form or dissipate around certain issues. Nevertheless, the basic teams will be founded on the requirements of the audience.

Whether one considers the department, the house or the school as the 'team' which each teacher is working for, there are many occasions on which teachers have to act for themselves. The classes are the real audience and so there will inevitably be 'fronting' between teachers, as colleagues, as well as between teachers as a team and pupils. This leads to conflict between teachers on several levels: the tutor, the department and the house. Management of conflict between staff in a school is of great concern to headteachers and all bodies concerned with seeing the purpose of the school - education - furthered. Therefore some attempt to examine the conflict between staff, as expressed in a dramaturgical way, has been made. The most generalised of these is the work of Corwin (1965).

Corwin's analysis was derived from a study of seven public schools of varying size. Interestingly enough they were high schools and not, as so often is the case with teacher/teacher studies, elementary or 'primary' schools. He was able to identify one hundred and fifty overt incidents of staff conflict. The main thrust of his study was to consider the question of 'staff conflict' and to generate a discus-

sion of the implications which various forms of fronting have for the school as an educational institution.

Corwin's typology needs a brief explanation. Each of the categories is introduced with a discussion of the problem, reference is made to incidents which are relevant and a passage quoting a teacher is usually incorporated to exemplify the point. Later the function of these fronting strategies is analysed. The first category is evasion tactics; these include avoidance, the use of intermediaries and polite rituals. The second category is discretion; this includes the tolerance of ambiguity, the acceptance of others at face value, the use of tact, hinting, the exchange of reciprocal self-denial and the effects of inconsiderateness. The third category is ignorance; the use of secrecy and even lying. The fourth category is joking; using rapport establishing jokes and the 'joking relations' which exist between colleagues. The fifth category is that of the manufactured public image.

Although Corwin's analysis was found useful in the present research it needs to be adjusted somewhat to the findings of the participant observation, but only the grouping of the forms of fronting, rather than the actual forms themselves. This readjustment is important because some aspects of fronting may well have more relevance to teacher/teacher relations than others, say of hotel workers (Goffman's study on the Shetlands). Thus at the beginning of each category there is a quote from Corwin, who identified the 'type', but association of the types and their functioning are modified by the research. Here is an outline of this typology. Proximity, already identified as being significant in the formation of teacher groups, tends to discriminate between the types of tactics used between teachers. When they are largely apart and have little face-to-face

contact they use the tactics of evasion and ignorance: avoidance, intermediaries, polite rituals, lying and secrecy. When teachers must spend more time together in the staffroom, they concentrate on the tactics of discretion and joking: tolerance of ambiguity, hinting, acceptance of others at face value, tact, reciprocal self-denial, inconsiderateness, story-telling, wisecracks and joking relations. The 'model' teachers (identified in Chapter Three) tended to use most of these tactics, with a distinct preference for the following: intermediaries, polite rituals, tolerance of ambiguity, hinting, tact, reciprocal self-denial, inconsiderateness, story-telling and joking relations. These forms of fronting will now be examined, and explained, at least in part.

5.2. Evasion Tactics

These fall into three categories: avoidance, intermediaries and polite rituals. As the name 'evasion' implies, there is a physical distance put between those who may have/want social distance. Thus these tactics are practised when teachers are not likely to be forced to come face-to-face, or may meet for relatively short periods in the working day. Since most teachers do not spend most of their working day with other teachers, it might be expected that this tactic was in more frequent use than others.

(a) Avoidance

Corwin explains this tactic thus:

> 'The most obvious way to avoid inter-personal conflict is physically to avoid the parties likely to be involved. Even within the confines of a school building people find crude as well as subtle ways to avoid the presence of those to whom they object.'

This tactic was developed by some staff at the annexe to such a point that it became the subject of a staff meeting. It is clear from the seating plans kept that there were some staff (Bridle, Colleen,

sometimes Ashurst) who rarely sat in the official staffroom. The result was that the staff began to diverge over issues concerning the whole department.

> Kaur and Podmore both said that they would not submit their projects to be vetted by Bridle. They claimed that the way in which the head of department (Pack) had told them (Kaur and Podmore) and others was most unpleasant.
>
> O.C. This stemmed from the fact that Bridle and Colleen did not frequent the staffroom. If there had been more contact and less rivalry, especially between Bridle and Kaur, this argument about who 'vetted' resources production might never have been a major issue. (d 172)

Some members of staff remained in classrooms or studies apart from their colleagues. This took place as a result of 'professional' commitment, though it gives some staff a good deal of 'legitimate' avoidance opportunity.

> Jones to Dean: 'When can I see you?'
>
> Dean: 'I'm usually in my room at break or lunchtimes. I can see you on Friday third period if that's alright with you.' (d 148)

If too many staff seem to be using every avoidance opportunity, it might suggest a peculiar staff culture at that school. This did not seem the case here. However, there was a disproportionate gap both physically and metaphorically between the annexe and the main school.

> Thacker: 'I really don't think that I can manage to get back to the annexe at lunchtimes ... it's so far. I don't enjoy it in Main School. I've tried to get on with staff there but they're so different. I stay in the class areas and help the pupils.'
>
> Jones: 'How do you get on with Croft?'
>
> Thacker: 'Not very well. He's looked up to by the pupils, but I don't like his approach. There's practically no examples of ethnic art.' (d 147)

(b) Intermediaries

Avoidance cannot be complete when one belongs to the same school, department or classroom block. In the official system, the various

actors used intermediaries to carry messages and provide communication between departments. The head at this school wisely tried both an official intermediary and a number of unofficial contacts. Officially he usually sent a deputy to the annexe when he wanted to have information relayed or collected for his own benefit.

> As usual, Abbott (a deputy) appeared with the salary cheques for staff at the annexe. He asked to see Pack (the head of department) who was out, and so he spoke to Gerrard (the deputy head of department), before doing a quick tour of the staff. (d 156)

Unofficially, he made contact with most staff visiting Main School and this included the researcher. He used the researcher's presence in the area (the annexe) to pass messages and to request information about the work of that department. In short the researcher became an unofficial intermediary.

