A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHING OF BOYS' PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

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SUMMARY

This thesis presents a sociological analysis of the teaching of boys' physical education and is based on a three-year research link with five teachers in two secondary schools. In the thesis, this link is characterised as ethnographic and the implications of the link for both the process and product of research are considered.

The thesis is divided into a Preface and four Parts.

In the Preface, guiding perspectives are discussed and consideration is given to how a sociologically-informed analysis of teaching requires sensitivity to both the immediacy of teaching itself and to the locatedness of such activity within structural relationships. Insights to be gained from interpretive sociology, neo-Marxism and cultural studies are discussed.

Chapter One discusses the links between private troubles and public issues. Research questions are discussed. It is noted that a central concern is how teachers construct contexts within which teaching and learning become more or less possible.

Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five provide detailed empirical research material in advance of a literature review in Chapter Six. This arrangement of the text is intended to enable a discussion of the role of the researcher and teachers in educational research.

Chapter Seven discusses developments in literary theory and emerging debates in anthropology about the process of writing.

Chapter Eight draws together themes from the thesis in an attempt to look at the personal significance of the research and the wider implications for the teaching of physical education.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It has been my good fortune to meet many people during the course of researching this thesis.

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Maureen Pope, my supervisor, enabled and facilitated my work in a way that sometimes might have challenged some of her core constructs.

Annette Stanett, to my joy and relief, proof read the thesis.

Sue, Beth and Sam have, at times, despaired of achieving 'normal' family life but have been essential supporters of my labours.

I hope that the thesis is worthy of such support.
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In most books, the I, or the first person, is omitted; in this it will be retained; that, in respect to egotism, is the main difference. We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well.

(Martin Duberman, Black Mountain, 1974)

We need more, not fewer ways, to tell of culture.

(John Van Maanen, Tales of the Field, 1988)
Physical education, in any form of schooling, has not been a consuming research interest for sociologists of education. In the 1980s, a small community of researchers, mainly associated with departments of physical education in higher education, have attempted to redress some of this neglect.

In this thesis, I present a sociological analysis of the teaching of boys' physical education in the secondary school. I have grounded my analysis in material drawn from ethnographic field work conducted with five teachers of boys' physical education in two secondary schools during the period 1986 to 1989.

I adopt a reflexive stance to ethnography as both a research process and a research account. I intend to give you, as reader, a sense of my analysis by posing as problematic my re-presentation of field work experience as a text.

I want to use the Preface to draw attention to the interplay of 'theoretical' perspectives and my 'practical' experience of field research. My intention is to pre-view some of the issues to be discussed later without overly delaying my tale from the field.

I have divided the Preface into three main sections:

1. Guiding Perspectives and Epistemological Acts of Faith
2. Field Research
3. Account-as-Text
1. Guiding Perspectives and Epistemological Acts of Faith

In his discussion of social science, privacy and ethics, J.A. Barnes (1979:9) makes "the gigantic assumption that some kind of social science is possible". I make a similar scale of assumption about a sociological analysis of the teaching of physical education.

In my sociological analysis, I draw upon a range of perspectives and methods that privilege an approach to coming to know about teaching which I will characterise as 'qualitative'. I make epistemological and ontological assumptions about the essence of qualitative sociology and willingly concede that both involve acts of faith. Such faith has drawn me to ethnography as a personally significant means of documenting the teaching of boys' physical education. Constructivist psychology has enabled me to focus my concerns.

(i) Constructivism

Constructivism celebrates personal attempts to make sense of the world. According to George Kelly (1955), meaning is given to the world through the construction of it. The building blocks of his psychology are the constructs a person employs to make sense of everyday life. Such constructs are templets used to view the world. The daily explorations of life involve trying out these constructs for empirical fit. The generic term 'man-the-scientist' is used to denote an active and creative vision of the person who attempts to observe, interpret, predict and control everyday experience. People act as scientists, George Kelly argued, since they are constantly testing out hypotheses about the world.

What is particularly attractive about his work is that it encourages a developmental approach to the ways we come to know the world. His 'psychology of the personal' is underscored by a philosophical position of constructive alternativism which holds that:
man understands himself and his potentialities by devising constructions to place upon them and then testing the tentative utility of these constructions against such ad interim criteria as the successful prediction and control of events. (1966:1)

George Kelly contrasted this with accumulative fragmentalism in which knowledge of the world is deemed to be acquired by increments of 'factual' information. Thus, rather than viewing the person as a passive reactor, Kelly:

preferred to portray people as active agents capable of making things happen and able to construct events (Sue Lyons & Maureen Pope, 1989:154)

With few exceptions, Kelly's work has been little used in research in physical education. David Savage (1979) has applied Kelly's work to performance in sport. My wife, Sue Lyons, has attempted a constructivist approach to dance (1985) and movement (1989). Barry Thorne (1988) has used constructivism to explore gender issues in the teaching of mixed physical education. In his discussion of naturalistic research in physical education, Andrew Sparkes (1989a) has raised some basic constructivist issues.

Sue Lyons has argued that:

Kelly's celebration of the person, his account of the fallibility of human enterprise and his concern with the dynamics of meaning construction are particularly suited to research in teaching and learning. (1985:115)

I see this as the attraction of constructivism and its similarity with those sociological approaches that allocate space and significance to individuals trying to make sense of everyday life. It is, as Maureen Pope and John Novak have argued, "an insightful heuristic".(1985:1)

One outcome of constructivist research in educational settings has been the questioning of the relative epistemological value and educational status of teachers' and pupils' constructs. It seems to me that by working with teachers and pupils in physical education the creative potential of constructive alternativism can be realised.
If, as George Kelly argues, we have the potential to construe the world in an infinite number of ways depending on our imagination and the courageousness of our experimentation, then change and development are possible. The liberational message of constructivism is:

No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances; no one needs to be a victim of his biography. (1955:15)

David Swift (1984), amongst others, has drawn attention to constructivism as a revolutionary-activist theory of knowledge. As originally conceived by Imre Lakatos:

Revolutionary activists believe that conceptual frameworks can be developed and also replaced by new, better ones; it is we who create our 'prisons' and we can also, critically, demolish them. (1970:104, original emphasis)

Kelly saw constructivism itself as open to refutation and was critical of attempts to suggest otherwise. It is exactly this sense of fallibility that I find attractive about personal construct psychology.

(ii) Sociological Perspectives

Maureen Pope has noted on numerous occasions (see, for example, 1981, 1982, 1989) the affinity between personal construct psychology and those sociological perspectives that celebrate active agency. My induction into constructivist approaches at the University of Surrey enabled me to recast my understanding of interpretive sociology and to ponder on the structural overdetermination of action.

In my attempt to locate my own work within theoretical debates, I draw upon:

(a) interpretive accounts of everyday life
(b) neo-Marxist accounts
(c) cultural studies
There is, by now, a substantial literature related to these three categories and my strategy here will be to signal my understanding of these perspectives and their significance for my work. I concur with Alan Tomlinson that:

Physical Education, if it is to be more than a set of taken-for-granted activities and values or a crude form of social control, must be studied and, if necessary, made and re-made as a significant element in our wider culture. The way forward, I believe, is to reject any notion of objective, value-free study of isolated 'variables', and to make connections between the different aspects of our social lives and cultural experience. (1982:53)

My own sense of Alan Tomlinson's signposting for the sociological study of physical education is framed by developments in the literature over the last twenty years. In epistemological and ontological terms, it is illuminating to compare the problematics in, for example, John Mangan's Physical Education and Sport: Sociological and Cultural Perspectives (1973) and John Evans's Teachers, Teaching and Control in Physical Education (1988) as is a similar comparison of John Loy and Gerald Kenyon's Sport, Culture and Society (1969) and Jennifer Hargreaves's Sport, Culture and Ideology (1982).

My thesis is founded on the cumulative theoretical enterprise in the sociology of physical education and sport over this period.

(a) Interpretive Accounts of Everyday Life

In 1932, Willard Waller provided a "literary realist" account of the social world of the school. His advice was:

A sociological writer cannot, in the present state of our science, hope to get very far ahead of common sense, and he is usually fortunate if he does not fall behind it. (1932:3)
Part of the problem for educational research in the intervening years has been that some researchers have sought to monopolise definitions of common sense at the expense of teachers and pupils. Those researchers who have found such imperialism unacceptable have drawn upon sociological perspectives that celebrate action and meaning in everyday life. In doing so they share a common project with constructivists.

The debate about action and meaning in the sociology of education was focussed, in England, by the publication of Michael Young's collection of readings Knowledge and Control in 1971. Critiques of 'old' sociology of education were presented and 'new' perspectives discussed. I take the waning paradigm of the 'old' sociology to be structural-functionalism and the emerging 'new' paradigm to be interpretive sociology founded on interest in symbolic interactionism and phenomenology.

The rise of 'new' approaches and their subsequent critique from alternative perspectives has been noted elsewhere (see for example, Olive Banks 1982). Amongst others, Geoff Whitty (1977) has commented on the optimism of possibilitarian strands in 'new directions'; David Hargreaves (1978) has asked 'What ever happened to symbolic interactionism?'; and Andy Hargreaves has observed that:

Much of what has passed for sociology of education has either failed to grasp the consciousness of those about whom it claims to theorise, or else it has over-optimistically celebrated the seemingly limitless power of the individual to define, make and remake his own world. (1978:73)

Whilst recognising the force of argument against the manifesto for 'new' approaches, I have been guided by the spirit of Knowledge and Control; while the debate raged, I was part of an academic community interested in the construction of meaning within education in general and physical education in particular. The encouragement to 'make' rather than 'take' educators' problems has been particularly invitational and has meant that:
Certain fundamental features of educators' worlds which are taken for granted, such as what counts as educational knowledge and how it is made available, become objects of enquiry. (Young 1971:2)

Nell Keddie's distinction between educationists and teachers (1971) and Geoffrey Esland's (1971:78) conceptualisation of teaching and learning as "the inter-subjective construction of reality" have also influenced my thinking about teaching and learning.

In her critique of a decade of classroom research, Sara Delamont suggests that:

After a brief period of being fashionable, interactionist studies of everyday life in school have become somewhat overshadowed by macro-theoretical accounts of schooling in capitalist societies. The position taken here is that while school and classroom ethnographies do have limitations of their authors' own making, they have provided important data on education in complex societies and will continue to do so. (1981:69)

One of her strategies for re-invigorating classroom research is to study unusual, bizarre or 'different' classrooms or subjects. Included in her category of unusual, bizarre or 'different' is physical education. In passing, it is interesting to note that:

it is argued that ethnographers have failed to read widely enough before they write, and that they have neglected to struggle against the overwhelming familiarity of the classroom milieu. (1981:70)

At the time of the publication of her article, a small number of interpretive accounts of physical education were already available. It would have been surprising if, a decade on from Michael Young's Knowledge and Control (1971), no attempt had been made to explore interpretive approaches to the teaching of physical education. Some sociologists of
physical education were already drawing attention to the significance of the work of symbolic interactionists, phenomenologists, ethnomethodologists and figurational sociologists. Associated with this interest was a burgeoning of articles about perspectives and methods.

John Yates (1975, 1977), Bob Carroll (1976), Eric Hoyle (1977), Eric Ward and Kevin Hardman (1978) all sought to use interpretive approaches in their accounts of the teaching of physical education. Joe Maguire (1979), then a fourth year BEd student, was able as to use an interpretive approach to account for the values and perceptions which influenced "the everyday teaching of physical education".

In the 1980s, concurrent with my own interest in teaching and learning in physical education, there has been a veritable explosion of literature linked to the development of interpretive accounts of physical education. As the decade has drawn to a close a community of researchers has become evident. In Part III, I will discuss this community in terms of a literature re-view.

(b) Neo-Marxist Accounts

One of the inherent weaknesses of creating categories of literature is the presumption that such categorisation reflects homogenous perspectives and some form of distinctiveness from other perspectives. My extrapolation of a neo-Marxist strand as a guiding perspective runs both risks. However, I do want to draw attention to some epistemological and ontological assumptions that have influenced my thinking.

One of the criticisms of interpretive approaches to education has been that they reside in some form of "splendid isolation" (Andy Hargreaves and Peter Woods, 1984:9). Anthony Giddens has sought to reconcile, in a theory of structuration, the duality of structure. He suggests that the notion of duality:
connects the production of social interaction, as always and everywhere a contingent accomplishment of knowledgeable social actors, to the reproduction of social systems across time-space. (1981:27, original emphasis)

In another context, Anthony Giddens has argued that:

The production of society is brought about by the active constituting skills of its members, but draws upon resources, and depends upon conditions of which they are unaware or which they perceive only dimly. (1976:157)

I take the significance of the less deterministic variants of neo-Marxism to be the insights to be gained from accounting for knowledgeability and action within the constraints of ongoing social formations. Ian Roxborough (1979), for example, discusses the benefits of adopting an approach based on partial economic determination rather than rigorous economic determinism whilst Angus Stewart (1983) has noted the variability of the social determination of life chances in contemporary Britain. Both of them locate their analysis within the context of a world economic system.

In my undergraduate days I had been encouraged to read Karl Marx. Ten years later, when I was on a postgraduate sociology course my prescribed reading included Louis Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas, Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School. From such a theoretical base, I became interested in the role of the state and the potential of historical materialism as a means of understanding social relations. The ontological appeal of Marx is, I believe, linked to human creative potential. Like many students, I recall two dimensions of this potential:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past. (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, quoted in Feuer 1969:360)

and:
The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it. (Theses on Feuerbach, original emphasis, quoted in Feuer 1969:286)

These kinds of statements stimulated my interest in praxis as a means of bringing about change.

Prior to my entry into the field at the two secondary schools, I was interested in the link between biography and history. I had become acquainted with some of the Marxist analyses of sport and leisure and was aware of the work of Bero Rigauer (1969), Paul Hoch (1972) and Jean-Marie Brohm (1978). In North America, Richard Gruneau (1978, 1980, 1982) and Rob Beamish (1981, 1982) had discussed materialist approaches to the study of sport whilst Alan Ingham (1978) and Alan Guttman (1978) had offered Weberian responses to materialist accounts. In England, the symposium on 'Sport, Culture and Ideology' at Roehampton Institute in 1980 enabled a debate about materialism and led to a collection of papers edited by Jennifer Hargreaves (1982).

Such developments transformed the debate about physical education. Students were now encouraged to read Antonio Gramsci and to grapple with the concepts of hegemony and relative autonomy. Critiques of hegemony appeared (see, for example, Jim Parry 1983). In my professional development, I experienced conversive trauma whilst listening to Alan Tomlinson's paper to the 1982 NATFHE PE section conference. Part of his concluding comment was:

The sociological study of physical education and sport must retain, or acquire and develop, a sense of the material basis of physical education and sports, and of the wider social relations in which they are situated. Educationists often see themselves as having some degree of agency in their lives, some capacity to affect the world around them. If we are potential agents, and can work with notions of what the world could be like as well as what it is, then we should recognise an element of potential agency in our own professional practice. (1982:53)
For Alan Tomlinson the way forward was linked to developments in cultural studies. The legacy of interpretive approaches and my interest in constructivism both required that I reworked some of the structural determination implied by neo-Marxist accounts of the state. I felt impelled to find a space in my thinking for the everyday lives of 'real' people. This led me to consider insights offered by cultural studies.

(c) Cultural Studies

My coming to know about cultural studies was circuitous. It started with Alan Tomlinson's talk, moved on through Paul Willis's Learning to Labour (1977) and his account of women in sport (1982), to Christine Griffin and others' discussion of women and leisure (1982), and to Alan Tomlinson's collection of readings on leisure and social control (1981). Only then did I start to read Richard Hoggart, E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams as well as discovering Stuart Hall and others' Culture Media and Language (1980), the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies' Unpopular Education (1981), and Paul Willis's revisiting of Learning to Labour (1983).

My cumulative sense of developments in cultural studies and at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies has encouraged me to consider how a range of disciplines can be engaged to address issues in contemporary culture. For Raymond Williams, what the cultural sociologist or historian studies are:

the social practices and social relations which produce not only 'a culture' or 'an ideology' but, more significantly, those dynamic and actual states and works within which there are not only continuities and persistent determinations but also tensions, conflicts, resolutions and irresolutions, innovations and actual changes. (1981:29)

I take the appeal of cultural studies to be the concentration upon lived experience and concrete historical realities which regards culture as a series of constructive meanings. Paul Willis (1983) has suggested that the
cultural studies project is a particular kind of interest in a particular 'moment' of the most general social processes. The 'cultural moment':

concerns the specifically human and collective activity of meaning making - the making sense, if you will, of a structural location: a position in a social relationship and Mode of Production. (1983:112, original emphasis)

Ethnography has been an important mode for the production of concrete studies at the Centre. Roger Grimshaw and others have pointed out that the capacity of the ethnographic project is to surprise and:

if not generate alternative accounts of reality, at least question, compromise, negate or force revision in our existing accounts. (1980:74)

Paul Willis has pointed out that such surprise is not unbridled, intuitive 'naturalism', for:

Even the most 'naturalistic' of accounts involves deconstruction of native logic and builds upon reconstruction of compressed, select, significant moments in the original field experienced. There is an art concealing art which precisely obscures the theoretical work that has taken place. (1980:91)

By reading some of the empirical work first, I found it easier then to address some of the domain assumptions of culture studies. Otherwise, I think I would have had some of the difficulties with the private language of cultural studies noted by Alan Tomlinson (1981:x).