> The head asked a member of staff to hand in some work for him to the secretaries and said that he would see him later. At the same time insisting that I came into his room to discuss the annexe:
>
> 'Come in Allan, old boy. How are you? How are things at the annexe?' (d 149)

Clearly, the problem of proximity was the motivating factor behind the head's actions. For a head, communication in a large school can prove difficult: even more so for an ordinary member of staff who might not see another member of the same staff for weeks on end. Therefore not only was it easy to use intermediaries, such as sending a pupil round with a note, it was necessary: indeed any use of them as an evasion tactic was quite acceptable to all the staff. Almost certainly the head used them to create social distance when, as in the case of the annexe, it might be necessary to avoid those staff most disaffected by policy decisions taken elsewhere.

The model teachers were often the intermediaries. Most staff accepted them as such. Indeed, where they are members of the

hierarchy of the 'system', they have an official role as such. But as the sociometry showed, not all senior staff get chosen as intermediaries. Model teachers did not appear to mind this role. Perhaps this was the way in which they demonstrated their position in the network, by the exercise of this type of strategy more than their colleagues.

The following piece of observation demonstrates the subtle way in which a model teacher, Gerrard, is available to be, if necessary, an intermediary.

> Jones, Ashurst, Bridle and Colleen were discussing the problems of home ownership and the value of property, though their conversation had begun with a discussion about a project on language. This group met regularly in the Resources area and were somewhat detached from the staffroom clique. Gerrard entered the room, almost certainly with the intention of duplicating some material. Instead of doing so she enthusiastically joined in the conversation. She had a great interest in property - having bought a cottage in the country a few miles out of town. Her regular presence in the Resources room helped bridge the gap between the two groups on the staff. (d 171)

This incident was one in a chain of occasions in which Gerrard's frequent use of the Resources area made the division between the staffroom and resources cliques less noticeable. She relayed bits of information, usually about what was being done or said on any week or day, and did not monopolise the conversation in either group. Moreover, members of both groups realised that she was a natural reference point for this sort of information. Other model teachers provided the same 'information exchange' service, so necessary when isolated individuals or groups wished to key in to what other staff were doing. This role suggests that model teachers can to some extent impose their perception of reality on other staff. In exchange for such a privilege the model teacher had to remain 'available' and 'aware'. They developed a sense of purpose and direction for the

school as a community.

A model teacher, like Gerrard, was not put off by the physical barriers of lack of proximity. Although other annexe staff made excuses and complained that main school was too remote, Gerrard found the time and energy to visit main school several times each term. Similarly, the staff at main school in staffroom B, were most acquainted with someone like Stott, who made the effort to see them, not only in their staffroom, but in classrooms, no matter how remote. It is the model teacher who sees the school as a whole and acts accordingly.

(c) Polite Rituals

> 'If adversaries cannot completely avoid one another, they can achieve the same effect by falling back on formal, ritualistic propriety when in one another's presence.' (Corwin)

The familiar rituals of the staffroom were the typical 'proprieties' of everyday life: taking coffee together, not interrupting conversation unless something 'urgent' imposed on the situation, asking about the health of near relatives or commenting on the weather. One of the better known rituals was the use of the noticeboard and bulletins to provide information which might be unwelcome.

> 'Written communication is a customary ritual which, in addition to its overt functions, helps to restrain the volume of face-to-face interaction and to focus the message on the immediate task, thus prohibiting exposure of personal feelings.' (Corwin).
>
> O.C. 'Staff frequently check the 'cover' timetable inside the door of each staffroom. I don't think a break or period goes by without someone checking. Some problems still occur though.' (d 112)

Although there are other administrative arguments for using a 'cover notice', the explanation of 'fronting - polite ritual' is not without an element of truth. Unpopular advice or requests by the head of

department at the annexe usually led to various 'additions' to the notice by staff.

> O.C. Pack had put up a notice asking for volunteers to do dinner duty. The list of names had some comments added, like 'No, thank you!' and 'You're joking!' This issue was a continual problem for the Head of Department, since few staff went in to dinner. Available staff ended up doing lots of duties. (d 159)

Other members of staff needed to use polite ritual to avoid conflict. One pair of staff, Bridle and Colleen, produced the resources for the annexe. Here was an attempt by Bridle to prevent a possible area of conflict developing:

> Bridle to everyone: 'So when you want work running off or typing out, just put it in the basket. It will get done in the order in which it arrives.' (d 76)

The use of polite ritual made for the smoother running of the school, but if one form of ritual did not work then other methods would be tried. So the staff in the resources area used other ways when this one failed. The rest of the staff were aware of this as a possible conflict situation and sometimes resorted to intermediaries.

> Kaur to Gerrard: 'Have Bridle and Colleen finished those duplicated sheets?'
>
> Gerrard: 'Well, they were doing them when I was in there. I shouldn't think that it will take all that long.' (d 147)

How far polite ritual and intermediaries can be interchanged is not clear. But it is obvious that they are similar activities. It is a subjective view as to whether they were evasion tactics or merely a direct result of the problem of proximity. Possibly the truth lies somewhere in between and the emphasis shifts according to each incident.

Model teachers were found to use polite rituals to good effect. An example of this might be their efficient use of postings on notice boards, providing 'helpful' information for their colleagues.

A simple device, but one that other staff might neglect, was to do what 32 did when I met her at break.

> Stott: 'Hello Allan, did you want to see me, or were you looking for someone else?'
>
> Jones: 'Well, I thought I might find Ginny here...'
>
> Stott: looking round staffroom A: 'I'm afraid she doesn't seem to be here yet. It's almost break, I'm sure she'll be along in a minute. Fancy a cup of tea while you're waiting?'
>
> Jones: 'Thankyou, I wouldn't mind...'
>
> Stott: 'I wonder if there's a spare cup.... ah .. I don't think this is anyone's, do you take milk and sugar.... here you are...'
>
> This conversation carried on through discussion of first year placement, and the problems of testing E.S.L. pupils until I met the member of staff whom I was waiting for. (d.38).

This style of staffroom hospitality was pronounced amongst model teachers, though other staff were likely to indulge in it with anyone they were well acquainted with, e.g. a member of their subject group. Only model teachers seemed to extend this format to relatively disassociated staff or even visitors. The most common occurrence was with female model teachers. Male model teachers might rather show their 'approachability' by gesturing you into a chair next to them, or standing alongside this teacher or that to indicate a sort of collegial solidarity.

5.3 Ignorance

> 'Ignorance refers to an actual unawareness, at least by one party, of certain facts that would otherwise alter the existing relationship. People's ignorance of what others actually think of them can curb open conflict. This ignorance is, however, often deliberately calculated by one party or group to give it a strategic advantage over competitors.' (Corwin).

There cannot be a more distressing term used in the sociology of education. It is as appropriate to educational institutions as any

other, at least as far as fronting goes. There are two forms of fronting (or ways of using) ignorance.

(a) Lying

This gives one party an advantage over another, since knowledge is power. For example this might take place when senior staff were asked by junior staff to explain an 'awkward' decision. Naturally there are many occasions when the term 'lying' is more emotive than the occasion requires. For example, when staff compete for promotion or perks they don't advertise 'non-professional' reasons for their application.

> O.C. Staff in the annexe department knew that the department was likely to shrink gradually as pupil numbers dropped.
>
> Gilroy read out an article on the job at Boxwood from the 'bulletin'. The job she had applied for was given a 2, 3 or 4 and this was for the third time of asking!
>
> O.C. Gilroy's 'front' of derision/distancing was a front, she had approached me to be her referee; she was in earnest. (d 182)

This may be considered speculative, since not even the applicant is always prepared to admit to him/herself what their true motives are. But Gilroy's attitude was representative of other teachers, especially in staffroom C. They were genuinely concerned to get promotion, which might mean leaving their colleagues. Therefore, though they might approach the matter of jobs with some 'levity' in the staffroom, they were in fact in earnest. This sort of 'lie' was also nearly a form of the 'manufactured public image' which for other reasons has been left out of this analysis. (See p.179).

(b) Secrecy

There is undoubtedly a lot of accidental secrecy in schools, because the isolated nature of teaching means that unless a general

circular is made to all staff immediately something occurs, there will inevitably be those 'in the know' and those who aren't. At this school there was a News Sheet which went out at least once a week and often more frequently, in an attempt to keep everyone abreast of events. Nevertheless, it was not always clear how general the information had to be to get in it, nor whether the sources of information got the timing right.

> O.C. A number of staff rarely saw the head from day to day. Some may not have seen him for weeks. (d 149)

However, only a few, unreasonable (?) staff ever complain about this dilemma to any degree. Most staff take it on themselves to 'uncover' information relevant to their functioning with at least basic efficiency.

> Gerrard to Gilroy: 'I haven't seen the Chinese boys' yellow sheets yet.' (d 165)

Given that accidental secrecy is inevitable, the existence of deliberate and contrived secrecy is a logical extension and easily accomplished. I cannot recall a single group or pair of teachers who did not hold some 'secret', albeit unimportant to the school as a whole, which might well have influenced the behaviour of someone else.

> Torevell to Gerrard: Don't tell Pack about Ashurst. I want the pleasure of breaking it to him. I told him about Thacker this morning!' (d 181)

It is not difficult to draw the conclusion that both secrecy and lying were viable and frequent fronting tactics used by staff to staff. It also seems likely that they were related to proximity. In a sense these are 'verbal' evasion tactics. Proximity, or the lack of it, must have considerable effect upon the forms of fronting which teachers choose, since proximity is a basic factor in the socialisation of the teaching profession. From the moment when staff enter school they are concerned with location and hence the distance between

locations. This is revealed within classrooms by the variety of arrangements with which different teachers permutate the desks. The timetable exists not only to allocate pupils but rooms to teachers. For many staff it is the rooms which are important, not the classes or even the subject. Anyone who has begun teaching, only to find a more senior staff member installed in their allotted room, whilst the 'class' are 'baying' at their heels will understand this point. The consequence of the import of proximity is that the lack of proximity, indeed, the 'individual' and separate role of the traditional form of teaching, allows the introduction of tactics which are peculiar to the 'lack' of proximity. So it is that the tactics of avoidance, intermediaries, polite rituals, secrecy and lying are all to be found amongst ones colleagues. It is perhaps a pity for the teaching profession that these 'negative' fronting procedures are so prevalent.

So far the analysis has looked at the negative fronting tactics which are present in staffroom life. But there is a more positive 'collegiality' which is built on other fronting mechanisms. These are designed to build up and maintain the teacher group. The teachers within these groups see themselves as having shared interests and therefore loss of face by any one teacher would devalue the group to which they belong. These tactics are termed 'discretion' and include tolerance of ambiguity, acceptance of others at face value, tact, hinting, reciprocal self-denial and occasionally inconsiderateness. Another type of fronting which can do much to build group identity is the use of 'joking'. Rapport establishing jokes - storytelling, wisecracks and kidding - and what is termed 'joking relations' can help dispel aggression and relax tensions when other factors are putting pressure on the group.

5.4. Discretion

> Discretion is calculated to save the situation and the opponents' loss of face in such situations by ignoring apparent facts that may embarrass them. (Corwin).
>
> "Face" refers to the positive social value that one claims for himself; the loss of face is "embarrassment." A "discreet" act preserves the fiction that nothing has happened. (Goffman, 1955).

Without 'discretion' no group of people can work together.

(a) Tolerance of ambiguity

This is the acceptance of an ambiguous explanation of a situation out of politeness.

A lot of decisions made in the school were not necessarily what staff felt were the best solution. However, when staff did challenge senior staff about decisions, and particularly the Head, they rarely 'pushed' their point of view.

> Stott to Pawson: 'When you have written your comments I sign them and staple them and send them back to you.'
>
> O.C. Quite clearly Pawson had asked about this procedure because he felt it was time-wasting. He tolerated a reply which assumed his question about procedure stemmed from being unsure about the system. (d 172)

There are potent reasons for accepting this sort of reply in the 'system'. In the 'network' though, there was considerably less tolerance of ambiguity and each member of staff felt that they had the right to 'push' their point of view.