Exposure to cultural studies in part enabled me to frame my research proposals to the University of Surrey. By 1983, I was confident that a qualitative approach to the teaching of physical education was possible if the duality of social structure and personal meaning-making was addressed.
(iii) Qualitative Research

I have broadcast the term 'qualitative' research in this Preface. For the time being, I want to put aside discussion of some of the philosophical and logistical implications of qualitative research. I am particularly keen that you get a sense of my work before such a discussion.

What I have found encouraging is that, during the time of my research, a community of interest in qualitative approaches to research has become increasingly visible both in sociology and physical education. Sheltered by my own 'academic' development and supported by a supervisor and department who saw nothing deviant in undertaking qualitative research, I have not experienced any of the status anxiety some qualitative researchers seem to have done.

Central to my thinking has been the kind of sentiments expressed by Phillida Salmon and Hilary Claire:

In order to come to understand the ways teachers saw their classrooms, their pupils, their goals, we needed to meet them personally - to acknowledge and respect their individuality, and to be accessible ourselves as human beings. (1984:14)

I also concurred with Peter Reason and John Rowan who have suggested that:

Research doesn't have to be another brick in the wall. It is obscene to take a young researcher who actually wants to know more about people, and divert them into manipulating 'variables', counting 'behaviours', observing 'responses' and all the rest of the ways in which people are falsified and fragmented. If we want to know about people, we have to encourage them to be who they are, and to resist all attempts to make them - or ourselves - into something we are not, but which is more easily observable, or countable, or manipulable. (1981:xxiii)

In deferring discussion of qualitative research, I am asking you to hold on to the sentiments expressed by Abra, a character in Joan Barfoot's novel Gaining Ground:
Look, you can sit here and tell me every moment of your life that you can remember, and you can analyze all of it and tell me what each moment meant to you; but there is no way that I'll understand exactly because I haven't had the experiences. And I can't explain to you how it is with me because you haven't experienced what I have. We can get a sense of each other, but we can't know each other, we can't really understand. That's not so terrible; it seems to me that the sense we have of each other is quite a lovely thing. There's no need to force it into being something else. (1984:182)

(iv) Physical Education

I have been involved in the teaching of physical education since 1974. I taught for three years in an 11-16 comprehensive school following the end of my postgraduate certificate course at Loughborough College in 1975. In 1978 I was appointed as a lecturer in a college of higher education. I was inducted into the teaching of physical education at a time of change from a certificate to a graduate profession. It was also a time when John Kane's (1974) Schools Council enquiry was hot off the press. A substantial part of my understanding of physical education dates from my socialisation as a teacher at that time.

In addition to John Kane's survey, the 1970s was also a time when researchers were considering the role of the physical education teacher. Leo Hendry (1975, 1978) amongst others pointed to the 'marginality' of physical education in the secondary school. In association with Nick Whitehead, Leo Hendry (1976) also described and analysed the teaching of physical education in England.

My choice of physical education as a substantive focus for research is in part generated by this background. It is also a response to the neglect of physical education in the sociology of education literature. The politics of school and higher education knowledge have afforded physical education little status. From the growing body of literature on teaching and learning in physical education available at the end of the 1980s, it would seem that many other researchers have been animated by the 'invisibility' of physical education.
I have noted that Sara Delamont (1981) regards the use of unusual, bizarre or different classrooms or subjects as one way of moving classroom research forward. Perhaps the delayed entry of research about physical education in the sociology of education has something to do with sociologists' memories of their own experience of physical education. David Hargreaves, for example, in his discussion of a pupil's persistent failure, indicates how he could empathise with the pupil:

The nearest I can come is to imagine a school in which the aspects in which I was least successful (the physical-manual) replace those in which I was most successful (the cognitive-intellectual). In this nightmare my secondary school's timetable is dominated by periods of compulsory woodwork and metalwork, gymnastics, football and cricket, drawing and painting, technical drawing, swimming and cross-country running. Sandwiched between these lessons but only in slices, appear welcome lessons in arithmetic and English, in French and history. Some of these, however, cease to be available to me after the third year; they clash with the more important subjects of technical drawing and gymnastics which I need for higher education and a good job. (1982:64)

The 'trivialty' of physical education might also be a reason for the research blind-spot. Chris Powell and George Paton, for example, have noted that:

As a school subject (sport) was something to be enjoyed or endured rather than thought about, a temporary cathartic suspension of the real everyday world of work and productivity. (1988:xi)

Paradoxically, educational researchers consistently use similes and metaphors drawn from sport. Sara Delamont, for example, cautioned against a wholesale shift of perspective:

which will leave the ethnographic study of schools and classrooms like an evolutionary blind alley in the sociology of education. There is, I believe, a danger that the subject will start to look like a game of football played by absolute beginners - all rushing about the field, this way and that, all clustered around the ball. (1978:64)
Some authors seem to have biomechanical, let alone epistemological, problems with sport, as in Andy Hargreaves's case in his discussion of 'coping strategies':

Like a gymnast on the trampoline, movement has tended to be up and down between ground level and the dizzy structural heights and has rarely provided any degree of forward momentum. (1984:64)

The paradox seems to be that although readers are assumed to understand the simile or metaphor, the subject of it remains subservient.

Within the physical education literature, the image of the male physical education teacher has hardly been enhanced by the kind of observation that:

In physical stature, physical educationists have been shown to tend to mesomorphy, while they tend to score high on personality factors related to extraversion, stability and tough mindedness. But this assertive, rapid-action physical education teacher is not necessarily the precision worker who in modern times is likely to contemplate the point of view of others who may be in disagreement with him, and who are proposing change. (Nick Whitehead, 1976:181)

Similarly, a reviewer of Herbert Haag's Sport Pedagogy (1978) opined that:

Physical education teachers often regard others with a different physical and psychic constitution as being of very little importance.

I think there has been some rehabilitation of the physical education profession in the last decade but for many pupils and researchers PE still equates with PT - the abbreviation for physical torture.

Throughout my account of physical education in this section I have assumed that 'physical education' is a generic term. I take a pragmatic view of it as a 'subject' taught by members of staff designated as physical education teachers. I do not mean to suggest that what is to count as physical education is unproblematic.
My pragmatism also extends to 'physical education' as a descriptor. Like Lesley Wright, I feel that:

If we now dispense with the term we are still left with the problem of justifying those same activities, the problem will not go away just because we have given them different names. (1984:191)

2. Field Research

In this Preface, I have characterised my research as 'field work', 'ethnography' and 'qualitative'. I have also tried to give a brief account of the qualitative tenor of my research interest. I want to signal that I see this qualitative spirit enabled through and by field research. Ironically, although physical education seems ideal for literal field work, the methods encouraged in the literature often fail to grasp distinct problems posed by the 'open' context of the physical education classroom.

I regard my research as ethnographic. Andy Hargreaves and Peter Woods suggest that ethnographic enquiry:

aims to bring to life by close observation and/or depth interview the internal workings of an institution or culture, to reveal the perspectives of its members, to highlight the constraints that they work under, the kinds of adaptations they make as a result, and to make explicit the routine and taken-for-granted features of institutional life on which orderly management may depend. (1984:1)

Although this kind of research has become increasingly popular in educational research, labels for it proliferate. Robert Burgess (1985a), for example, has chosen to use 'field methods' as an umbrella term to cover: fieldwork, ethnography, case study, qualitative research, interpretive procedures and field research. Frederick Erikson's preference is to use 'interpretive' as a term for the whole family of approaches to participant observational research. He argues that:
(a) it is more inclusive than many of the others (e.g., ethnography, case study); (b) it avoids the connotation of defining these approaches as essentially nonquantitative (a connotation that is carried by the term qualitative), since quantification of particular sorts can often be employed in the work; and (c) it points to the key feature of family resemblance among the various approaches - central research interest in human meaning in social life and its elucidation and exposition by the researcher. (1986:119)

Notwithstanding difficulties about labels, I see field research as a venture in what Clifford Geertz (1975) refers to as "thick description". Part II of the thesis is my attempt at such description.

3. Account-as-Text

I have tried to minimise the scale of this Preface in order to move you on to the teachers, pupils and schools in the description as quickly as possible. There will be plenty of time afterwards to engage in discussion of hagiography and demonology.

I do however want to conclude this Preface with a mention of the thesis as text. I have addressed you directly as reader and have persevered with personal pronouns. I have also ordered the text and constructed it. In doing so, I am reminded of Miller Mair's suggestion that:

Words are substantial, like paint or clay. They are not transparent and secondary. They tell their own tales. They muscle in wherever they are used to influence everything around them with the stories they wish to tell. They bring with them baggage from other places and other times. They lead off in directions that speak of their relationships with other words and other things. Words, and the choice of words in relationship, create realities of their own and do not just point to things we suppose are separate and of superior importance. (1987:16)

In presenting the thesis, I am attempting a reflexive undertaking. I see the account-as-text as a preliminary attempt to address vibrant issues in educational, sociological and anthropological reportage.
PART I
CHAPTER ONE: Of Personal Experience and Research Questions

1.1 Introduction

In 1983, I registered for a higher degree in the Institute for Educational Development at the University of Surrey. My aim was to conduct research into the teaching of boys' physical education in the secondary school.

Six years on, the thesis presented here is something of a quantum leap from what I originally intended. My plan was to research the teaching of physical education, from a sociological perspective, in order to improve the quality of courses and tutorial advice I was giving to student teachers. It had been five years since I was a physical education teacher in a comprehensive school and I was rapidly becoming the kind of Derby tipster that Roy Nash (1976) was critical of in his account of the practical training given to teachers.

I was, in fact, an innocent abroad on a number of counts. The Department of Education and Science's Teaching Quality had not been published at that time and I could still believe that CATE was a phonetic spelling of a girl's name. Also, I had not carefully thought through exactly what kind of research I wanted to do and when asked about my intentions in this respect I used to mumble something about 'qualitative research'.

My innocence did not extend to my language, however. At that time I used the most ridiculous jargon without turning a hair. An undergraduate social science course and a sociology masters course had ill-prepared me for everyday life. What is even worse, I used the jargon to give myself bogus authority.

To carry on for a while in this confessional vein, I also think that I hid behind a missionary conception of qualitative research. Despite my emerging interest in constructivist approaches to education and glimpses of books like Peter Reason and John Rowan's Human Inquiry (1981), I
still had not realised the significant difference between research with and research on teachers. I seemed to think that doing qualitative works was a virtue in its own right. I was bringing to the research process an understanding of research that matched Tony Hancock's notion of being a blood donor!

Doing research was a perfect antidote. From 1986, when I started working with five teachers of physical education in two schools, my understanding of qualitative research was transformed. I also found it comforting that there were other researchers with similar qualitative interests in the sociology of physical education.

But I think I would have opted for a safe account of my own and others' work, if I had not discovered some critical essays on the form of anthropological and ethnographic writing. The more I read, the more appealing it became to explore some of the issues raised by George Marcus and Dick Cushman (1982), Johannes Fabian (1983), Stephen Tyler (1987) and John Van Maanen (1988).

The upshot is that I am going to present an account of the teaching of physical education that celebrates the voices of the teachers with whom I researched. In doing so, I want to avoid the packaging that sometimes accompanies accounts of qualitative research. I take this to be quite a challenge for me as writer and you as reader.

I have consciously chosen not to use footnotes and have tried not to overburden the account with too many references to 'the literature'.

1.2 Private Troubles and Public Issues: Firming Up Research Questions

Over the years, I must have asked hundreds of undergraduate students to articulate a central research question in their write up of final year dissertations. In trying to sort out a central question for my thesis, I initiated a process of introspection that took me back a long way.
Perhaps why I have been moved to complete a doctoral submission has something to do with the rootedness of my present in my past.

I grew up in a small town in North Wales. From a very early age, I took an active part in games under the watchful eye of my grandfather. Although our family album has a number of photographs of me kicking footballs and holding cricket bats, my first real memory of sport is the day I got my first pair of football boots.

I can remember the boots being unwrapped and then being laced into them by my grandfather who had bought them. I have no idea how old I was but I do remember standing proudly on our scrubbed kitchen table and looking at him eye to eye.

For many years, I was preoccupied by football and even into my early teens my sole reading matter was Football Monthly. I was a rabid supporter of one of the local football teams, Buckley Wanderers. They wore the same strip as Wolverhampton Wanderers and the goalkeeper, Fred, was well into his forties (or so I was told). He wore a rolled neck jersey and a flat cap. Whenever possible, I snatched chances to kick into the nets before, at half-time and after the game. What luxury not to have to chase the ball after scoring! I also gradually learned how to cheat as a linesman.

Then, in 1962, the pinnacle of achievement ... Buckley Wanderers got to the Welsh Amateur Cup Final. We beat Ferndale Athletic. I went to the game and it was my first experience of a 'big' match. By one of those co-incidences of history, the Wanderers' left half that day was to be my physical education teacher at secondary school.

I ought to say that throughout my primary school years, my interest in sport was nourished and developed by teachers as well. In fact two teachers, Ivor Jones and Tommy Inglesfield, made sport particularly special. In lessons and school teams I learnt a great deal about football and cricket. My memories of that time are important to me and
have acted as a touchstone for my dealings with young children in my own teaching career.

Years later, experience of higher education and exposure to social sciences initiated opportunities to reflect on such memories. The title for this section, for example, has been stimulated by my re-reading of C. Wright Mills's *The Sociological Imagination* (1967) occasioned by John Evans's introduction to *Physical Education, Sport and Schooling* (1986).

My experience of higher education and my specific interest in sociological accounts of physical education have enabled me to link my experiences of physical education and sport with those of other people. In retrospect, I would have liked to have worked harder at making sense of the intricate relations between biography and history.

Now that I am a little older and hopefully a little wiser, I have tried to escape from my preoccupation with the language of sociological discourse. I am much more concerned now with empowering and facilitating the professional development of teachers.

Comparatively late in my research, the relationship between personal experience and public issues moved to the foreground. This is in part due to the emergence of a number of significant contributions to the literature in the sociology of physical education and to changes in my own career path. 'Escape' from the stress of full-time employment in a college of education, the experience of parenthood and long-term contact with teachers of physical education have provided a distancing perspective.

In 1987, when I had the opportunity to set out research questions in my upgrading PhD document, I was still trying to find a way of relating private trouble to public issues. I felt strongly that whatever questions I identified were to be part of a research process designed to challenge the politics of knowledge in educational research. I argued that by researching physical education using qualitative methods I hoped to contribute to the debate about what counts as research.
In the 'Research Questions and Design' section, I had this to say:

I am fascinated by the transmission of knowledge. My own educational experience has been permeated by the notion of social mobility through examination success. 'Education' was deemed to be important. Only gradually did it become possible to reflect on the process of knowing. In the last fifteen years I have been exposed to critiques of the normative structure of education which have challenged and disturbed my taken-for-granted assumptions.

Research Questions

My research is an outcome of my biography. After teaching in a comprehensive school and a college of higher education, I wanted to take the opportunity to explore teaching and learning. Central to my original research idea was the question 'Do children learn in spite of or because of the teacher?'

After some five years of reading and empirical research my research questions have developed, changed and emerged. My central question has become 'How do teachers construct the contexts within which teaching and learning become possible?' My focus has therefore become the teachers of physical education specifically, with the pupils taking a place on the 'back burner'...

An overarching problem is that of methodology and indicates the reciprocal relationship between methods and evidence. I want to know what methods can be used to describe what happens within physical education in the secondary school. I do not wish to research teachers in isolation and I will require methods sensitive to teachers, curriculum models, evaluation and social relations. In short, research methods should be alive to the complexity of teaching...