> There was a confrontation between Gerrard and Pack, Gerrard refused to cover for more dinner duties; Pack responded by saying that no one need cover if the annexe was shut. (This shocked staff in this department). (d 167)

Model teachers realised that their role as intermediaries might sometimes be strained by the conflict of interests amongst their colleagues. When faced with a situation where two colleagues of differing persuasion looked set for confrontation, the model teacher usually played for time, so that one or other or both staff could stage a strategic withdrawal of the conflicting view or actions.

> At a heads of department meeting, chaired by Abbott, the issue of first year children and the 'sorting' into classes was raised by Croft, who rather brusquely asked Stott (a 'model' teacher) what could be done to improve the notification of relevant staff. Clearly this member of staff felt that they were not finding out which pupils went to whom in time for staff to update the registers. Stott replied by giving a historical perspective of the problem and took some time and put some detail into it. She expressed concern for the point that Croft had made. Before she had finished the analysis Croft had offered to 'switch' the focus of his criticism to a vague notion of 'the school'. (d 3)

The model teacher was squeezed between two conflicting interests. There was a danger that 'face' might be lost, for the model teacher as well. This does not mean that model teachers could not hold strong views of their own. They did. But they were also well aware of the patience and tenacity required to bring about change. They practised the 'negotiated order' quite literally.

(b) Hinting

A lot of communication amongst staff, especially between junior and senior staff consisted of 'probing' by junior staff anxious to see if they could attain their own goals by levering on policies already applied in the school. The head, for example, could grant little 'extras' by allowing staff a more flexible timetable or even time off. Extra allowances might be granted to staff promoting sound'educational' innovation.

> Jones: 'I came to the staffroom with Podmore who was explaining how he would spend his afternoon out of school - at another school, at a shop taking photographs of Indian food and then attempting to sort out the conveyancing on his house.'
> (This flexibility stemmed from his being prepared to spend extra time outside of school on an 'educational innovation' in the curriculum.) (d 69)

This tactic was important at all levels, though generally senior staff were much more explicit about their aims, at least with the Head. Mutual support was often sought from other 'interested'

staff to create what might be termed a 'lobby'.

> O.C. Podmore had got several other staff to put in a good word for him and the need for more multi-ethnic photographs. Staff on his side here included all of staffroom 'C'. (d 69)

All this took place more within the network, than in the 'system', because staff did not want to lose 'face' by having direct applications turned down. This period of discussion often ended with a better idea emerging as it was 'negotiated'.

Most model teachers were also past masters of the art of hinting.

> Gerrard to Gilroy: 'I haven't seen the Chinese boys' yellow sheet yet.'
>
> Gilroy: 'Oh ... I gave one to Rack. I thought that I gave all the copies out. Perhaps I put them back in the cupboard with the other copies. I'll have a look.' (d 165)

This was a much better way of handling Gilroy than to say 'Why on earth haven't you dealt with this yet!'

Hinting was not usually the main strategy of a model teacher. It can be regarded as an aid to their role of intermediary, or where it belongs, according to Corwin, as a feature of discreet fronting.

(c) Acceptance of others at face value

This means of maintaining discretion lasts as long as staff do not know you very well. For obvious reasons, of location, many teachers only knew each other vaguely, and a few more by 'reputation'. Only when an intruder, e.g. a parent, entered the building, was there a distinct attempt to 'front'. Staff did accept each other in terms of their professional ability, in order to establish a working

relationship, but amongst the network there was frequent exchange about what a teacher should or should not have done.

> Gilroy, talking about a teacher (Evans) who had just rung in: 'It's Evans, she doesn't want to come this afternoon!! ... She can't show them any movements from the side ...' (d 182)

Nevertheless, the teacher who was discussed did not usually have to face up to public recrimination.

> O.C.: Despite Gerrard's dislike of Ashurst and vice versa, they never came to the point of complete row. Gerrard does not accuse Ashurst to his face about his teaching. He doesn't goad her so much on other issues. (d 183)

When they did there were still three ways by which some of that teacher's face could be saved.

(d) Tact

> 'A way of preventing possible embarrassments by making it easy for the other party to save face.' (Corwin, 1965).

Another form of fronting, which might be categorised as being 'discretion', was tact. Quite often this boiled down to no more than scapegoating outside or detached agencies so that possible responsibility for failure would not get lodged within the staff group.

Most excuses for inadequate teaching skill fell into three categories. These were the timetable (or the organisation);

> Cook: 'Have you seen the list of staff off because of the German trip? It's a lot of staff to cover for. None of my classes have gone either.' (d 107)

the classroom facilities;

> Cook: 'As you have seen, my classroom (mobile) is very grotty. Other classes use it and spoil any displays I put up. The windows don't shut properly. It's not easy to teach there.' (d 109)

and the youth or inexperience of a teacher:

> Whitehead to Jones: 'I can't stay long, I want to talk to Gibson about her lessons. She is one of our younger teachers and she's having some difficulties with her classes.' (d 150)

Of course outside agencies got used as excuses for everyone and everything.

> Gerrard to Podmore and others: 'Yes we do need better meals, but you can't do much about it at the local level (i.e. own school kitchen). You must get at the supervisors and buyers.' (d 181)

The main purpose of the tactic of 'tact' was to allow teachers to excuse poor performances without detracting from their own 'face'.

The model teacher, as well as other staff, found this an effective method of bolstering morale. Here is an example of how Gerrard turned round a discussion which threatened to demoralise the staff.

> An exhibition had been held and other schools invited. Response was poor from some quarters:
>
> Thacker: 'He had nothing else to do on Friday. (Referring to a member of staff at main school.) They make no effort towards us. Even people working with us.'
>
> Gerrard: 'Nobody has come from the Castle schools.'
>
> Gilroy: 'Some schools you can't get away from.'
>
> Gerrard: 'What about the lunch hours?'
>
> Thacker: 'I can't believe that heads are saying that you can't go and see the Exhibition!'
>
> Gerrard: 'Anyone from Sandy Ridge been? ..... In a way I can understand why they might not bring the children. But there's no excuse for teachers.' (d 105)

Throughout the conversation Gerrard was looking for a way of turning people's thoughts into a more positive vein. Eventually, having met with no optimism, she pronounced a judgement on the teachers in 'other' schools, i.e. them, holding out the 'reasonable' and 'understood' implication that the organising of school parties is not easy at the best of times.

(e) Reciprocal self-denial

This practice of sharing one's inadequacies with a sympathetic audience, is well illustrated by an incident where Boswell had returned from a course aimed at introducing teachers to industry:

> Boswell felt strongly that the jobs B.R. offered were badly paid and 'only for morons'. Mercer joined in the conversation. Mercer said that she had 'chucked' careers work with girls a couple of years back because of this. She felt that the school was giving individuality and initiative to kids when they couldn't use it in the real world. She said it made one appreciate teaching. Boswell agreed, but still felt that more could be done to ameliorate the situation - better pay and less restrictions on the initiative of employees. (d 5)

It is a subcultural norm amongst some young teachers that they are somehow producing a 'better' product from schools than before. It offends them to think that after 'nurturing' the young adolescent, there is such a poor employment prospect. Whilst they, Mercer and Boswell might differ in their 'solutions' they could empathise as to the 'problem'. So it was with lots of other subjects: 'difficult' pupils, parents who did not 'co-operate' with the school, the 'cover' timetable, and certainly the personal traumas of home life:

> Ashurst had to leave school because his child had gone down with mumps. This triggered off a conversation about common ailments which various staff had suffered in the past.
>
> Gilroy recalled: 'When I had measles ....'
>
> Gerrard continued: 'I had mumps when Ann was four months and I was breast feeding ... the doctor prescribed something for me which sent her to sleep!
>
> Gilroy: 'You should see the reaction in Shagufta's arm from her B.C.G. It's swollen right up!' (d 181)

And so the conversation in the staffroom could turn back quite suddenly to something of importance which affected their teaching.

The staff who indulged in this were those best acquainted with each other, or at least on the same or similar level as each other. Occasionally a senior staff member would boost the flagging ego of younger staff by saying something nice about their lessons.

> Gerrard to Kaur: 'I thought the dancing was going well when I saw you with the girls yesterday lunchtime.'

Kaur to Jones: 'It's hard work. They're so timid. One or two are alright. Some of them are always talking. They don't listen.' (d 102)

This was never intended to be reciprocal. A general condition of staffroom life is that staff have the opportunity to indulge in reciprocal denial if they want. This may have influenced the choice of staffrooms for teachers in this school.

Bridle to Jones and Colleen: 'Pack says we ought to be in staffroom 'C' at lunchtimes. What do you think? How can we meet teachers and do all this extra work if we just sit around drinking coffee?'

O.C. Pack was worried that there were two groups appearing in the staff at the annexe. One in the staffroom and the other in the resources room. Bridle felt that she and Colleen did not have enough in common with others in the staffroom. (d 103)

Shared interest groups, particularly where they were subject based, gained strength from sessions of reciprocal self-denial.

(f) Inconsiderateness

The categories of discreet behaviour so far mentioned presume that the group is always going to save face for themselves and the individual. The fact is that there were some senior staff who were quite isolated. They were sometimes talked about in a deprecating manner (gossip) and on occasions events manipulated to make them appear incompetent.

Gerrard to others in staffroom A: I haven't been covered all day when I am supposed to be moderating C.S.E. work.'

O.C. Gerrard had told me that Whitehead's work was seen as less than efficient, by junior staff. (d 72)

For these staff the main complaint of other staff was that there was a large discrepancy between their 'front' and what they actually did.

Gilroy: 'Pack is best in a crisis.'

O.C. This referred to the mess that options had got into. Pack sorted them out under duress each Friday morning. (d 166)

As far as the entry of neophyte teachers was concerned the deliberate

'testing' which can sometimes be found in a staff, was not so explicit. Senior staff were quick to back up new teachers. A few staff were seen as being 'weak', but they were not publicly sanctioned unless they attempted to vindicate themselves.

> Thacker: 'It seems incredible from their point of view that we can't organise 60 children.'
>
> O.C. Thacker was referring to the options system and the fact that Pollard, who takes a group in the options, thought that there was gross mismanagement.
>
> Ashurst: 'I warned Pack that it would be a mess.' (d 162)

Unfortunately though, once a staff member had been rumoured to be weak, it took an even greater effort on their part to quosh the 'verdict'. Some staff, a very few, played up to the expectations of other staff by using inconsiderateness in retaliation.

> Torevell: 'If any worksheets get vetted, they go straight in the bin.'
>
> O.C. Since Torevell felt criticised it asserted his independence. (d 173)

This was not usual though, since it suggested bad 'morale' amongst staff.

5.5. Joking

> 'Some situations, where the conflict does come into the open, can be saved with humour.' (Corwin)

Staffrooms are not just full of serious discussion and no humour. They are a sanctuary for teachers to let out their frustration and aggression through the telling of jokes. Joking, which enhances group feeling, developed through at least two forms, storytelling and the wisecrack.

(a) Storytelling

This was quite extensive amongst staff.

> Greenwood recalled, in a humorous fashion, a pupils' strike which had occurred at a neighbouring school. Some of the pupils from that school had marched on

> Grassbank School and called over the railings for pupils to join them. He had been in a science lesson and told his class that they were free to go - but don't come back! They had stayed. They didn't go. Other older staff recalled this. Younger staff were amused and felt that there was some 'tradition' to join in with. (d 130)

It was not always directed at parents or other outside agencies, nor was it just about the pupils. Staff would tell exaggerated stories about other staff or events to recall the 'we' feeling of the group present. The researcher rarely heard any kind of joking, except amongst male staff, which was bawdy.

> Torevell to Jones and Ashurst: 'Heard about the three boat loads of vikings which rowed to England.
> Boat 1 arrived, disembarked and stood along the shoreline fierce and armed to the teeth.
> Boat 2 arrived, disembarked and stood menacingly on the beach.
> Boat 3 arrived hours later. The men were pale faced and tired.
> Some even drowned getting onto the beach.
> They fell in a heap on dry land.
> Then the chant went up from the first crew:
> 'Burn, BURN.'
> The second crew shouted: 'Pillage, PILLAGE.'
> The third crew weakly muttered:
> 'Not rape, <u>again</u>.' (d 127)

This sort of joke might be the most that anyone would tell in the presence of women staff. Of course there was occasionally the use of kidding (see later) or rather innuendo.