There are, of course, research questions about teachers of physical education and their practice:

1. What salient biographical factors influence the way physical education is taught?

2. How do teachers deliver and evaluate lesson content?

3. Are teachers active curriculum researchers?

I am particularly interested in the extent to which teachers see their task in active and creative ways. Implicit in all three questions listed above are the constraints upon the practice of teaching.
Another set of research questions relates to the institutional and cultural contexts of physical education teaching. In particular:

4. What significance is attached to physical education by the school hierarchy?

5. What cultural expectations impinge upon the construction of the physical education curriculum?

I am interested here in the overdetermination of the physical education curriculum. Since the turn of the century, there have been a number of 'moral panics' about male physical education. A present variant of this 'panic' is the concern over the inability of physical education to provide elite sportsmen (sic) in the 'traditional', culturally dominant games (soccer, rugby, cricket). In my research I would like to say something about agenda setting in physical education that is beyond the control of the individual teacher.

I have deliberately chosen to focus on teachers in my research but I would like to pose some questions about pupils:

6. What factors influence a child's involvement in physical education?

7. How significant is physical education in a child's experience of formal and extra-curricular education?

In this part of the research I wish to explore the 'problems' facing boys in participating in physical education. The ritual of undressing, performing, showering and dressing is a distinct marker in the school week. Performance in lessons is public and very visible. There are consequently important psycho-social aspects of pupil involvement in physical education to be considered. At the methodological level, finding appropriate access points to pupil talk is a problem and one which I intend to discuss in my research.

The research questions identified in my upgrading document reflected work done up to that time and also mapped out some of the developing issues in my work. The seven research questions sat within a process of research that I saw as emergent, fallible and reflexive. I was determined that the questions themselves should be open to revision and replacement in order that I might creatively explore links between biography and history.
1.3 Outline of Thesis

Although I have provided a Preface and Introduction, I have wanted to move on as quickly as possible to accounts of my field work at two schools in the borough of Parkgate.

I have arranged the thesis into a Preface and four Parts. Part I is brief and identifies some links between my own background and the research questions I posed in my research.

Part II contains four chapters which are based on material collected by ethnographic methods in two secondary schools I refer to as Bridgetown School and Riverside School. In Chapter Two, I provide details of the research context. Chapter Three presents accounts of three physical education teachers, Alan, Mark and Ed, from Bridgetown School. Chapter Four presents two accounts of physical education teachers, Bob and Tony, from Riverside School. In Chapter Five I try to give voice to some of the other staff and pupils at both schools whom I met during the field work.

My preference has been to present research material in advance of analysis. In Part III, I offer a sociological analysis of the teaching of boys' physical education in the secondary school (Chapter Six) and provide an account of recent developments in writing up field work (Chapter Seven).

In Part IV, I discuss some of the issues arising out of my research for the teachers and myself. I also consider my analysis in relation to professional development in physical education.
CHAPTER TWO: Two Schools, Five Teachers and a Cast of Thousands: The Research Context

2.1 Introduction

In this thesis I present a sociological analysis of the teaching of boys' physical education that is based on ethnographic research I conducted in two schools with five teachers.

I have named the two schools Bridgetown and Riverside. In keeping with the convention of much qualitative research reporting, and my specific contract with both headteachers, I use pseudonyms to refer to both schools. One school, Bridgetown, is an eleven to sixteen, co-educational comprehensive. The other, Riverside, is an eleven to nineteen, boys' independent school.

I do not anticipate that my account of teaching physical education will attract the kind of investigative activity that Stephen Ball (1984) reported in relation to his study of Beachside Comprehensive. But I do hope that the anonymity of Bridgetown and Riverside will be respected.

A time may arrive when 'coming out' will be important. During my last visit to both schools, in June 1989, the teachers indicated an interest in collaborative writing for an audience of other teachers of physical education. I am particularly keen to explore, with the teachers, texts that share authorial control.

The five teachers in the case studies are: Alan, Ed and Mark at Bridgetown; and Bob and Tony at Riverside. As with the school names, I have allocated pseudonyms to each of the teachers. This is part of my explicitly negotiated research contract.
There is also a supporting cast of senior staff and pupils introduced in this chapter. Their voices are an important chorus in my account of the teaching of boys' physical education. In deference to authority, I refer to both headteachers as Mr.. The head of Bridgetown is Mr. Mitchell and of Riverside, Mr. Wells. At Riverside, the head of games is John and his post reflects a particular division of labour at the school. Pupils at both schools appear as very generalised others although at specific points you will be introduced to named pupils.

The action takes place in a borough I have called Parkgate.

2.2 Parkgate

Parkgate is a borough on the outskirts of a large conurbation in the South East of England. It is made up of twelve towns and villages. In the 1981 census it had a population of almost 160,000. Demographic data from the census includes the following:

1. Age Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 4</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 15</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 24</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Social Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIINM</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIIM</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Miscellaneous

28% of males and 24.2% of females reported that they had higher qualifications. 62% of homes were owner occupied. The unemployment rate was calculated as 6.1% (male) and 5.1% (female).
My choice of Parkgate as a geographical context for the research was both strategic and pragmatic.

By 1985, I had been out of the everyday routine of secondary school teaching for seven years and yet was expected to advise and support student teachers in their practice. My interest in returning to schools was a matter of personal, professional development rather than a nervous, opportunistic response to the increasing debate about "recent, substantial and relevant" experience associated with the work of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE). Although I was aware of the White Paper, *Teaching Quality* (1983), its significance (and Circular 3/84, *Initial Teacher Training*) had minimal impact on my own practice at that time. Paragraph 65 of *Teaching Quality* now makes interesting reading for me in the light of my concern about my knowledge and experience. The paragraph concludes:

"...The training institutions should therefore now take steps, in consultation with local education authorities and schools, to ensure that there is sufficient recent teaching experience among relevant staff...The establishment of close links between training institutions and suitable schools in their vicinity will facilitate arrangements along these lines..." (1983:20)

The college of education in which I worked was in the borough of Parkgate. It seemed of strategic importance to draw upon examples of local practice for student teachers. The work of my wife, Susan Lyons (1985), had also shown me the significance of work with local schools and teachers.

I had lived in or around Parkgate since 1975. My first teaching job was in a Parkgate school and so I had a good deal of knowledge about the local authority, secondary schools and teachers of physical education. In 1986, I moved to within a mile of Bridgetown and Riverside schools and became involved in the local community association.

Educational provision in Parkgate has been organised into primary, secondary and tertiary levels since 1973. Until that time the borough
had operated a secondary sector of 11 to 18 divided between county secondary and grammar schools. In the school year 1985-1986, there were eight secondary schools and one sixth form college in the borough. Seven of the secondary schools were co-educational. The local authority referred to these as 'county mixed' comprehensives. The approximate school population (11 to 16) was in the region of 7,000. In the authority's handbook on admission to secondary school, it was noted that the Council did not offer places at independent schools except for a limited number of places "for pupils of 11 whose parents wish them to attend a recognised school of dance for training in ballet". Parents were also informed that "the government's assisted place scheme at certain independent schools is administered by the Department of Education and Science...to which all enquiries should be directed." Riverside was the only 11+ independent school in the borough in 1985-86.

2.3 Bridgetown, Riverside and the Chain Link Fence

Bridgetown and Riverside were next to each other on the same suburban road. What intrigued me about them was that they were so close. The physical boundary between the two schools was marked by a chain link fence. There is no gate in the fence to allow traffic either way. Anyone wishing to visit both schools has to leave and enter by their main gates.

The account that follows draws upon 'official' documents and my notes recorded over the period of the fieldwork. In my role as teaching practice supervisor, I had become accustomed to visiting schools and gaining a feel for 'atmosphere' on entry.

Impressions of a school are imprinted in my memory by a mixture of senses. My immediate impressions are those of smell and noise. I am not sure which strikes me first. What I do find intriguing is how smells are evocative of other times and places.
At the time of the early fieldwork visits, I had also been watching a series of television programmes, *Where We Live Now*, about the life and work of Le Corbusier, and so I was sensitised to the use of space in public buildings. My visual literacy has been almost irrevocably stunted by minimal artistic/creative/aesthetic educational experiences but I was also aware at the time of some sentiments expressed by David Hargreaves (1983) about the display of material in schools.

I have visited both schools over a period of three years.

**Bridgetown School**

In the Summer Term 1989, senior management at Bridgetown School was in the process of writing a development plan. In a draft introduction to the plan, it was reported that:

Bridgetown School is an 11-16 mixed, comprehensive school... It opened in the 1930s but did not assume its present status until reorganisation in 1973. The school's small size meant that it was threatened with closure in 1979-80 but was reprieved and, since then, has undergone a far-reaching transformation.

Determined work by staff and friends of the school and local housing developments gave Bridgetown its life-line and the Borough of Parkgate supported the decision to keep the school open by financing a major extension and refurbishment programme in the early 1980s.

The building was redesigned in line with the changed curriculum structure introduced from 1980 as a result of which all pupils continue to study in English, Mathematics, Humanities, Science, Languages, Creative Studies and Physical Education for their five years at Bridgetown...

The school roll has grown during this period by some 400 pupils so that Bridgetown now has approximately 1000 pupils...
In an Open Evening booklet in 1988, an account of the development of the school drew attention to a photographic display which showed the contrast between the 'new' and the 'old' school. In the refurbished school building, "the educational benefits of teaching in the resulting pleasant (notably carpeted) environment have been enormous", it was noted.

My own immediate experience of the school some two years earlier was of the carpeted floors. I was also aware on entry of a glass cabinet in the foyer which contained trophies and some other artifacts. As I progressed towards the enquiries desk, I noticed the use of photographs in purpose-built display boards. The school entrance was always neat and tidy. In order to enter the school, visitors walk past classrooms. As with most schools, noise levels vary in these classrooms from the single voice of a teacher to the hum of pupils engaged in conversation to occasional loud exchanges with or without a teacher present. On some days, I was aware of my auditory senses focussing my first impressions of the school.

Bridgetown School publishes a prospectus and information for parents considering their choice of secondary school in Parkgate. Other publications available include literature for open evenings and, from 1988, a newsletter Bridgetown News. During the course of my research, I collected a number of these publications. With the exception of the draft bulletin noted above, I restricted my interest to documents available to the public.

In 1985, the school prepared a booklet to introduce new parents to the school. Mr Mitchell wrote in the introduction:

It is, I believe, a happy school and new pupils invariably settle into our community quickly and easily. The staff work hard to ensure that a secure and caring environment is maintained in school within which children can flourish academically, personally and socially.

He later noted:
However, the most important element in the school is that provided by its staff and pupils. The encouragement of self-discipline, tolerance, co-operation and mutual respect and the promotion of positive attitudes and values are of paramount importance...

Pupils at Bridgetown studied major areas of the curriculum every year. Physical education was taught in all five years. On entry into the school, pupils were placed in mixed ability forms. A distinction was drawn between the social mixture of the form and the teaching groups which varied from subject to subject.

Each department determines how it will group the pupils basing such groupings on sound data, the needs of the children and the demands of the subject matter.

The introductory booklet gives detail of the school uniform and PE kit and discusses issues relating to it with regard to cost and image:

Uniform fulfils many purposes not least in giving pupils a strong sense of identity with the school and, we hope, a pride that comes with that identity...We are very concerned that Bridgetown pupils are seen for what they really are and not judged by the excesses of a few. A good appearance out of school is very important to the reputation of the school which in turn may have vital consequences for each of our pupils.

When we moved to the vicinity of Bridgetown in late 1984, we became privy to local chit-chat about the school. Our next door neighbours, both teachers, chose Bridgetown for their son on the basis of an educational and bush telegraph that characterised it as a 'good' school. By a complete serendipity, shortly after coming to live in the area, I was invited to play for the community, 'veteran' football team. Mr Mitchell was a keen member of the squad. We were introduced on the occasion of my first cap (against an even more geriatric team). Unprecedented victory in the game cemented a friendship based on my ability to supply him with reasonable possession and an unspoken mutuality about education matters.
During research methods courses I have often been reminded about fortuitous meetings in the field. A literal field eventually served me as an introduction to a metaphorical field of research.

Bridgetown's prospectus for 1985-86 provides further information about the school, its curriculum, pastoral care and departments. Sixty-six teaching staff are listed in the prospectus. The school hours were from 9.00 to 1.05 in the morning and 2.10 to 3.30 in the afternoon.

In a section on school club activities and school journeys, it was reported that:

Sports activities are numerous, and there are many teams representing the school in several different age groups...Sports practices also take place as after-school activities, and many matches are arranged in competition with other schools after school or on Saturday mornings.

The Physical Education Department described its work:

Our prime aim is to provide a range of activities designed to develop the pupils, both mentally and physically. Each individual is encouraged to understand the limitations and potential of their own bodies. In order to realize the different levels of potential, we offer an extensive programme.

Sports taught during the first three years include soccer, rugby, netball, hockey, basketball, dance, gymnastics, tennis, rounders, cricket and athletics.

During the 4th and 5th year many other options become available, and include badminton, volleyball, trampolining, keep-fit, ice-skating, swimming and weight-lifting.

The pupils are also encouraged to understand personal relationships and responsible attitudes. In arranging fixtures with other schools we provide competition, as well as an awareness of hospitality and sportsmanship.

Facilities available at Bridgetown include an excellent gymnasium, sports hall and extensive playing fields.
A G.S.E. course in P.E. was introduced as an addition in 1981. This runs for two years and the student looks at four sports, general health and hygiene and the anatomy and physiology of the body.

The school prospectus also refers to the Sports Hall as a school and community resource. I describe in detail the facilities for physical education at Bridgetown in 3.2.

Riverside School

Riverside School has its roots in the sixteenth century and an unbroken history from 1612. In the school's 1985-86 syllabus, it was noted that:

Until 1910 the School was independent, although it had then for some years been receiving annual grants from both the County Council and the Board of Education. From 1910 to 1952 it was a voluntary controlled school maintained by the County Council, and during these years became generally known as Riverside Grammar School. The grant of voluntary aided status in 1952 restored a substantial measure of autonomy, though the Local Authority (from 1965 Parkgate) continued to maintain the School. In September 1975, the School once more became fully independent and resumed its ancient name. It remains a day school for some 830 boys between 11 and 19 years of age, with a Sixth Form of about 230, maintaining the Riverside traditions of academic achievement and wide-ranging activities.

Riverside is a Headmasters' Conference School and a member of the Governing Bodies Association.

In a letter to prospective parents, the headmaster made some general points about Riverside School:

First, I would emphasise that Riverside is an academic community, not simply a 'results factory'. We expect boys to do well in examinations, but we think it equally important to encourage intellectual curiosity, clear thinking and individuality of opinion.

Riverside is an ancient foundation, but not a grand or exclusive school. Our buildings are plain and serviceable, though extensive and well-equipped. Our pupils - many of
them holders of Government Assisted Places - come from a wide variety of backgrounds. It is our concern to see that they can all feel comfortable here.

Riverside offers a quite exceptionally wide range of opportunity. It is true that a glance at our results sheet might suggest that we are primarily a 'science school', while the Boat Club's international reputation might lead you to think that sport must dominate School life. Neither is the case. Our curriculum reflects the high regard we have for the arts and humanities as well as for science, and the boy who is interested in music or painting or reading is as welcome amongst us as the athlete. What we value is enthusiasm and commitment in whatever a boy undertakes.

Those pupils who enter the First Year of the school, join a group of about 26 pupils in a Form and this Form stays together for three years. The prospectus notes that "though there is some 'setting' by ability, chiefly in Mathematics and French, forms are at no stage 'streamed'".

The curriculum at Riverside provides for 'core' subjects which are pursued for the first five years. Physical education and Games are part of this core. The first two years at the school constitute:

an introduction to the whole range of school subjects among which we therefore offer virtually no choice.

With regard to subject syllabuses at the school, the prospectus reports that:

In every subject the syllabus and the methods followed are kept under constant and critical scrutiny. Though we have not abandoned traditional standards of intellectual rigour and hard work, we are ready to adopt modern courses where they offer clear advantages ...

A scheme of Health Education is incorporated into the syllabuses for Biology, Physical Education and Religious Studies. At appropriate stages it covers such topics as growth and sex; food, drink and drugs; exercise, physical and mental wellbeing.

In a section in the prospectus on 'Activities Outside The Classroom', Games are described thus:
Though games play a comparatively small part in the formal curriculum, some 200 boys enthusiastically maintain the School's sporting tradition by voluntarily taking part every Saturday in representative fixtures and regattas.

Unusually, both Rugby and Association Football are played as major games throughout the two winter terms, fielding between them fourteen teams across the complete age-range. (First Form boys make their own choice between rugby and soccer after a term when they play both during their games lessons.) The main summer sports are cricket, tennis and athletics; rowing is the chief year-round activity for Third Forms and above, though swimming also flourishes. For senior boys, there are opportunities to play squash racquets, Real Tennis and golf, and in each of these coaching is provided for beginners as well as those who already have some skill in the sport. There are active angling and table-tennis clubs with representative matches against other schools.