> Torevell: 'What have you been up to?'
> of 'Where have you two been?' (d 139)

(b) <u>Wisecracks</u>

These are jokes about the group by one of its members to the group. They were always popular, though not very frequent. Perhaps

because they are difficult to make successfully, requiring precise timing.

> Several staff were starting to form a card game. When I commented on this to Ridgley, he said: 'Yea. This is the only extra-mural activity in the school.' Everyone at the card table grinned. (d 40)

(c) Kidding

This took place to a limited extent, usually where some difference between two staff made it necessary for a plan to be put jokingly. I overheard kidding type jokes to heads of departments on several occasions.

> Evans to Gilroy: 'By the way Brenda, who's in charge this afternoon?'
>
> O.C. This was said casually as if it was a joke. However, it expressed a need to sort out the fact that they didn't see eye to eye on the running of swimming. Evans was senior to Gilroy, but the latter was in charge of this activity. (d 162)

There was a point beyond which kidding became a 'joking relation'.

(d) Joking Relations

This is 'a relation of permitted disrespect between two persons in which one party may humourously abuse another without serious offence'. It can be symmetrical or asymmetrical, that is mutual or one sided. If it is one sided it is usually from senior to junior staff. Amongst the staff of the annexe there was a fairly well developed network of joking relations. I feel that this was because quite a few staff felt frustrated and so let out their aggression through this type of relationship.

> Asymmetrical joke.
>
> Gilroy to Gerrard: 'Isn't that door usually locked?' (Jokingly)

Gerrard to Gilroy: 'No, I come that way each morning.'

O.C. Gerrard said this in a disapproving manner. She felt that it was not Gilroy's place to joke when she had not initiated it. (d 164)

Symmetrical

Torevell to Jones: 'Here comes the Inspector. (I had just walked in with a suit on.)

Jones to Torevell: 'Yes, the sanitary inspector! (d 180)

This kind of relationship seemed much less extensive in the main school staffrooms. Also, some jokes about teaching seemed to come from teachers who would have been considered less involved with their own teaching, and more interested in things 'outside' of school.

Gilroy: 'Torevell goes in the water, to take the non-swimmers, and he can't even see where he's going!

Torevell: 'I think it's for kids to see you in the water ... !' (d 182)

The model teacher did not always have to be ready with a joke or story, but they did have to have a sense of humour.

The discussion turned to the whereabouts of the milk for making coffee. There was real consternation about this! Gerrard (a 'model' teacher) in particular was puzzled.

Gerrard: 'There were $1\frac{1}{2}$ pints here this morning.'

Torevell: 'I had one extra coffee this morning, but I didn't have much milk in it.'

Gerrard: 'Perhaps Joe is using it to produce glossy photographs!'

Podmore(Joe) was present and took it in good part - he had recently started a project which involved processing large numbers of photographs. A few moments later he could quip back, when Gerrard said that the caretaker had removed the electric lead from the socket because the electricity might leak out -

Podmore: 'No wonder the atmosphere is so highly charged!' Groans all round. (d 165)

This sort of banter where one staff member might 'leg pull' another was a sign of collegiality. Without it, incidents like this might have taken on the proportions of requiring industrial action. Quietly potential aggression was dispersed and the group reinforced its members for their more onerous tasks.

At this point it is worth remembering the work done on joking relations by others, especially the work of Peterson(1975) and Woods(1979). Peterson looked at 'Black-white joking relationships' in a school where there were both coloured and white staff. Peterson noticed that in order to prevent a possible breakdown of teacher/ teacher relations along lines of race, the ploy of 'joking relations' was used. This allowed 'permitted' levels of disrespect between the two groups, fostered in particular by the coloured staff who referred to themselves and their 'culture' as being 'brown'. White staff took their lead and also referred to coloured culture as being 'brown'. Thus a whole class of joking developed around the use of the word 'brown'.

Woods devoted a significant chapter of 'Divided School' to a study of staffroom humour. In a detailed account of staffroom humour at Lowfield, he demonstrates that there are two elements to laughter in the staffroom:

> 'In the ordinary course of events, humour and laughter operate to resolve conflict, maintain control, preserve order or release tension. But staffroom humour has another, more transcendent, quality .... its ability to transcend the immediate situation and appeal to a broader scale of criteria. By this token, it is a supremely important part of school life, allowing the restoration of a perspective more in line with preferred identities.'

Thus joking amongst teachers not only allows them to 'cope' with their performance discontinuities, but it abstracts them from the immediate confines of their workplace, albeit backstage, and re-establishes their links with the rest of humanity.

5.6. Conclusions

Corwin ends on this note:

> 'Evasion tactics, discretion, ignorance and joking, are all familiar acts, but ones which are not commonly associated with the functioning of organisations and occupations. Yet, each of these processes has positive as well as negative functions for the organisation which are at present only faintly understood .... Much more attention needs to be paid to the discrepancies between formal public relations statements, the implicit image conveyed by customary arrangements and procedures within the system, and the informal backstage behaviour. To what extent is it the intended image that is actually conveyed?'

Since the 'Great Debate' and the increased pressure from government at both local and national level, schools in this country and even individual teachers within them ought to be aware of the fact that they cannot rely on established images to 'hold up' under scrutiny. That is not to assume that the new images which are perceived by the outsider will necessarily be less prestigious or that the status of teachers will be adversely affected. But it is important for both schools and teachers to be aware of the 'discrepancies' which Corwin notes and to have some idea of which stem from natural/efficient and inter-staff relations and which are less appropriate and reflect less satisfactory teacher/teacher relations.

Corwin continued his analysis with a lengthy section about the 'manufactured public image', a concept which concerned Goffman too. However, it is not within the scope of this research to compare or investigate so large an issue. Exclusion, by omission, does not mean that this is not a serious problem, but the contribution of this chapter is to substantiate the dramaturgical analysis of Goffman and Corwin. If this dimension of analysis can be shown to illuminate several studies of schools, then greater awareness of the importance of 'informal backstage behaviour' will help those who are concerned to align discrepant images about school life.

There are other aspects of this chapter related to the rest of the findings here on teacher/teacher relations. First of all, there is the recurrent surfacing of the idea of a 'model' teacher. In this research model teachers were not found to be reinforcing the more negative aspects of fronting tactics. They did engage in the more positive aspects, such as discretion and joking. Indeed, their store of 'storytales' about school life enlivened many a break or lunchtime. But even more they excelled as intermediaries. They looked outwards from their classes and subject areas to concern - themselves with colleagues and the well-being of the school. They crossed boundaries which other staff baulked at. Not that the model teacher was always a saint. They had their bad days too. But the most singular quality which made them stand out as primus inter pares was their ability to relate to each part of the curriculum, each room of the school and, most forcibly, each pupil at their desk or in the yard. Of course, there were only a handful of such teachers in this particular school. Teachers, like Stott, Gerrard, Greenwood and Tomkins , had 'star' status on the sociometric questionnaire which was reinforced by the practice of the more positive fronting tactics,

or perhaps was a result of the successful employment of those tactics. Goffman tentatively referred to them (this category) when he said:

> 'Sometimes guardians arise informally to coordinate established boundary lines between teachers.'

There is almost the suggestion that the 'backstage play' requires at least one referee and that model teachers may perform that function.

The other feature of the analysis is the way in which it aligns quite naturally with the perspective of 'proximity'. This is not surprising since the question of 'regions' of interaction is fundamental to this type of analysis. What is interesting is that it does reinforce the notion of proximity as a powerful agent in the group dynamics of teacher/teacher relations. Greater awareness of this ought to encourage administrators and architects to think again before allocating this or that area to this or that department. For example, should the factor of proximity be used to encourage or discourage departmental affiliations among teachers?

Perhaps the one important factor, which other chapters highlight, but which does not arise from this analysis, is the degree to which there were certain tactics employed between teachers from differing subject departments. Undoubtedly the teachers of any particular department felt constrained to 'front' for their departmental 'face'. However, since this analysis was not adopted until late on in the research, no detailed data is discernable. This may be partly because teachers often taught more than one subject and so felt less obliged to join in with one performance at the expense of another. Again, it may reflect the fact that there are formal means of negotiating differences between departments, such as the annual form requesting

which classes staff would like to teach and where. Whatever the reason, and there are three already given, the influence of departmental affiliation does not appear to have favoured any special type of tactics.

While it can be seen that Corwin's typology adds to our knowledge of teacher/teacher relations, this does not mean that there was an exact fit between data and typology, or that this should necessarily be expected. It was not always possible to find clear examples of Corwin's typology. Perhaps this reflects the intangible nature of first level constructs: the use of teacher talk in its raw state. Nevertheless, the overall impression from the data was that while fronting is certainly reflected in teacher talk, the match between the categories and the relevant data varies in degree. Certainly some categories, for example tact, were poorly or not at all represented in the data. Other categories, for example avoidance and storytelling, were not only good matches, but add depth to the ideas expressed by Corwin and Goffman. One instance of this is the use of story telling by model teachers. This took place on several occasions and was often about a specific pupil or event. Teachers rationalise their experience through such talk and the 'on-stage' pressures are alleviated by such anecdotes. Moreover, the data within this chapter has shown that there are two features of teacher/teacher relations which are demonstrably interwoven with a dramaturgical analysis of staffroom behaviour. One is proximity, or the lack of it, and the other is the role of the model teacher.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUDING REMARKS ABOUT THE RESEARCH

6.1. The hypotheses

These may now be restated in the light of the research findings which are summarised at the end of each chapter.

(i) That teachers form a network of informal groups.

The data from the literature, the sociometry and the observation provide ample justification for saying that teachers do form informal groups. One consideration is whether these informal groups are of a permanent or of a temporary nature. In general, the argument probably favours a view of such groups as being relatively stable: teachers may move between them occasionally, or out of them on leaving a school, but constraints of departmental affiliation and proximity choice amongst adults will encourage stability. However, this research does not focus on the activities of the isolate or 'rogue' teacher, whose presence within a staffroom may disturb established groupings. Data from this research suggests that it may be worthwhile examining this aspect of teacher/teacher relations.

The contentious issue in this hypothesis is the term 'network'. In the sense that there were articulations and bridges between informal groups of teachers, for example the model teachers, and that teachers clearly interact in back, as well as front, stage styles, then there is evidence of quite considerable informal interaction amongst teachers. This research suggests that the network reflects the formal system through the influences of departmental affiliation, proximity and the high status of model teachers. Also, while there

is an element of egalitarianism and organisation in the formal system, for instance where it is assumed that deputies will have similar status, in the network some high status individuals achieve acclamation and enhancement of their formal status, but others don't. The point about using the term 'network' is that it can be used to contrast with a word like 'system'. Whereas the formal organisation of the school is a 'system', the informal teacher/teacher interaction, though related to the 'system', creates a 'network' consisting of intersecting communications between colleagues. These interactions sometimes reinforce, sometimes cross boundaries within the system. It would be incorrect to refer to these interactions as another system, but the data would suggest that there is a network.

(ii) That teachers share technical knowledge through task-related talk in groups.

This hypothesis can be shown to be supported by the information given in chapter four. A matrix or framework is adopted with commonsense categories within it: the timetable, relations with pupils, lesson plans, examinations, stock, rooms, equipment, parents, visits, extra-curricular timetable, relations with colleagues, inservice courses, other courses, career, reports and tutoring. These are clearly task-related. The evidence from teacher/teacher dialogue points to the need for teachers to maintain an ongoing review of their practice, even though it is often the exchange of entirely subjective data. There is one point to note. The terms 'technical knowledge' and 'technology' may be debatable terminology. Certainly 'shop-talk' or 'staging talk' are not precise enough and do not convey completely the relationship between teaching and teacher/teacher interaction. While the term 'task-related talk' is frequently used, the effect of such teacher/teacher

communications is the creation of a technology of teaching. Thus 'technical knowledge' seems a reasonable description.