Despite the range of games played, the standards reached are very high. The Boat Club's reputation is, of course, international, and crews of all ages row in the Head of the River races. Riverside is one of the country's leading rugby schools, and our soccer XI has for many years been one of the best in the region. Members of the School regularly represent their county in rugby, soccer, cricket and athletics, while in recent years boys have represented their country at Under 19 level in rowing and rugby.

Even the least athletic boy can represent the School in competition: chess is strongly supported, and Riverside has held trophies for debating.

The prospectus also draws attention to a flourishing Old Boys' Association and through the Association "senior boys are introduced into good cricket, soccer and rugby".

Additional sources of information about the school have been subsequent prospectuses and the school magazine. The 1987 prospectus, for example, had a slightly changed text about 'Games' and refers to "active table tennis, basketball and badminton clubs with representative matches against other schools". The school magazine marked the retirement of Mr Wells, in 1988, with an in-depth article about him and an introduction to the new headmaster.
In a local newspaper report of the opening of the school's £750,000 sports hall in December 1987, Mr Wells is quoted as saying:

our main aim is to improve the health and fitness of every pupil by encouraging them to take part in various activities which we hope they will continue in adult life.

2.4 Research Arrangements

In June 1985, I received formal notification that my employers had granted me a sabbatical term in the academic year 1985-1986 to conduct empirical research for my higher degree. With the agreement of my department, I chose the Spring Term 1986. Although I had been thinking about the kind of research I wanted to do for some time, I did not want to make any definite arrangements before I had received official news.

I deferred rushing into any research arrangements until the start of the new school year in September 1985. I wanted to research the teaching of physical education in a small number of schools and use qualitative methods. Although I was grateful to receive any sabbatical time at all, the relatively short time at my disposal meant that I had to make some very practical decisions about research location.

The choice of local schools assumed critical importance. In order to familiarise myself with the schools I needed much more contact than one term. I had a young family and it seemed unthinkable that I should leave them in search of 'exotic' locations. Both these factors encouraged me to think of making the most of local connections and also facilitate the kind of initiatives endorsed by CATE. In these respects my research could be characterised as 'opportunistic' and pragmatic.

Early in September, I was psychologically committed to my immediate environment. Bridgetown and Riverside schools seemed ideal for my purposes. However, the volume of my workload in the Autumn Term was such
that although I was able to do some background research on the schools, I did not make formal contact until November. I was aware that Bridgetown, like other state schools in the area, was being affected by industrial action. The significance of this for access to the school did not immediately dawn on me.

From the qualitative research methodology literature, I was aware of a 'hierarchy' of consent in gaining access to schools. I was not sure whether because my college sent student teachers to both schools for teaching practice this might make access more or less possible. I thought it important to make approaches both at local authority and school level in a formal way.

The Parkgate Physical Education Adviser had been very supportive of my wife's research in dance in the borough and so I wrote to him early in November to enquire whether the local authority would have any objection to my research. I followed up my letter with a phone call. He assured me that this would not be a problem and expressed his interest in the research. He did point out that his brief did not cover Riverside School but said that he would support my request to visit Bridgetown.

A day after the phone call, I drafted handwritten letters on my college notepaper to the headteachers of both schools. The text of the letter is included in Appendix 1. I found it difficult to judge what to include in the letter and still felt uncomfortable with draft four.

Mr Wells replied by return of post and invited me to visit Riverside at a mutually convenient time to speak with the head of games and himself. In his letter he observed that:

In principle I see no difficulty at all in you spending part of the next term with us. We should be happy for you to find out what we do in physical education - and the contribution that the physical education department is making to health education.
I phoned the school immediately on receipt of the letter and arranged a visit for 10 December.

I heard nothing from Bridgetown for three weeks but I was reluctant to contact the school again for fear of receiving bad news! I appreciated the difficulties that the staff were facing with the industrial action and decided to wait. In the second week in December, I received a telephone call to say that Bridgetown would be pleased to be involved in my research. I was then able to make an appointment to visit the school before the end of term. I discovered some months later that the delay had been occasioned by management and staff discussing whether it was suitable to have a visitor in the school on a long term basis during the industrial action.

I arranged to visit the school on 13 December.

Preliminary Visits

Prior to visiting both schools in December, I wrote out a brief curriculum vitae and description of my research on one side of A4. I made photocopies of this and had them available to give to staff. I described the purpose of my research like this:

I am interested in the teaching of physical education. In particular, I want to explore the catalysts that make teaching and learning possible. I would welcome the opportunity to talk with staff and pupils about physical education. In essence, I would like to 'be around' and to be as unobtrusive as possible. If appropriate, I would be happy to do any kind of work that would help staff with their day-to-day contact with pupils.

I also tried to clarify exactly what I wanted to say. I decided that the message I wanted to give was that I was coming to the schools to learn and that I regarded being in both schools a privilege.
I was quite nervous by the time I arrived at Riverside School for my meeting with the head of games and the headmaster. One of my anxieties was how to record anything that went on! I had somehow got the impression that everything was 'data' to be captured by the researcher. In the event, I was soon made to feel at ease at the school and I jotted down some notes after I left.

On arrival at Riverside, I was taken by the secretary to meet John, head of games, who was waiting for me in the staff room. We talked about proposals I had for research. My notes remind me that:

School was clean and quiet. Staffroom large with shvoha'penny board prominent. Talked with John for twenty minutes. Attentive and interested. I tried to emphasise that my work was open-ended and stressed the possibility of reciprocal links. John has taught for seven years and was appointed head of games last year.

We then went on a tour of the school site. I was shown the north and south gyms. John then returned me to the headmaster's office for coffee and left Mr Wells and me to talk. My notes of our meeting are:

Polite, helpful and direct. He outlined distinctiveness of physical education at Riverside: (i) non-PE trained head of games (involves "a lot of ordering of equipment"); (ii) changes to curriculum include health-related fitness. He asked about my background and interests. We discussed work and what I might be able to offer. Asked that on the way to school not to "cut across the fields". The school would include me on their insurance should I want to teach.

At the end of the conversation, I thanked him for his time and interest and made my way back to the staff room. It was break time and John introduced me to to Bob and Mark, the two Riverside physical education teachers. We only had a brief opportunity to talk. I arranged with John that I would return in the first teaching week of the Spring Term to finalise arrangements for observing physical education and games lessons. The following day I popped back with some letters to thank Mr Wells and John for their help and included in John's envelope an article
from the British Journal of Physical Education that I had mentioned to him.

My visit to Bridgetown coincided with Friday 13 December. The date actually helped break the ice! On arrival, I was met by Ed, the head of boys' physical education at the school. He took me along to meet the deputy head, Miss Gray. After a brief chat, I went with Ed to the staff room where the department was assembled for the weekly, timetabled meeting. I was introduced to the department. The other two male members of staff were Alan, whom I had met many years ago, and Mark. The head of the girls' physical education department was a recent graduate of the college where I taught.

At the meeting, arrangements for the Spring Term were discussed. I listened with interest and after the meeting chatted with Ed, Alan and Bob about my research ideas. I tried to replicate what I had said at Riverside three days earlier: I wanted to observe the teaching of physical education; I would be very happy to be a 'dog's body' and do odd jobs; I emphasised that I did not want to be a threat, I wanted to learn; I hoped there could be some reciprocal link with college.

I gave each of the teachers a copy of my curriculum vitae and research outline. I also arranged to return at the start of the Spring Term to finalise timetable arrangements. The teachers at Bridgetown seemed interested in my work and offered their help.

Unfortunately, my notes of the meeting do not give a great deal of detail. I did stay on for coffee at the end of the meeting and chatted informally. I called in the following Monday to drop in some thank you notes.

Friday 13 December had been lucky for me and the research now seemed much more realistic and focussed. I had met the requirements I set for myself in arranging the research: small-scale, local, qualitative research of/with teachers of boys' physical education.
I have tried to describe in detail these initial field encounters. I was aware that at such encounters, I was establishing a framework for a research contract. I was determined that my research was to be overt and discussed. I am further aware that often initial encounters are somewhat nervous affairs and participants have selective perception of what happens. That, in part, was the intention behind having available the A4 piece of paper about myself and my research interest.

I returned after a refreshing Christmas holiday to confirm with both schools the timetable arrangements for the Spring Term. I found the freedom of a sabbatical intoxicating and relished the prospect of being at the schools.

My aim was to see as much of each teacher's work as possible. I thought the best way to do this was:

(i) To select that mutually convenient day in the school week when all teachers were involved in physical education

(ii) To follow each teacher with a particular class or group and so see the same lesson each week over the term

(iii) To limit the time spent in each school so that teachers might be free of my presence; and to give me time to write up notes, read and attend seminars at the University of Surrey.

At all times I strove to minimise my nuisance value. I was particularly sensitive about my presence at Bridgetown School as the industrial action started to have a greater impact there.

My first full week in the field started the second week of the Spring Term 1986. The time line of my research at the schools from first contact to the end of the Summer Term 1986 was:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 November</td>
<td>Contacted Parkgate Physical Education Adviser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 November</td>
<td>Initial letters to headteachers of Bridgetown and Riverside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 November</td>
<td>Reply from Riverside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 December</td>
<td>Visit to Riverside. Met head, John, Bob and Tony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 December</td>
<td>Visit to Bridgetown. Met deputy head, Ed, Mark and Alan. Attended Physical Education dept staff meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 January</td>
<td>Second visit to Riverside: confirmed timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 January</td>
<td>Second visit to Bridgetown: confirmed timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 January</td>
<td>First field work, Mark's first year swimming group at Alderman Pool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 January</td>
<td>Start at Riverside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 January</td>
<td>Start at Bridgetown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 February</td>
<td>Letter to Physical Education Adviser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 March</td>
<td>Letter from Physical Education Adviser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 March</td>
<td>Meeting of teachers at my home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 March</td>
<td>End of intensive fieldwork at Riverside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 March</td>
<td>End of intensive fieldwork at Bridgetown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 March</td>
<td>Letter to Riverside head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 April</td>
<td>Letter from Riverside head (lifeguards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Visit to Sports Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tony invites me to help with athletics match in Bob's absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 June</td>
<td>Letters to teachers about research. Visit to Bridgetown pm, then Riverside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 June</td>
<td>Bob conversation (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 June</td>
<td>Ed, Mark, Alan conversations (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 June</td>
<td>Bridgetown pupil conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 June</td>
<td>Bob conversation (2); Tony (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of the academic year 1985-1986, my wife and I decided to leave the relatively secure environment of our posts in a college of higher education and headed south west with our young family. What in November 1985 had been chosen as a 'local' research setting had now become distant. This posed some logistical difficulties. However, I did manage to keep in contact with the schools and the teachers. Racing up motorways very early in the morning started to become an occasional habit.
My visits, sometimes arranged in advance, traded on shared experiences of the intensive fieldwork in 1986. The updating I received on each visit almost seemed to have a kind of family ring to it. Major events were discussed and gossip was rife. I could mention pupils' names and hear of their progress. This kind of talk added to the sense I had of both schools.

If possible I tried to sit in on the teachers' lessons when I was in town. The only exception was Mark who left Bridgetown in January 1987 but whom I met subsequently at the school.

I also think that my change in status allowed the teachers and myself to open up to each other. We were getting to know each other and my lack of an identifiable, threatening occupation must have helped. I never asked the teachers about this.

The time line for this phase of the research was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 March</td>
<td>Letters to teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 April</td>
<td>Letter to Bob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 July</td>
<td>Telephoned schools about visit possibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 July</td>
<td>Visit to two schools: notes of news etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 July</td>
<td>Bob conversation (3), Mark conversation (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 July</td>
<td>Riverside head; letter to Bridgetown head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 August</td>
<td>Letter from Bridgetown head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Met Tony at Loughborough Summer School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 March</td>
<td>Letter to Alan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 March</td>
<td>Visit to Bridgetown and Riverside. Questionnaires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 March</td>
<td>Conversations Update; Ed (2), John (1), Alan (2); Bridgetown head, Riverside head. Did not use teaching Physical Education questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 April</td>
<td>Letter to Bridgetown head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 May</td>
<td>Seminar at Southampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 July</td>
<td>Visit to schools. Notes of Alan conversation. Discussed INSET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alan conversation (3); Tony (2); meeting with Bridgetown management; letter to head of Physical Education at Bridgetown

Visit to both schools
INSET day at Bridgetown
Called in on Riverside staff whilst in Parkgate

Letter from Alan about Australia
Letter from Bridgetown head (news of appointment)
Seminar at Guildford
Seminar at Exeter
Visit to two schools
Start final write up of thesis

In Appendix 2, I give an example of how intensive one of these visits turned out to be.

2.5 Alan, Ed, Mark, Bob and Tony

The scale of some of the research into the teaching of physical education has troubled me. Alan, Ed, Mark, Bob and Tony gave me the opportunity to look at teaching at a manageable level. In 1986, they taught in schools less than 200 yards apart and yet they had never met.

My original requests to Bridgetown and Riverside Schools had been addressed to the headteachers. I really wanted to talk with the teachers directly but as I did not know the teachers, it was important to approach the gatekeepers to get to the goalkeepers! Despite having my research interests forced on them uninvited, all five volunteered their services and welcomed me into their lessons.
Throughout my contact with them, I have tried to emphasise my apprenticeship role. If invited, I tried to offer support, advice and physical labour. Being with them brought back many memories of my own journeyman days in a comprehensive school in Parkgate. Being with them invigorated my thinking and practice.

Alan, Ed and Mark were teaching at Bridgetown in the Spring Term 1986. Bob and Tony were teaching at Riverside.

2.6 The Headteachers

In November 1985, I wrote to the headteachers of both schools to ask for permission to research the teaching of physical education in their schools. Throughout the research, Mr Mitchell and Mr Wells expressed interest in my work and I briefed them on what I was doing.

During the course of the research, Mr Mitchell was appointed to a new headship in a community school in the South West of England (March 1989) and Mr Wells retired (July 1988). Mr Mitchell was head at Bridgetown for nine years and Mr Wells was appointed as headmaster at Riverside in 1969. Both oversaw considerable changes in their schools' fortunes.

When Mr Mitchell was appointed in 1980 the school was facing closure. The local press reported his ambition to make Bridgetown "second to none" and within a year it was reporting that the school was to receive a £1,000,000 face lift. Mr Mitchell's message was that "we are looking to get the community into the school". In September 1988, in a special issue of the Bridgetown News, the banner headline was 'GCSE Success At Bridgetown'. The News reported that:

Bridgetown's first GCSE candidates have achieved outstanding results shattering all previous school public examination records. Whilst nationally there has been a 2% improvement overall in A-C grades (compared to GCE) at Bridgetown the improvement is over 60%. The increase in grade A's is even
more dramatic, rising from 40 to 130 and including boys and girls in all major subject areas.

Mr Mitchell wrote that:

Better results were anticipated, especially from the boys, because our 1983 intake was more able than that of the previous 6 years. This change in ability reflected the new confidence which parents and pupils placed in the school at that time and I am delighted that this has been so amply rewarded.

Riverside School also faced a challenge to its existence. In 1973, during the local education authority's re-organisation of secondary schooling, it was announced that Riverside was to lose its voluntary aided status. The school chose to become an independent grammar school and its status as such was confirmed by the then Minister for Education and Science, Margaret Thatcher. An appeal for funds was launched and within eight months the school had received £200,000 in donations.

Daphne Johnson in her discussion of private and state schools has noted that:

Most independent schools were fundamentally on their own in what they were doing, and needed to be very clear just what it was. (1987:50)

In a tribute to Mr Wells in the Riverside Magazine, the chairman of the school governors recalled that:

The 18 years during which Mr Wells was Headmaster at Riverside were years of continuous improvement and development. This was achieved despite substantial and unexpected change which took Riverside from being the voluntary-aided Grammar School it had been from around the turn of the century, back to the full independence of the first three and a half centuries of its life. Mr Wells came to Riverside to be Head of a first class Grammar School. He had never contemplated entering the private sector. He wanted to develop the excellence of an existing State school. But when that excellence was threatened ... he flung himself with immense energy and determination and great sensitivity into ensuring the success of an independent Riverside School.
In a contribution from a member of staff, it was suggested that Mr Wells had inherited a school in turmoil, transformed it and established a distinctive image.

In the post-independence years, Mr Wells oversaw an extensive building programme that provided new facilities for science, music, and technology. A new library was opened in 1984 and the Sports Hall in 1987. At the time of his retirement the school had long waiting lists for places and in a folder to prospective parents included some facts and figures about exam success "without comment".

2.7 Other Staff

At Bridgetown, by a stroke of good luck, a teacher I had taught with in Parkgate was a senior master and latterly deputy head. Another deputy head at the school had visited my college on a number of occasions and I had met her briefly. The third deputy head at Bridgetown was interested in sport and prior to his departure from the school was a race-walking enthusiast. At the management level, there was a personal interest in sport and physical activity that made conversation possible. On a number of occasions, I was able to drop in on the deputy heads and discuss my work with them. On my last visit to the school in June 1989, I met with the deputy heads at Sam.

Over the three years, two female physical education members of staff were appointed and both were graduates of my college. One eventually became the head of physical education at Bridgetown. The other had been my personal student.

At Riverside, there was no such serendipity. In addition to the physical education staff, the head of games, John, was an influential figure for me. Thereafter, those members of staff who taught games and/or used the school's sports facilities became nodding acquaintances. My circle of conversation was therefore much smaller at Riverside and devoid of insights of senior management.
2.8 The Pupils

My research interest was the teaching of physical education. I had deliberately chosen to focus on teaching for professional reasons. I also did not want to deal with the access problems that might arise with pupils. I had enjoyed Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour* (1977) and Paul Corrigan's *Schooling the Smash Street Kids* (1979) but did not want to get involved in that kind of work. I did like Paul Corrigan's account of the difficulties of researching the adolescent's world:

... I am 6ft 4in tall and most 14-year olds in Sunderland are considerably smaller than that. This means that the sort of unobtrusive participant observation by hanging round on a corner with them was simply impossible... (1979:14)

However, I did not want to exclude pupils totally from my thinking. I limited myself to boys' physical education in order that I might legitimately enter the changing rooms to talk with the teacher and so, without being a voyeur, be available to hear conversations and exchanges between teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil at strategic times during the physical education lesson. Further, by being around at the beginning and end of lessons, I was also open both to pupil-pupil talk and any relationship they wanted to develop with me.

Each teacher introduced me to the pupils in his class at the first lesson I observed and thereafter it was assumed I would be in the lessons. I tried to make it clear I was not a teacher at the school although pupils tried to cast me in that role. My response was always to say that I was interested in the teaching of physical education in order to help student teachers in their training.

There were occasions when pupils thought/hoped I might be a talent scout for a professional soccer club but other than that I was somebody who happened to be at their lessons. Participation in warm ups, small-sided games and routine tasks like putting out cones and collecting bibs got me known to pupils.
In Part II, I identify a number of classes and pupils. Over the intensive field work period it would have been difficult not to have got to know some names and 'personalities'.

2.9 About Methods

Members of G K Chesterton's Detective Story Writers club promised to conceal no clues, to provide the reader with all the evidence and to avoid solutions based upon jiggery-pokery and acts of God. This seems a reasonable expectation of a qualitative research report.

In the next three chapters I use material drawn from observation of lessons, conversations with members of staff and pupils, questionnaire responses, and documentary analysis. These methods are associated with that family of approaches that rely upon 'being around' a social setting over an extended period of time.
3.1 Bridgetown Wednesdays

Had I been subject to the punctuality criteria used by Bridgetown for the start of morning school, I would have received a regular dose of demerits and possibly even one detention. Throughout the Spring Term 1986, I tried very hard to arrive at school early to be where the action was prior to the start of the school day.

I rarely managed to be in school before 9 am. (My recorded times: 9.20, 9.05, 9.15, 9.10, 8.50, 8.50, 9.27, 8.55, 9.05). I was particularly aware of my time-keeping and made a determined effort to be at school earlier after half term. I rationalised my behaviour in the following ways:

1. I was a family man with two young children, one of whom went to school a car ride from our home. Parkgate traffic is judged by time not distance and if it was my turn to take our daughter to school, arrival at Bridgetown was + or - 10 minutes at the start of the school day.

   My wife worked and required access to the car in order to start teaching at 9 am herself. On most research mornings as a negotiated deal, I walked the mile to Bridgetown and my wife took our daughter to school. I thought that the walk would give me an opportunity to be amongst some of the children on the way to school.

2. I genuinely did not want to be intrusive at an important part of the day for the physical education staff at Bridgetown. I did not want them to feel obliged to make conversation when they were having to deal with the routine chores of the day: registration; discussion of facility availability; gossip. I did make a particular point of trying to be at school early on bad weather days in order not to be in the wrong place at the wrong time on those days' lessons.

As well as making a note of my arrival time at Bridgetown, I also made a note of the weather. Intuitively and experientially, it seemed that weather patterns would be important determinants of what teaching was possible. When I taught in a comprehensive school, I recall trying to develop a
weather eye. I was partly helped in this process by a year I spent as a forestry worker, prior to my postgraduate year at Loughborough. In that job, weather conditions determined how much I could earn as did the length of daylight. As a teacher, I also tried to anticipate what demands the weather might make on my ingenuity. The outdoor dimension to the teaching of physical education had, for me, important content and care imperatives. I worked on the assumption that active, warm children were happy children but that occasional ordeals in cold and/or wet weather were also part of a process of coming to terms with an experience of the physical education curriculum.

So, for each visit to Bridgetown, I have a record of arrival time and prevailing weather. If there was time, I usually made for the staffroom on arrival just in case contact needed to be made. At that time in the morning, I caught glimpses of Ed, Alan and Mark and developed a nodding acquaintance with other members of staff. At this time of the day, I usually sorted out my field notebook and made some preliminary notes. Morning school started at 9.00am and pupils were requested to be at school by 8.50am.

The time line for Wednesdays was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>Registration and form time or assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>Lesson one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>Lesson two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>Lesson three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.05</td>
<td>Lesson four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.40</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.55</td>
<td>Lesson five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>Lesson six</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>Lesson seven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>Lesson eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>End of school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was referred to by the teachers as a 6/2 day. The physical education department's time was blocked in double lessons. Timetables for the Spring Term were arranged by the department in half term blocks:
Third Half Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2A</th>
<th>3B</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>Fifth Year Games Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group 1: Soccer (Ed)</td>
<td>Group 1: Badminton (Alan)</td>
<td>Group T/O: Soccer (Mark)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 2: Badminton (Jane)</td>
<td>Group 2: Soccer (Mark)</td>
<td>Group Y/H: Badminton (Alan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourth Half Term

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2A</th>
<th>3B</th>
<th>2B</th>
<th>Fifth Year Games Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Group 2: Rugby (Ed)</td>
<td>Group 1: Rugby (Alan)</td>
<td>Group T/O: Badminton (Mark)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group 1: Badminton (Jane)</td>
<td>Group 2: Badminton (Mark)</td>
<td>Group Y/H: Rugby (Alan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2A, 2B and 3B also had another double block of time during the school week for physical education. As activities were paired in a half term block, the group did a second activity in the second double lesson.

During the term, I attended: lessons one and two with Ed; lessons three and four with Mark; lessons five and six with Alan; and lessons seven and eight with Ed. I had arranged to visit Bridgetown on Wednesdays as a mutually convenient day. The decision to observe a particular teacher in a particular lesson was made in part because of the logistics of the day. In the third half term, for example, Ed was the only male teacher on for the first two lessons. It seemed sensible to stay on at the games field for the arrival of Mark's class for lessons three and four. I then had break time to make my way to the Sports Hall for Alan's lessons with 2B. In the afternoon, Ed was the only member of staff on site for fifth year options.
I decided in the third half term to maintain this rhythm during the fourth half term even though Mark taught in the Sports Hall in lessons three and four and Alan on the games field for lessons five and six. I anticipated that it would be helpful to follow a teacher's relationship with a group over a term rather than change after five weeks. I was able to build up a history of a group at a specific time point in the school week over a term. The availability of two contrasting activities for each teacher also afforded opportunities that I did not want to forgo.

Here are some field notes to indicate my movement around the school site.

**Wednesday, 29 January 1986**

Arrived at school at 9.05am. Damp, wet morning. 'Grange Hill' feel to the morning. Came to school to check on pitch availability/suitability. A number of questions to pursue:

- impact of weather? do school assemblies give out information about sport? how do pupils know not to go to sports hall or games field? when are pupils released to go down to games? who checks their rainwear? any register between am arrival and games field? what liaison between staff and dept? when are decisions made about facilities?

**Lessons 3 & 4: Third Year (Mark)**

The weather had deteriorated to such an extent that Mark diverted his group to the sports hall where they joined Alan’s group. The lesson reminded me of my teaching days. Are there boys who act as catalysts for particular kinds of behaviour?

Two boys had already changed when Mark arrived at games field. Others who had arrived were reluctant to change. Mark took minibus and I walked over with Josh and Owen. The group in front of me were loud and singing.

When I arrived at the sports hall there were boys playing football, table tennis and some non-participants sitting around.

...At the end of the lesson, I took refuge in the nearby cafe and wrote up my notes...

12.10pm: Pupils still entering the bakery to buy food.
Wednesday, 26 February 1986


I decided to walk to Sports Hall to check time: 8 minutes without hurrying. When I arrived at the Sports Hall the heating engineer was trying to get the heating system to work. My early morning thoughts turned to curriculum planning: what educational benefits are to be gained from the walk to the Hall and the ambient temperature inside and out? What humanises planning? How useful is it to have an off-site facility? Who oversaw design and construction? What opportunity did potential users have to voice interests/concerns? Is there a borough policy?

Lessons 3 & 4: Third Year

I walked across from the Sports Hall. Took five minutes. No one at Pavilion when I arrived at 10.35. A very cold day, chilly yet very sunny. My notes reflected how cold my hands became!

10.45 First boys arrive. Colin says some have gone to Sports Hall.
10.48 Mark arrives with Alan. They discuss who should be where. Alan goes to Sports Hall.

Wednesday, 5 March 1986

A relatively warm morning. On my way to school I noticed at Riverside School that plastic cups had been placed in the hedge: a kind of neat litter? Seeing the pupils in the Bridgetown playground encouraged me to think about school and the opportunity to converse and how opportunities to do so were structured formally and informally in the curriculum. The off-site arrangements at Bridgetown particularly amenable to this. In the playground there were large groups of children centred around yo-yos.

I arrived at 8.50 and chatted briefly with Ed. A little later Mark tells me he has sent for details of a post in Cornwall.

I walked to field and arrived at 9.18. The groundsman was cleaning the changing rooms.

Lessons 1 & 2: Rugby

Prior to my departure from school, Ed had said "We might even be able to get out". The ground was wet and slippery. I made use of the time to write up some notes.
A wet, damp morning but reasonably mild. I walked to school and arrived at 8.55. No one in the staff room from PE. On the noticeboard I saw a copy of the Head's report to Governors for 10 March meeting. I went to see the secretary to see if I could get a copy and to check on availability. She seemed reluctant/vague about access. I suggested I see Mr Mitchell. "Yes, that would be the best thing. They are available but it is best to check."

I walked to the field and arrived at 9.20. No one there so I read through notes.

Such notes helped to map both the time and space dimensions of my visits to Bridgetown. I seem rarely to have made notes about lunchtimes at Bridgetown. I ought to make clear my understanding of lunch time arrangements.

Bridgetown was in the midst of industrial action. Debates about the supervision of lunch times were ongoing. In the Spring Term 1986, few teachers ate their lunch in the school canteen. Staff and pupils were able to choose hot or cold meals and most staff, who did not bring packed lunches to school, purchased sandwiches, fruit, and cakes from the canteen and returned to the staffroom to eat them. On all but one occasion, I also ate in the staffroom. The exception was when I joined some of the senior management for lunch.

On my first few visits to the canteen, I joined the queue of pupils waiting to be served but was told that I could jump the queue! When I did queue, staff and pupils looked at me in surprise. These institutionalised arrangements and the political significance of where to eat made lunchtimes a real exercise in understanding taken-for-grantedness.

In the staffroom, lunchtimes provided an opportunity to talk with the physical education staff, share news and update information. I chose not to record events in the staffroom and they became part of a 'second record' of my sense of the school. I was also aware on re-reading the field notes how the notes fell away after lunchtime. In retrospect, I think I was so concerned in catching up with the morning's events that Wednesday afternoon
slipped by almost unrecorded. I also think that my lack of notes about lunch time in the staffroom is my attempt to deal with the dilemmas associated with covert research. Very early in the Spring Term, I became aware of the problems raised by ownership of information. The industrial action had a polarising effect and a good deal of talk centred on the action at Bridgetown.

From my reading prior and subsequent to the Spring Term, I am aware how some ethnographers have dealt with accounts of staffrooms (see for example Andy Hargreaves and Peter Woods, *Staffrooms and Classrooms*, 1984). I was aware in general terms who sat by whom and the topics of some conversations. At no stage did I seek to extend my own circle of conversation beyond the physical education department. Wherever possible, I tried to attend and listen to conversations. I noted, as other writers have done, the significance of humour in the staffroom but found it intriguing how some writers managed verbatim transcripts of conversations without recourse to an audio tape. I felt strongly that there was no point attempting to be a stenographer of lunchtime conversations or to undertake a feverish shorthand account of every syllable. The smell of burning graphite and the alarm that such activity would have caused did not seem worthy of the effort.

The most important feature of lunchtimes for me was the opportunity to be with all three teachers at the same time. I could join in conversations and, after a few weeks, recognise some of the pupils referred to. Without being too grand, I got a sense that lunchtimes were a kind of collective affirmation and support. The exigencies of weather and the industrial action seemed to give lunchtimes particular significance. It was a time to relax and on a 6/2 timetable the day was going rapidly to a close.
In the afternoons, I usually made my way to the games field at 2.10pm and stayed there until the end of school at 3.30pm. Due to the industrial action, there were no 'official' extra-curricular activities and so my day ended in the staffroom at 4pm chatting to one or more of the teachers and writing up field notes. Occasionally, I walked back with some of the 3B2 pupils but usually I was left to wander home through the dwindling number of Bridgetown pupils.

After the mile walk, I re-entered family life, and tried not to invade our home with unfinished field note work. This time window of three or four hours gave me a chance to distance myself from the day. Whenever possible, after the children were in bed, I read through the field notes to check legibility and to expand cryptic notes. On three occasions during the term I was able to type up my field notes on a borrowed BBC microcomputer.

3.2 The Bridgetown Physical Education Department

In the Spring Term 1986, the responsibility for the teaching of physical education at the school rested with three male and three female members of staff. All six teachers had classroom teaching commitments in other areas of the curriculum. Sarah, the acting head of department, had been at the school for two years.

The head of the boys' physical education was Ed. Alan who had been at the school since 1975, had been an acting head of boys' physical education for one year prior to Ed's arrival. The third member of the department, Mark, had been at the school for two years and was responsible for a community youth club centred on the school.

At the time of my arrival in 1986, the department had regular weekly meetings to discuss curriculum matters and day-to-day business. The relationship between the department and senior management at the school was mediated by Sarah. One of the pre-occupations of the department was
the impact of the industrial action on curricular and extra-curricular activity.

My specific concern was with boys' physical education and because of the particular timetable arrangements on Wednesdays, I had little opportunity to meet and talk with the female members of staff. News of their work and of staff relations came from the male members of staff. In later years, I was able to have longer talks with Sarah which culminated in an INSET day at the school in November 1988.

The physical education curriculum was not embodied in a document at that time though the department gradually moved to a discussion of a draft curriculum. The department was committed to the CSE in physical education and had been involved in exam work since the early 1980s. Basic agreement was required, however, over arrangements for coordination of teaching and timetable planning.

Spaces for teaching physical education were both on and off-site. At the school there was: a small 'traditionally' equipped gymnasium with a sprung floor; the assembly hall; a hardcore area for netball and tennis; and a hockey pitch. A 'short' walk from the school, across a main road, were the main games fields and associated changing facilities which were jointly used by the school and community. They included in Spring 1986: a hockey pitch; three soccer pitches; and a rugby pitch. This facility nestled on the fringes of a big housing development. By 1986, the sports pavilion was the target for graffiti artists, the occasional arsonist and petty thieves. The Sports Hall used by the school was also a 'short' walk from the school and the playing fields. It made up a triangle of provision.
The Sports Hall had been a Parkgate initiative. A disused coach garage was refurbished when the housing development was underway nearby. As the area developed it became landlocked and was situated next to a large supermarket and a host of other small shops. As a facility, it was used by the school during the day and by the community in the evenings and at weekends. There was a multi-purpose main hall and a small gymnasium annex. Changing facilities were limited and, increasingly from 1986, in a poor state of repair. By the Spring Term of my fieldwork, all the windows in the Sports Hall were boarded up. The council had long since ceased to replace broken windows. Like the pavilion the Sports Hall attracted the interest of graffiti artists, arsonists and apprentice burglars.

The Sports Hall was the scene of the community youth club organised by Mark. The community was supposed to supply its own equipment for the club and other activities. Over the years, the 'safe' storage space for school equipment had been broken into and on some occasions in 1986, staff were never quite sure what scene would greet them when they arrived to teach.