(iii) That a typology of task-related talk can be developed.

This is directly linked to the findings in hypothesis (ii). The typology developed in chapter four depended on certain assumptions: that the institutional, academic, instrumental and expressive boundaries are a feasible basis for a description of the technology of teaching. The sixteen categories which emerged did so from 175 'instances' of teacher task-related talk. They were arranged in several schema before this framework was developed. However, it is hoped that this structure might prove useful to others. It aids a discussion of the nature of each part of the 'technology' of teaching and relates it to the others. All too frequently this kind of rationale from basic data is missed out, because many educationists are concerned with a particular area and assume that it does relate to other areas without questioning how.

(iv) That there are other useful typologies for explaining staffroom behaviour.

This hypothesis was meant to show that staffroom behaviour is not just related to 'staging talk'; there may be several ways of analysing what happens in staffrooms. The literature already has examples of this (Hargreaves, Woods, Hammersley).

The dramaturgical dimension of chapter five is proof of this. Nevertheless, there are problems with a dramaturgical analysis. The first is that this dimension is so interwoven with other dimensions of teacher/teacher relations, for example personality or social structure, that it is sometimes difficult to extricate it from the data satisfactorily. The second drawback is in the level of understanding or 'explaining' which may be expected from

this type of analysis. This explanation gains from being linked to the themes of the model teacher and proximity. However, the 'explanation' from this typology must be seen as an explanation and not the explanation of staffroom behaviour.

6.2. Further considerations.

Besides verification of some or part of the hypotheses, the research developed themes which had not been defined at the outset of the research, though they now appear to be of considerable significance.

First, there is the development of a concept of the model teacher. This concept goes beyond the simple selection of the member of staff with 'star' status in the sociometric status. There is considerable evidence within the chapters on fronting and on task-related talk to suggest that this notion is one of the 'key linkages' which was observed in the participant observation.

Given that the idea of the model teacher is justified, what use is it? For example, could it help in the training of neophyte teachers? Perhaps teacher tutors should be staff who fit the description of model teachers. There would undoubtedly be difficulties in identifying such staff and this research does not claim to be a blue print for doing so. Indeed, this research does not even identify a typology of model teachers. There may be contradictions between a 'teacher's teacher' as identified here, and a 'pupil's teacher'. This whole concept needs far more study and in particular comparative ethnography. The evidence of this research has been one of presenting the concept as useful in understanding teacher/teacher relations.

Second, the factor of proximity and its implications for teacher/teacher relations has emerged. Apart from the evidence of

chapters 3, 4 and 5, there is substantial evidence as to the importance of this factor from the literature. The sociology of the traditional teacher is full of reference to the isolation and the separateness of teachers. So much so that until recently the area of teacher/teacher relations was seriously under-researched. The effects of proximity are not purely of a negative kind, that is separating and therefore damaging teacher/teacher relations. Rather, if school administrators and architects could realise the importance of this factor, then quite deliberate positive effects might be produced. For example, dilemmas of school life might be modified to a greater or lesser degree: the division between departments and the division between houses or pastoral groups. Is the prime function of the school pastoral or is the maintenance of departmental boundaries more important? So many schools develop in an unforeseen way because numbers of pupils fluctuate. Greater care needs to be exercised when 'bits' are added to the original school. It is apparent in some schools that staff relations were never considered, except as an adjunct to the role of the head-teacher. This research argues for the same attention to proximity amongst teachers as has been accorded to proximity amongst pupils.

Third, there can be little contention in the underlining of the accepted status of the academic department as a social unit in teacher/teacher relations. In particular the evidence from the chapter on sociometry and to some extent the content of the conversations among teachers (chapters four and five) creates the firm conviction that departmental affiliation, and therefore subject orientation, is crucial in secondary school life. This may be a reflection largely of the formal system, within schools, and the immensely powerful influence of training in colleges and

universities, outside of schools. Given that this is an important factor there are still many unanswered questions. If the department is so important a unit, then it ought to be clearer than it is as to whether there is a model for departmental performance to be measured against. Again, it might be possible to analyse the effects of the size and the subject of a department. Whatever the results of such research, this thesis maintains the social importance of departmental affiliation in the network of informal teacher/teacher relations within a school.

Fourth, the typology of task-related talk, or the creation and transmission of a technology of teaching, amongst collegial groups, is presented as a matrix. The typology, as it is, should be capable of application to other 'organised' forms of knowledge about teaching. For example, the syllabi of teacher training and in-service courses might share some of the framework, at least in content, if not in concept. If this typology is not applicable there might be two reasons. One is that it is too generalised: more detail, even at the syntactical level, could be added. Another is that it is too specific: important elements in a technology of teaching are missed out, and need including. Does the framework prevent such modification? It is sincerely hoped that this is not the case, but only further contrasting and comparing of evidence will verify this approach. More important than the question of the framework is the assumption that a typology is required. This assumption, so central to the research, may justifiably be challenged. Nevertheless, there remain compelling arguments for the extension of research in this area. One is the limited nature of such research as it exists to date. More important still are the increased accountability and diminished

authority of the teacher in society. There is a real need for more knowledge about teachers and teaching, among pupils, among parents, among governing bodies and among local and central government financiers of education. The time may not be far off when the vague outline of professional knowhow must be exchanged for a clearer technology of teaching.

The last important element which this thesis highlights is the dramaturgical nature of school life, not only when the teacher is in the front regions of the school, but even 'backstage' in the staffroom. There are limitations to the degree of relaxation allowable between colleagues. It is an 'arena for laughter' and as such it rescues many a teacher from the world of the child, or adolescent. What it cannot do is dismiss the formal relations and obligations amongst adults altogether. Many staffrooms may be minefields for the 'face' of an individual. Without such pressures it might not be feasible for collegial ties to be formed. It is this delicate collegial balance which creates and transmits to its members an oral technology of teaching. The presenting fronts of colleagues are an important stimulus to such a developing technology. Whether such a technology can or should be written down is debatable. This thesis has only aimed at demonstrating that informal teacher/teacher relations has an important role in school life and that a significant part of what teachers talk about is concerned with how they teach.

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