Both off-site facilities were locked when no teacher was present. Pupils made their way to the Sports Hall or playing fields on foot or by bicycle.
3.3 Alan

3.3.1 Introduction

When I visited Bridgetown School late in 1985, I became reacquainted with Alan. He was thirty-two and had been at Bridgetown for ten years. He and I had first met a decade earlier when we were both probationer teachers in Parkgate. I had left my school after three years and had not seen Alan since that time.

In one of the intervening years, Alan had been granted a sabbatical year and he had gone to university to follow a BPhil course. He had gained first hand experience of research and this encouraged him to ask me about the process of my research. In his straightforward way, he enquired if I was going to do 'hit and run' research.

Alan had held a number of posts at Bridgetown. He had arrived there straight from college and in 1985 was one of the longer-serving members of staff. He had been temporarily head of boys' physical education for one year. More recently, he had been given responsibility for examinations in the school. During the course of the research, Alan applied for a number of posts. In January 1989 he went to Australia on a teacher exchange scheme for one year.

I have had to think very carefully about how to present an account of Alan. Throughout the research, he apprised me of the micro-politics of the school. Our shared early experience of teaching in the borough provided common currency for conversation and, more than any teacher in the research, he volunteered information about interpersonal relationships. He provided accounts of schooling that otherwise would not have been available to me.

During the intensive fieldwork stage of the research, I spent lessons five and six every Wednesday with Alan. Throughout this time, he was timetabled with a second year group, 2Y/H. I observed the following lessons:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>Weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.1.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cold morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.1.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Windy and raining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.1.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Indoor Games</td>
<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Cold, wet, damp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sunny, warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Indoor Games</td>
<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Snow on ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.2.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Games Field</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Very cold (-14°F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Games field</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cold and windy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Games Field</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bright and sunny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.3.86</td>
<td>5&amp;6</td>
<td>2Y/H</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Games field</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Damp, mild</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Alan was away from school on 12 February and 5 March. Term ended after lesson four on 26 March.
In the account that follows, I have made use of a range of data. I have found it particularly difficult to present an account of Alan. Despite (or perhaps because of) his experience as a teacher, I think he was influenced by my presence more than any other teacher. As a result, I have spent more time considering what material to include and exclude than with any other case study.

3.3.2 Early Encounters

When we met in December 1985, Alan and I discussed my research ideas and, in common with all the other teachers, he expressed an interest. I arranged to sit in on his lessons with a second year group in the Spring Term 1986. Following the pattern of work in the department, Alan was to teach one indoor and one outdoor activity with the second year group during the term. The first half term would be badminton and the second rugby.

Our informal talks during the first few weeks of the field work centred on Alan's reflections on his own practice and his experience of his BPhil course. Some time later, when I audio-taped a conversation about teaching (June 1986), Alan recalled his own note-taking in field research and how he had treated the issue of confidentiality.

Our early encounters set an agenda for our relationship throughout the field work. He seemed to view my presence in his lessons as a spur to discuss specific and general educational issues. He produced for me those elements of the Hargreaves' ILEA Report (1984) directly relevant to physical education. He shared with me papers he had written about personal and social education and TVEI.
3.3.3 Alan and 2Y/i

I was very aware of my own presence in Alan's lessons. The notes I made were cryptic and much less complete than with other teachers. I was much more a participant observer. Field notes were often written in retrospect immediately after the lesson. The incompleteness of observations of Alan's lessons was often compounded by my own late arrival.

There was a fifteen minute break after lesson 4 and I used this time to write up my notes in a local cafe! I chose not to arrive at Alan's lessons at the same time he did or even before him.

Here are some examples of my field notes in relation to: badminton; bad weather; rugby; and substitution.

3.3.3.1 Badminton

15 January 1986
Lessons 5 & 6: Sports Hall, 11.55am - 1.05pm.

This was my first visit to the Sports Hall. There seemed to be a certain amount of animated behaviour prior to Alan's arrival. He set about organising the pupils for the badminton lesson. I noted 23 participants and 2 non-participants. Some boys had brought their own racquets. Alan handed out school racquets from the store cupboard in the small gym.

Three courts were set up in the Sports Hall and one in the smaller, adjacent hall. Lesson started with free play in both halls. At 12.18 pm, Alan called the class together to make some general teaching points.

22 January 1986
Lessons 5 & 6: Sports Hall

On this occasion, my notes were written in a hurried and scribbled form. After the previous week's lesson, I was keen to develop a suitable method of making notes and recording events. I abandoned my notebook and tried to make discrete notes on an A4 piece of paper folded into quarters. I include a deciphered version of these notes here to indicate the developing focus of my observations.
At the end of this second observation, I was conscious of searching for a focus to structure further observations.
5 February 1986
Lesson 5 & 6: Badminton

I arrived at 12.15pm. The Sports Hall was quiet. Three table tennis tables had been set up in the small gym. Games were in progress on each table. There were three non-participants: two were playing, then wrestling, on the mats in the small gym, one was playing a computer game on his watch. After a short time, all three were involved in an organised fight on the mats. In the Sports Hall, Alan was organising a defensive clear practice.

The practice used five boys on one side of the net and one on the other. The aim was to have a continuous rally and to give the one player opportunity to play a number of clears. This was the pattern on three courts. A lower ability group was gradually pushed to the edge of one court. This marginal group included Sawyer and a plump boy in glasses. Sawyer was unable to hit the shuttlecock. He managed one successful return and then the practice ended.

Alan called the whole group in for a demonstration. He had chosen a pupil who had performed well during the practice to demonstrate but the demonstration did not work.

At 12.30, a late arrival announced, "I don't like badminton". By this time Sawyer and friends had moved to the small gym and were told by boys playing table tennis, "There's no room here". Sawyer proceeded to play a frying pan game of badminton in the corner of the gym.

As the lesson progressed, some children stopped participating. Alan suggested to me that this was happening because they were good at other sports and had become frustrated at their inability in badminton. A little while later, one of these pupils, Alex, said he had stopped because he was put in a wrong group, his friends were elsewhere in the Sports Hall.

As the activity rate flagged, Alan organised a rally game. Sawyer was eliminated very quickly and went back to his frying pan game against a wall.

At the end of the lesson, Alan and I discussed the letters furnished by regular non-participants.
3.3.3.2 Bad Weather Diversion

On 29 January, the weather was sufficiently bad to disrupt outdoor lessons. The groups were joined together in the Sports Hall. Alan and Mark were involved in organising the lessons.

Normal business was interrupted and pupils were given the opportunity of playing football or table tennis. Although I was particularly interested in Mark during lessons three and four, I noted that Alan organised the football game in the Sports Hall whilst wearing a sheepskin coat. I discovered that he was keeping a record of the ambient temperature in the Sports Hall and that this was his way of demonstrating the ineffectiveness of the heating system to the boys as well as an effective way of keeping warm.

During lessons five and six, the bad weather continued and so groups doubled up in the Sports Hall. This prompted me to think about: the strategies teachers use to cope with weather and the non-availability of facilities. I also contemplated the particular off-site arrangements at Bridgetown which removed institutional markers for teachers. At what points, for example, can discipline be imposed? Are games lessons but part of a flow of off-site activity?

During the course of the morning, Alan and I had opportunities to talk about the effects of doubling up. He expressed concern about the non-educational nature of arrangements. I noted that Alan used the term 'educational' a number of times during brief conversations.

In order not to impose on Alan too much or overly distract him from his management task, I took the opportunity to walk around the Sports Hall. I discovered, at 12.30, a group of three boys playing penny-up-the-wall in the corridor. I had access to the Sports Hall office nearby in order to be around whilst the game was in progress. At the same time I made notes from some information Alan had given me on David Hargreaves' ILEA report.
By 12.44, the game had fuelled threatening behaviour. I overheard one pupil say, "I can play with money people owe me". The game continued and at 12.56, I made a note to consider: who controlled such games; what mechanisms were used; who selected site and playing partners? Whilst I was making those notes, I overheard the comment, "This is not a good wall".

My field notes from the day include the following quotations extracted from the Hargreaves' Report during my time in the Sports Hall office.

PE makes an important contribution not merely to fitness, psycho-motor development and education for leisure but also the wider aesthetic, intellectual, social and moral development of the pupil. (1984:61)

And

In some schools we believe the severe unpopularity of PE to be a reflection on the quality of teaching in the subject; the curriculum and/or teaching method is inappropriate; there is lack of high expectation or a neglect of all but the most gifted; there is too great an emphasis on competition rather than co-operation. (1984:61)

My notes ended with a personal reminder about the temperature in the Sports Hall and the need to explore what avenues of complaint were open with regard to working conditions for physical education teachers.

3.3.3.3 Rugby

26 February 1986
Lessons 5 & 6: 17P 8NP

Prior to my departure for Bridgetown, the weather forecast on the local radio promised a sunny day but with low temperatures. By lessons five and six, there was brilliant sunshine but a very cold wind. I discovered later that the wind chill factor had taken the temperature down to -14°F. Alan's rugby lesson went ahead.

The introductory warm up was a long run. I took part in the run. When all the group had returned, Alan organised an 8 v 7 game. The first team to score four tries would win.
Many of the boys were ill-prepared for the weather. Sawyer and three other boys eventually lay on the ground to avoid the wind! Although they changed their prone position, they remained inactive throughout the lesson.

The game lasted twenty minutes in all. It was so cold that I was unable to make any notes! Alan sent the group for a run to warm up at the end of the lesson. We talked about the lesson in the changing room and I mentioned the adaptive behaviour of Sawyer and his friends.

The following week, Alan was away. I took that lesson and discuss it below under the heading 'Substitution'. I did see two further rugby lessons. I include notes of both lessons here.

12 March 1986
Lessons 5 & 6: 15P 8NP

I covered for Mark during lessons three and four. Ed wanted me to stay at school for lessons five and six to administer the pupil questionnaire to Mark's second year group. I was keen to go to Alan's lesson. After some discussion, Alan insisted that I go with him. We travelled to the games field in his car.

We arrived at the field late. The pupils were reluctant to take part in rugby. In my notes I characterised their behaviour as 'resistant'. Alan decided to tell the group off. He addressed the boys by their surnames and suffixed their names with a 'y'. I took refuge in the staff changing room but overheard the monologue. Alan concluded with a request for "a better turn out next week."

Whilst other pupils were changing, one pupil (surname Beck) told Alan that he had lost his boots. The outcome was that Beck did not do rugby but in the process became somewhat upset by being called Becky by Alan.

The group were sent for a warm-up run and I accompanied them. Alan set up cones for the lesson. On my return, I helped put out the remaining cones. I noticed that the non-participants had split into two groups and were playing separate games of penny-up-the-wall. As the lesson started, one of the groups, Beck included, moved off to find a comfortable tree in which to perch.

Meanwhile, Alan set up a grid demonstration for a 2v1 practice. The aim was to draw the defender and pass the
ball. This was developed into a 4v2 game. I worked with the group of three that was left.

The practice went on until 12.55. When Alan called the groups in, a number of pupils anticipated a game. When Alan set up a 3 man scrum practice there was some disappointment.

At the end of the lesson, I returned to school with Alan. He gave me news of courses and job applications.

19 March 1986
Lessons 5 & 6: Rugby 19P 6NP

When I arrived at the lesson at 12.20 some boys were already changed and out on the pitch. When one pupil enquired of another what the lesson was and received the reply that it was rugby, his response was, "Sod that for a fucking game of soldiers".

Non-participants were outside busily engaged in mud-throwing, cycling and water bombing.

12.25 Alan tells the group "I am not enjoying teaching you." He expresses his concern about their late changing and behaviour. This takes place with pupils lined up on the side line of the hockey pitch.

Alan then gives an exposition of the lesson. The skill to be learned is the 3 man scrum. He sets up a four man practice with pupil to rotate roles. The fourth player is to act as a leaning/holding post. After each group has had an opportunity to practise a number of times, Alan reorganises the groups for a 3v3 practice. The fourth player in each group becomes the scrum half. Sawyer's group is the odd one out. They are afraid of binding together! They seem to find physical contact impossible.

12.45 Alan calls the group in. There follows a five minute tirade about mud and laughter. The boys are told that they have not taken the scrummaging seriously. From my observation point, the boys seem cold and the situation seems to be escalating. Alan asks the group "Do you want to play?", "Do you want to throw mud?" He singles out Salman, "Is it Mrs Taylor I have to see to put you on report?"

A game is organised and most of the boys work well. Some pupils withdraw. Two boys work particularly hard to enthuse the game.

Alan starts and restarts the game with the exhortation "Action". The game is played on half a pitch and a
conversion is attempted after a try is scored. The game ends at 1.00. In the meantime, the non-participants have returned to mud fights.

At the end of lesson, Alan confides "I feel I am losing this group." He also tells me that he has not been given secondment to follow a one year course at an Institute of Education.

3.3.3.4 Substitution

Alan was away on two occasions during the Spring Term 1986. My field notes record my concern about my role on these two occasions.

12 February 1986

I arrived at school at 9.10am. Snow was on the ground. Ed told me that all sessions this morning would be in the Sports Hall. He also said that Alan was away. I volunteered my help but emphasised that I would not do anything to compromise the guidelines established by the school and the teaching unions during the ongoing industrial action.

My notes record that this was my last visit to Bridgetown before half term. Following the NUT action, covering/substitution of lessons had become a key issue. Covering for Alan meant:

1. I had an opportunity to offer practical input and help. The deputy head responsible for staff cover was extremely 'grateful' when he spoke to me at 9.45. At the end of the day, the headteacher was 'very pleased' that I had offered my services.

2. I had to be prepared to exhibit some 'authority' during the course of the day. This might change the view pupils had of me, particularly if 'control' of behaviour was expected.

In all six morning lessons, 12 February, pupils were given the option of football or table tennis. I was to organise the table tennis. I have no notes written during the morning but at lunch time I noted that the
same informal playful themes were evident. Wrestling and penny-up-the-wall seemed popular ways of passing time for non-participants.

During the morning, some boys were able to play table tennis without supervision, others required much more attention. I wondered if this was a low boredom threshold or the lack of a structured input on my part.

In retrospect, it occurred to me that I had chosen a low profile approach to the cover for Alan. I had to give the support that I thought Ed and Mark needed to make the lessons possible; I had to ensure that the limited stock of table tennis bats and balls was not diminished through damage or loss; and I had to ensure the safety and well-being of each pupil. Beyond these requirements, my behaviour was a comment on my previous observation of Alan. I did not want to do anything unprecedented in the context of his group nor did I wish to assume any role that claimed the status of a full time teacher at Bridgetown.

The experiences of the day were still relatively fresh when, four weeks later, Alan was away for a second time. My notes were written up as follows:

5 March 1986
Lessons 5 & 6: Rugby 14P 7NP

At 12.15 I arrive at the field. Pupils are there but no Alan (it transpires that the deputy head knew Alan was going to be absent but forgot to arrange cover for the lesson). There is a need for me to consider: my role and explicit research contract in the context of the teachers' industrial action.

I sent for some keys and, as it was a relatively warm morning, in the meantime got boys to change outside. Some boys were prepared to change, others chose to wait until the keys arrived. I discovered whilst waiting that one of the boys had a blow dart! I suggested that it was put away. I felt obliged to inform Ed subsequently about this. I discovered that there was to be a year meeting about blow darts that day and the matter was to be dealt with at the following morning's assembly by the headteacher.

As I did not want to create more problems than necessary, I organised a game of rugby. Some pupils wanted to play football but I explained that were the class's normal
teacher to be here, it would be a rugby lesson. I was very aware of not wanting to set any precedent that Alan would have to deal with in subsequent lessons. We played a half pitch game on the rugby pitch and after some initial grumbles about the fairness of the sides I picked, the boys made a reasonable effort to play. There were niggles and I tried to deal with them. We played until 1.00pm.

Shortly after the lesson I tried to identify some of the issues arising from it. My main concern was that the more able boys were aggrieved that they were not able to play football. I did try to explain to Neil and Omar in particular about why I had chosen to play rugby. I also assumed that the boys wanted to be active. During the course of the game, I tried to keep an eye on the non-participants. I gave each of the non-participants a job to do linked to one of the teams.

My experiences of covering for Alan were an important part of my fieldwork. I was acutely aware of researching my own practice on these two occasions. In particular, I was trying to locate such practice in the context of what I thought Alan would do in a similar situation. I could have taken the view that Alan's absence meant that no lesson would take place. In a sense, covering for Alan was a challenge to my understanding of his construction of teaching physical education.

In the next section, I draw upon transcript material of conversations I had with Alan over a period of two years. My notes of observations of Alan's teaching were relatively brief. Our taped conversations take up almost 200 sides of A4 and were based on topics given to Alan in advance of our conversations. Copies of these topics given to Alan and the other teachers are included in Appendix 3.
3.3.4 Talking with Alan

Alan was a mine of information. He tutored me in the micro-politics of the school and provided a contextual account of curriculum development in the physical education department. With his agreement, I taped three conversations:

3.3.4.1 Talking About Teaching: (25 June 1986)
3.3.4.2 Update: One (24 March 1988)
3.3.4.3 Update: Two (14 July 1988)

Alan's conversations are the first ones to be presented in the thesis. I want to note here the conventions I used to transcribe them and all other conversations.

... Within a line of text this indicates I have taken out part of the conversation at that point

[...] Indicates that the person speaking paused during the conversation

... At the start of a line on left margin indicates that a section of the conversation was missed out

3.3.4.1 Talking About Teaching

In our first recorded conversation, Alan and I talked about:

(i) Personal background
(ii) Professional development
(iii) Experiences of teaching

The conversation took place in the Year Tutors' room at Bridgetown immediately after my talk with Mark on the same topic. Alan had been waiting patiently for some time in the staffroom. My notes record that
our conversation started at 2.45pm and concluded at 3.35pm. My impressions were that the atmosphere was polite and relaxed.

(i) Personal background

Alan was a local boy. He went to what was a grammar school not far from Bridgetown. He followed a three year teaching certificate at a college of education, in the adjacent borough to Parkgate, immediately on leaving school. His first teaching appointment was at Bridgetown School in 1975. In 1982 he was given secondment to follow the full-time first year of a BPhil(Ed) in Curriculum Studies and completed the part-time year whilst teaching at Bridgetown the following year. He was awarded his BPhil in 1984.

In the preliminaries to our conversation, we talked about our common experiences of teaching in Parkgate over a decade ago. I then asked Alan about early sporting influences and memories. Alan replied:

...my brother, who is thirty-four now, is a sports fanatic. Basically he used to take 'little brother' along with him, so I was heavily influenced by my brother, who in actual fact one could say is a frustrated non-PE teacher...

The following exchange then occurred:

Keith: And was there a wide range of sports you took part in with your brother?

Alan: A little bit of athletics, which was nearly all running, football and rugby.

Alan played football, his brother did not. His experiences of football were enlivened by the influence of the manager of a community team. "I suppose you could say he was my mentor." The manager was not himself a physical education teacher, he played senior amateur football "and took children from the age of about eleven through to when they were sixteen or seventeen".
Alan's brother and the football manager were the major influences on his sporting career. The grammar school, in Alan's view, was limited in what it offered him:

...we didn't do any cricket... No tennis, no athletics in terms of field events. We were given a rugby ball to play with in winter and quite often a football to play with but he (the physical education teacher) couldn't be bothered to come out at all. Absolutely no coaching at all. No inside work at all. No badminton. No gymnastics to speak of. So that made my expertise limited although I've tried to widen my expertise to a certain extent, there is no doubt about it, there are areas of PE where I am extremely limited.

During his secondary school days, Alan played in rugby teams and took part in athletics competitions. Each weekend, during the football season, he played for a local team.

(ii) Professional development

Following on from Alan's account of his secondary school physical education, I wondered whether he had thought of becoming a physical education teacher whilst at school. He replied that in the sixth form he had been encouraged to study history at university. As a safeguard he applied to the local college of education. When his 'A' level grades were not accepted by the university of his choice, he took up the place at the college of education "with no conception of what going to the college meant. None at all".

Keith: When it came to choosing the college, was that simply because it was a local college, or had you been advised by a teacher?

Alan: I think it was my brother again, a strong influence. He said to go along there. I can even remember him giving me a lift there... In fact, I can't even remember filling in the form. I just turned up there... I got in I think because they were very impressed with my reference from school, my academic reference.
Alan's college had a national reputation and I asked whether he had positive memories of his experiences there. His perception was that:

I thought it was a poor college, in so far as the breadth of curriculum was extremely poor. We did four or five hours of gymnastics every week for three years. We did athletics throughout the summer for six or seven hours. Our football course, over three years was timetabled for ten hours. Because of truancy and lateness we did six hours. The rugby course was timetabled for ten hours. After truancy and lateness we did two hours... even the planned timetable [...] somebody did a survey [...] I think forty percent of all practicals and lectures were cancelled. No cricket. No tennis, no compulsory tennis. No compulsory trampolining. One benefit - they taught me how to swim well... After three years I could swim over a mile... But it was an appalling record, that's all you can say, of how to give PE teachers width of experience.

However, Alan did comment that "the actual standard of lecturing was extremely high". A little later, I followed this up with a question about whether there were any models of teaching available to him either in the college or on teaching practice. With regard to college, Alan thought he was particularly influenced by the abruptness of one of the lecturers.

The remainder of our conversation focussed on Alan's experience of teaching practices and his subsequent employment at Bridgetown.

(iii) Experience of teaching

During his three year course, Alan had two teaching practices. A teacher at his first practice "influenced me a great deal". He thought the teacher at the second practice school was "hopeless". I failed to ask Alan about the differences between the two practices and in a short time we were talking about his early experiences of teaching at Bridgetown and the significance of the head of department's style for Alan's teaching.
I called him Mr at first. You think I'm joking but I'm not! He didn't say "call me Dave". He was a pure authoritarian figure and, within my teaching style, I was immensely influenced by him.

I wondered whether at that time there was a house style of teaching at Bridgetown. Alan replied that the discipline of the school was also influenced by Dave:

...they looked to him, and one or two other teachers and very quickly me, very early on, to be the disciplinarians at the school...you'd quite often see me walking down the corridor with plimsolls in my hand! Going back to '75, '76 and '77.

I asked Alan whether he was conscious of the style he currently employed and whether he thought it had evolved since his early days at Bridgetown. He replied that:

I still say it is heavily Dave-influenced and more abrasive than I would like it to be but the style I try and play if you like is the 'old boy', been here a long time, seen it all and done it all and I play with that. I don't know the children's names that well and I deliberately play on that, even children who are good at PE...

I was interested to know whether this style was age sensitive at all and whether Alan varied it. He replied that he treated all years the same "whether that's right or wrong I probably am unconscious of age and ability".

I mentioned that I thought the dreadful weather of the Spring Term had been a real challenge to the teachers' motivational capacities and I asked Alan:

...Are you aware of any particular style of motivation that you have or strategy to motivate pupils to be involved in the lesson?

Alan replied:

It's negative motivation I think... there is no one as far as I can see who never brings his PE kit out of kicking against the PE teachers or the system... It's one of those
situations where you're having to chip away at it all the time... My way of dealing with it is very negative in so far as bellowing at them, moaning at them, nagging at them, particularly in a group situation. In fact, I handed to a boy today, quite rare I think for me, but he complained to the head. Because he's not been bringing his kit a lot and I showed him up in front of the others, deliberately being nasty. But he thinks he'll bring his kit next week.

In the light of my observations of Alan's lessons, I pursued this point further.

Keith: Which pupil was it?

Alan: It was a third year boy. He's fairly new, comes from Iran, don't know his name but I showed him up in front of the others. He went away, kicked and had a huff. He went and saw the Head. The Head was busy - I only found this out afterwards. To be fair, after about half an hour of him being angry, I then went over to him and had a ten minute quiet chat but not a "come and tell me your problems, Johnny" it was more a "look, I want your PE kit. I expect you to bring it". This sort of negative way of dealing with it. But I think that in that way it is complemented by Ed's gentle talk or soft touch. When I say 'soft touch' they probably get better results like that, because it's a more quiet, soothing approach.

Keith: Would there ever be a time when you would give up on a pupil and say "well, this isn't worth the trouble"?

Alan: Oh, yes. I have been known to say that. But I don't think in practice that that occurs. I think we're in a situation I have been in before now where I send two or three letters home with no effect. So the year tutor or headmaster have to do something about it.

Now in the group you saw, there were several children who weren't bringing their PE kit. Now within five years' experience, the answer is I will do something about it. But there have been times when I've not done anything about it for a year. Now I've let children [...] I mean this kid from the second year now, he came the first year, he was trouble and didn't want to do PE. There's another kid in the first year now, so I say "OK, don't do it". And I will leave that child for a year not doing PE but then we'll work on him. But I find if you push too hard, you have a negative effect. I'm not saying this is run of the mill. This is quite unusual. There was Brewer in the first year who's now in the second year and he does it now. I'm not too sure I'm going to have the same success with the other one in the first year called Gibson.
Coming back to that group you observed, it's one of those situations. It's not a conscious decision to sort them out but sooner or later, over the year, you're going to have five or ten minutes when you've got that (inaudible) PE and you home in on them. But it could go easily for two terms before that's done.

Following on from this, I wanted to explore Alan's feelings about the craft of teaching. My interest stemmed from experiences I had had with student teachers and my own attempts to verbalise feelings about the atmosphere of lessons.

Keith: ...How does a teacher become aware of the atmosphere in a lesson?

Alan: Pure intuition... it's a sixth sense. You just begin to feel [...] You walk into a classroom and you know [...] You know that the children are going to be receptive within seconds. Well I think I'm tuned into that.

Keith: How do you know when to intervene?...

Alan: What do you mean, to change the activity?

Keith: Yes. Is it the inactivity itself or noise or petulance?

Alan: Yes, I think it's the whole thing. You can also... if you know the children, home in on the children and you can see when one or two of them get restless... when you see one or two children who don't normally get restless, then you know to chip in. Sometimes you can chip in too quick...

I tried to draw out from Alan what he thought constituted a 'good' lesson or a 'good' course in the next part of the conversation. His response to my question about this was:

...the idea of the perfect lesson would depend on the teacher's personality and the children's response... have the children learnt, have they progressed over that lesson? I think that one lesson is very difficult to be a good rule. I think half a term's work is a better guide.

Pursuing my own interest in critical moments or key incidents in teaching experience, I asked Alan whether he had any similar experiences to my own. He thought that his first teaching practice had been
sufficiently problematic for him to return to college with lots to reflect on. In particular, he thought he had learnt about the significance of a sense of humour in teaching. At Bridgetown:

...I think in terms of your style of teaching you are heavily influenced by the Head and two Deputies. What they accept and what they don’t accept. For example, how you deal with the children: they set the tone...

We chatted briefly about our experiences of heads of department and we agreed that in both our schools we had been particular helped, in my case saved, by our heads of department. Alan mentioned that he and Dave had usually team-taught and there had been opportunities to observe each other teaching. This prompted me to ask him how he evaluated his own teaching. I was interested to know if there was some collective departmental input to the process. Alan’s response, in part, was:

...some teachers never learn by their mistakes. Some teachers never assess their ability. I hope it’s reflective thought, your own reflective thought, your own conscience...

Alan thought that there might be teachers at Bridgetown "who don't give it a moment's thought before nine and after three-thirty". I wondered whether Alan had less experience to work on when industrial action had removed extra-curricular activity. Of his own involvement in extra-curricular activities, Alan noted:

... the bond you build up with some children is increased through doing extra-curricular activities. I'm walking past the corridor and the children are looking at me. Fair enough, my way of communicating is not through official channels, but through unofficial channels: stopping children in corridors. But I'm walking past the corridors and the children are looking at me to see whether I'm checking them over. They're wanting to be beckoned and the actual aura you have walking through the school is up-tempo if you're doing things after school. There's no doubt about it [...]

At the time of our conversation, extra-curricular activities had resumed following resolution of the industrial dispute and Alan was heavily involved in athletics at the school.
A little later, Alan suggested that:

I think in terms of reflecting on your teaching, extra-curricular activities can impinge on your teaching, rather than improve it. When Dave and I were working full out, there did come a time when there was virtually no difference between what we were doing after school and what we were doing in school, because we were getting so many children involved and in any one class there must have been eight to ten children doing extra-curricula activities... that was a year when we had the whole school buzzing...

Experiences of high level involvement and the industrial dispute had encouraged Alan to consider the role of the physical education teacher. Contained in his response to my questions about the extra-curricular were two references to the teacher's role in linking pupils with the community and clubs in the community.

Our talk about industrial action had reminded me that Alan was in the midst of preparing Bridgetown pupils for the borough sports and so I started to wind the conversation up in order to give him some space to prepare himself for the evening's activities. I asked him two final questions. The first was "can you identify one aspect of your work you could improve?". Alan replied that he was aware of the stress and anxiety he put himself under. A second question asked him to consider aspects of the school he would least miss. He turned the question round and said that he would miss contact, particularly extra-curricular, with the children most of all.

I've lived and breathed preparing this athletics team for the last three or four weeks and although it's been hard work, I've enjoyed every moment.

Our conversation ended at this point. I thanked Alan for his time and attentiveness. As I gathered up my papers and tape recorder, Alan left to join the Bridgetown athletes down at the games field on a warm June afternoon. For a number of years, certainly since my time in Parkgate, Bridgetown had an enviable reputation for athletics excellence. It was interesting to note, in passing, the kind of personal investment of time and energy required of a teacher to sustain such a tradition.
3.3.4.2 Update: One

Twenty-one months elapsed until our next recorded conversation. Late in March 1988, I visited Bridgetown for two days with the specific intention of catching up with developments.

In this section, I make use of Alan's responses to my questions about what had been happening in the intervening time. I had written to him two weeks prior to my arrival at Bridgetown. It followed a preliminary phone call to check that the proposed date of my visit was convenient for Alan and Ed. Between posting the letter and my arrival at Bridgetown, Alan contacted me to talk over a job application for a senior post in the Parkgate Education Department. I arranged to meet him before school started on 23 March to talk over his letter of application.

Alan and I met at 8.40am to discuss the job and he gave me a copy of his letter of application and curriculum vitae to read. I said I would read both as a priority that morning and arranged to go along to his third year rugby lesson at 10.30. I observed his lesson and then we talked from 11.30 until 1.15 about the post. We had a working lunch. Alan submitted his application the following morning.

Our update conversation took place on 24 March at 5.30pm and went on until 7.10pm. This conversation had already been given a context by Alan in our talks the previous day. As usual, Alan's update had been full of the micro-politics of Bridgetown. We talked about management styles at the school and Alan's perceptions of the senior management. We also talked about developments in physical education and the move to a written syllabus. My notes record that we spent some time talking about a written syllabus as a "work of fiction".

Alan told me about the collaborative spirit at that time in the boys' physical education department. He suggested that not having a written syllabus had been "one of our strengths". All three teachers in the
department (by this time Clive had replaced Mark) were in constant contact, skills were discussed and ideas were shared.

Although the head of physical education had been trying to move towards a written syllabus, at the time of our conversation, Alan informed me that the timetable was allocated on the half term model in use in 1986. There had been changes in content in the intervening years. Tennis had been introduced in Year One and had replaced some of the cricket. Alan thought there was still too much badminton on the timetable but he reported that he had been waiting three years for basketball rings to be put up in the Sports Hall. He was concerned that all other practical subjects in the school were serviced by a technician and yet physical education was left to its own devices.

My notes of the Update conversation on 24 March were:

We sat face-to-face in the tutors' room. Alan came into the room as Mark left. The atmosphere was relaxed and Alan rambled for the 100 minutes of the conversation. He continued talking after the 90 minute tape ended! As usual some of the most interesting points came after the tape clicked to a stop. We concluded our conversation with a discussion of 'theories of teaching'. We walked together to the school car park and Alan reaffirmed his interest in looking at what writing I produced. I assured him of confidentiality. He was aware from his own research of the amount of gossip that could be picked up and used. As we went our separate ways, I asked him to trust me and I thanked him for all the time he had given me in the last two days.

The ninety minutes of our taped conversation, when transcribed, ran to sixty-seven pages of material. The account that follows draws upon this very selectively. I have used themes to organise Alan's extended responses.
(i) Flow of events

We talked first about what had happened in the last two years.

Alan: I think you've got to see it in a whole school context. The Teachers' Action here was quite strong. There were some nasty situations...Relationships did sour and the momentum of the school is nowhere near what it was before...Whether it's due to the strike action, I don't know.

In the context of PE clearly things came to a stop. Borough-wide, the teachers I've spoken to, I think most of them are relieved it's come to a stop. By and large they didn't have much status. They began to leave [...] to feel that there was a life outside teaching [...] you know, with Saturday mornings and things and they began to enjoy life a bit more themselves...

PE teachers, including us [...] There's a common element. They're really not too sure if they're doing their job properly because they're not doing extra-curricular activities. They want reassurance from somebody [...] to say "we think you ought to be doing this. It's part of your job". They want it clear cut.

Keith: ...do you think that people have become more instrumental since the Action, in terms of doing things because they have to be done - they're contractual? ...Is it substantially different from what it was?

Alan: Yes, whether it was going that way anyway or not I don't know. I think by and large it was going that way. I think teachers were looking to reduce the amount of time they had...

Alan pointed out that he had been going to Parkgate's central playing fields since 1975:

... up to about 1979 all pitches were used. In 1982, you'd only have four or five schools there whereas before you'd have fifteen to twenty schools. There was a large reduction anyway before the Teachers' Action, in my opinion.

Since Alan drew upon Parkgate-wide evidence for his response, I thought it might be interesting to discuss curriculum developments in the borough. In the Autumn Term 1985, I had been told by the physical education adviser for Parkgate that a curriculum review was in progress.
Keith: ...was there a group working on the curriculum...?

Alan: Again [...] into a political situation... thirty-two consultative groups were organised. All the standard subjects. I have never seen any publication, minutes of any meetings made, of any consultative group. Their impact, and they still meet, is not negligible. It is nothing!...

Alan pointed out that those who attended the consultative groups were eligible for time off in lieu. "After they've gone to three meetings or so, it's equivalent to a day off."

It seemed reasonable to consider school-based development at this point and so I asked Alan to talk about physical education department meetings at Bridgetown. Recently, meetings had been held at lunch time:

...so, by the time we've eaten, we get there at 1.30pm, the bell goes at 1.55, and so you have twenty-five minutes of nothing. Although we have tactfully asked for meetings after school, we are getting in fact a twenty-five, twenty minute meeting...

Alan observed that the head of department had been "weaned off" meeting in the staffroom and that such meetings now took place in a classroom.

(ii) Curriculum matters

On the list of topics for update, I had included: curriculum matters - policy, implementation and evaluation. In order to pre-empt further discussion of the personal issues related to the decision to hold department meetings on Friday lunchtimes, I asked Alan about curriculum matters. I mentioned Gordon Underwood's (1983) book, The Physical Education Curriculum in the Secondary School and asked whether Alan and Ed were engaged in a process of planning and implementation.

I ought to point out here that from my earliest days at Bridgetown, I had been particularly interested in how consensus about what constituted physical education at the school, and how it was delivered, was achieved. I think I had given Alan the impression that I thought a
written curriculum was important. Alan's comments once again conveyed this impression:

... I think you're on the wrong track here... I see it much more as a ball of wool, much more messy than that... Our departmental meetings are probably about thirty minutes a day. Constant conversations...

I see that written document, which I keep stressing all the time, as simply a political tool. It's like an insurance policy almost because the rules of the game are about that at the moment, what everybody thinks.

The aims and objectives thing, in the way that it's been done in the past, is just a complete waste of time. If you want [...] I'm not saying that things shouldn't be written down, although I think they're not that important [...] I think a general philosophy statement of probably one side of A4 of how you feel the department can grow and develop and mature, within the foreseeable future, to be reviewed every year, is the type of thing to be of benefit.

I encouraged Alan to indicate what happened in practice and he gave some examples where differences of emphasis lay between Ed and himself. One example was the use of warm-ups in lessons:

...I am lazy in doing warming-up exercises. Ed is very good... Ed has them for three or four months and he might be doing warming-up exercises when he has them and me, it's a quick run round...

Another example was to do with kit:

...It bugs me, kids go to Ed and asking "got any shorts?" He'll give them shorts. I'll say no. I mean, obviously once or twice [...] but Ed usually has two tracksuits down there and he'd give his tracksuit bottoms if they'd fit! And his spare football boots! There are children I think who won't bother because they know Ed is going to provide it. So that kind of thing ought to be aired... time to have general rules that apply across the board for all of us.

I was interested in the process of evaluation and so I used Alan's example to raise the general point about process.

Keith: ... once you have a document or some shared consensus...perhaps you can evaluate what you're achieving, what you're doing... What kind of evaluation would have been
engaged in the last two years, in terms of, apart from your thirty minute conversation each day [...]. Has there been any kind of formal process that's gone on?

Alan: None at all, no. I think we sense that it's an ongoing process... I still think we're sensitive enough to respond to children [...]. You know, children will vote with their feet on many occasions and you're a fool if you don't recognise that [...]. So that would be an ongoing thing. But by and large, there is no formal evaluation.

I thought a specific example might help our discussion and so I mentioned the possible significance of 'no-kitters' in evaluation. Alan's response takes up five sides of A4 in the transcript. Here are snippets:

By and large, we haven't got any out and out no-kitters.

...you have to analyse in the school context...I immediately reflect it back on them. Because we have got good kids here and you must ask these children sometimes "why aren't you responding in the same way that that group did?" It then puts the onus back on them and it is a very good way of making them reflect.

...another way I would try and evaluate it would be to look at their record books. What are they like in other lessons? Is it me or is it them?

He explained that once it became clear that a no-kitter had a well-kept record book "then as far as I'm concerned that's serious. I want to know why and I will talk to them and find out why." If a no-kitter has a "duff old record book", Alan thought that was the time "you find out the political situation in the school [...] what's your support like".

Recently, Alan had been writing home to parents to inform them that their children were not taking part in physical education lessons. He reported that there had been a good response to this. Alan embellished his story with an exception to this trend which raised issues at the school level of the treatment of no-kitters. His perception was that a group of pupils were allowed to get away with unacceptable behaviour.

Alan closed this part of the conversation with the suggestion that:
...But by and large, the no-kit tends to be seasonal and, if I wanted to generalise, it's because kids round here are too whimish.

Prior to my conversation with Alan, Ed had told me about a new first year course at Bridgetown. I wondered whether Alan regarded this as a development linked to evaluation of previous courses. He gave me some background to the new course and sketched in some of the curriculum politics for me.

One possible interpretation of Alan's political briefing is that the introduction of a mixed first year course of games skills and swimming was prompted not by educational issues but by the limited number of teachers who could drive the school bus to Alderman swimming pool. Once it was agreed that swimming should be on the timetable as mixed activity then one of the female members of staff had to be on-site at Bridgetown.

In passing, Alan mentioned that the first year course had been given a welcome boost by a student on his final teaching practice. The school had been impressed by the student's work and offered him the post made vacant by Mark but the student's teaching practice supervisor advised him to turn the job down.

With regard to the pragmatic solution to the first year curriculum, Alan remarked:

But you see, that's where I think that teachers are at their best. Given practical problems that they've got to deal with and they've got to come up with immediate solutions... Not philosophising about...

I then sought Alan's views about the GCSE in physical education as another example of curriculum development. Once again, Alan provided some historical background and political analysis. At the end of his account (four and a half sides of A4 transcript), Alan said he had been responsible for the first year of the GCSE course. He had spent all year preparing material "basically writing a book if you like. I spend three or four hours per week".
I offered to support his work in whatever way I could. Alan's response, in part, was:

...teachers don't tend to use other people's material... And you could give me material and I wouldn't use it. The reason I wouldn't use it is because I probably lack a little bit of confidence in that area. I'm not an expert in anatomy and physiology... if you start giving me a book and I give it out to the children, I lose the controllable knowledge type of situation which I can't really afford to do...

Alan sensed there was a buzz in his lessons which he attributed to the amount of preparation he did for the course.

It seemed a good time for me to ask about all pupils at Bridgetown. I asked whether Alan thought there was more interest generally in physical education now than two years ago. I managed to ask this question just as side one of the audio tape was coming to an end. The prelude to Alan's answer was his analysis of the social implications of Thatcherism, the answer itself lies somewhere between the end of side one and the start of side two of the tape. By the time I had changed the tape and restarted the recorder, Alan had moved on.

Side two starts with my attempt to salvage the flow of conversation from the technology of recording our conversation. I asked Alan about the pupils' skill and fitness. I saw this as a link between Alan's briefing update and my interests in pupils at Bridgetown. I also mentioned diet and nutrition.

Alan took this as a cue to report on the pattern of the school day. He thought plans were well advanced to restructure the school day around a much shorter lunch time when pupils would not be allowed off-site.
On a previous visit to Bridgetown, Alan and I had talked about physiological profiles of children through testing and measurement on entry into the school and at regular intervals thereafter. I followed this up early on in our conversation. My reason for raising it was that Riverside had a regular testing programme and I saw it as a possible collaborative venture. Experience and data could be shared and at both schools the data could then feed into a health focus in the curriculum.

With regard to measuring 'flexibility', Alan thought:

When you're talking about these rather static measurements in a group situation [...] flexibility [...] like this type of thing where you measure it on the wall [...] You're asking for the world, because you're not going to get it. You're not going to get the kids doing it properly. They'll find it boring, because they want action. Whether you should give them some action, whether it's desirable or not I don't know...

However, a few moments later, Alan did suggest that:

...it would be interesting...if children could see changes in them, in their flexibility for example. In an objective, written way...

In passing, Alan mentioned that he had done some flexibility work with the headteacher's son when he was a first year. The boy had done well in athletics and his progress had stimulated the headteacher's interest in physical education, Alan thought.

(iii) Expectations, hopes and trends

I was conscious of wanting to move Alan on to talk about other issues and so I asked him to summarise the experiences of the past two years and his hopes for development. Alan took a retrospective view:

...I think the sourest part of my career here was when I was Head of Boys PE. I'd had that job for a year and I'd had these brilliant visions I thought. I was organising 'E' team fixtures and I organised a whole list of them for the next year. We were going to have PE on a grand scale. Anybody who
wanted to play for the school can. And he destroyed it in one moment for me.

I came back in September to find I had half a PE timetable! The rest was Maths and Geography [...] on the first day back...I was just given a timetable in the letter, like everybody else had got and whereas in July, it was all PE, I opened it and it was Maths and Geography!

(iv) An appropriate model for the physical education curriculum

Keith: How do you choose to teach what you teach?...

Alan: I think we use a common sense approach... we still give them a choice, but it's much more structured now...some kids are really good inside and some outside...I've found in my experience that children prefer being told what to do because it implies that we know what's good for you...

From Alan's preliminary reply, I was keen to follow what model of physical education he employed. I used the term 'traditional' a number of times in a loaded way without defining what I meant by traditional other than implying team games and certain values like fairness. After a number of prompts, Alan replied:

The main problem is the unthinking way that PE teachers do things. Automatically football and rugby without thinking why. And perhaps, as I put on my application, one of the ways in terms of justifying PE is to look at each activity in its isolation and think 'why'? As I've said before, I think it's got to be flexible, any curriculum that we do.

(v) The process and product of teaching

Keith: I wondered whether you had any feelings about how you see your teaching in terms of process and product...

Alan: I think I'm a product man. If you're asking me what's more important, sitting here now I would say process. It's got to be. Actually a good evaluation of any successful PE department would be to get hold of all the people you taught when they were nineteen and twenty and find out how many are still taking part in PE.
It's not that you're a failure if they're not taking part in PE but if they can give you a good reason why they're not, that would count as a success...

PE schools are renowned that children will play football 'til they're sixteen, with forty fixtures a year for their school and then hang up their boots. I mean really good athletes in the broad sense of the term [...] tons of them retire. Partly I think because they just live off that individual teacher's motivation and when that hypnotic sort of 'Come on!' [...] when that's all gone, there's nothing there. The process is by far the most important thing. We're not trying to educate children to sixteen and then, you know [...] And yet PE teachers are a bit obsessed with product and result...

(vi) The pupils in your care

In our previous taped conversation, Alan had talked about his view of teaching but we had not had the opportunity to explore his view of pupils. I wanted to know, initially, how Alan classified pupils.

His response was:

Clearly, I think that one of my weaknesses, one of my greatest weaknesses, is seeing kids as objects. You know, a bit of a standards man, the old type, partly probably because of my background, haven't got kids myself [...] not married. I see them like that and, unconsciously, a yard stick is: what was I like at their age? Sometimes I see myself as being a model pupil and yet sometimes [...] I mean, I can't remember that much about it...

For some considerable time, probably since the intensive fieldwork, I had been particularly interested to know if the physical education teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside had detailed knowledge or awareness of how any named child might learn.
As a precursor to his answer, Alan pointed out that since the department had a policy of changing the teaching groups on a termly basis, he sometimes found it difficult to learn names in the time available. However he was conscious that he used not knowing names as a strategy:

...It's partly deliberate. In the first year, I've always deliberately not gone out of my way to [...] You're not important, you're just somebody else I teach [...]

The day before our conversation, I had observed Alan's rugby lesson with the Third Year group. He used that group to develop his point about recognising pupils facially rather than by name:

...Basically, when I've got a group of twenty kids in front of me and I'm picking up two teams, I know normally that the score at the end is roughly going to be twelve each. And nine times out of ten, it is.

One of the reasons why that failed was because you were around and I was getting a bit nervous.

But one of the major things, one of the important things, is that you pick up their signs...The way you pick up their signs is vital.

Alan's comment that he was nervous in my presence troubled me. Once again, I was aware of my intrusion into the otherwise private world of a physical education teacher. I suppose, in retrospect, Alan might have thought my presence on that occasion was particularly evaluative because of our concurrent concern with his job application. At the time of our conversation, I do not think this registered with me. From the following transcript extract, I think I deliberately tried to encourage Alan's confidence in his own ability.

I tried to draw out his understanding of pupils by taking up his last point that "The way you pick up their signs is vital". I quote the exchange verbatim both to give Alan space to develop his thoughts and to signify that this was a particularly important exchange for me. All along, I had been determined to find out about how the teachers related to pupils.
Keith: So you have a mental set of most children you teach over a period of time?

Alan: Oh yes, but I can't put a name to them. And I probably label them, you know, "useless" and whatever. In the context of what we're doing, it is extremely precise.

Keith: And do you have an historical reference as well ... you know what a pupil was like if you met him in the first year, the second year, the third year and so on?

Alan: Oh yes. You know how they improve and you know whether they're quiet and unassuming, they come on or they go into a shell.

Keith: And how do you use that information ...? Let's take Adam as an example.

Alan: Well he's been helped [...] I've had lots of chats with Adam. I mean, you could take another child if you like. I do have quite a few individual chats with kids.

Keith: When does that happen? Is it usually when they're changing?

Alan: It's usually the best time [...] the most pressurised time I find for a teacher is at the beginning of the game when you're getting them going and I often say to children, quite rudely, "go away!" and they've got notes because they want [...] I say "you've got burdens, so have I, go away. If you want to put your own burdens on me I don't want to know, clear off!". And they've come, fully polite and they've got letters. I've got the problem.

Another thing [...] talking about what we ought to do together, apart from warming up: we ought to teach children to get stuff out themselves and I've got into a situation where I was getting the kids [...] "you set up the bollards, it's your bloody lesson not mine" but of course when I get my next group [...] In the end, it's easier to do it yourself. But it's wrong.

So the major problem time is the beginning of a lesson so the chats tend to come at the end of a lesson. Whereas, if you've got a good class, you can set them off and then beckon them over and say "look, what's wrong with you?". The chaps by and large were [...] Adam has had the sharp end of my tongue, he'd arrived fifteen minutes late on a dawdle. He would get changed which would take him half an hour, thirty-five minutes [...] I mean quite often, in the first and the second year. I mean, again, the hard, horrible bastard I am, he would end up sitting on the bench in one sock [...] the other two boots and sock would be locked in the changing rooms. I'm not leaving the changing rooms open in case the children play around in there...
Our recorded conversation ended with Alan talking about the link between his view of physical education and his view of pupils and how both were combined in the physical education lesson:

...the subject is the child... I did a lesson this morning where the kids get out the apparatus and they explore it. And they're up over the metal girders... and it's lovely to see. And the confidence amongst [...] I mean, I've tried it before from fifth years and most of them won't go over the wall bars...

I used to do formal gymnastics and I got broken arms and all sorts [...] do a roll this way [...] it used to bore me to tears... For me, when I have gym it's "let's get the gear out and give it a go". It's all action.

Now I say to that one particular group of mixed ability "as soon as you've changed, go in and start getting it out". You might get one or two fooling around but you can say "you're going to have a go on it anyway, what do you want to mess about for because it's just wasting time for other people". I get some good sessions like that. I can't do it with the fourth and fifth years because all they want to do is swing on ropes. Basically, they've become fearful perhaps because they didn't have it in the years before, in the first and second years. Again it could be hell [...] if some kid fell off the girder [...] 

At that exact moment, the tape recorder clicked off.

Alan and I talked for a further ten minutes and I recall trying to continue our conversation to a point where there was a natural close. I made no detailed notes of this exchange. By the end of the conversation, Alan and I had been in each other's company over the two day visit for something in excess of five hours.

On a subsequent visit to Bridgetown, Alan wanted to know if I would be recording any more talks with him. Our third conversation is the subject of the next section.
Near the end of the Summer Term 1988, I called into Bridgetown School on the off chance of saying hello to the physical education teachers. I did not know that this was an activities week when timetabled lessons were suspended. Alan was out in a local park organising orienteering. As I was driving away from school I noticed him walking up the road to school, riding shotgun on a group of pupils.

I drove back to school to await his arrival. After exchanging news, we sat down to talk about teaching. With Alan's permission, I recorded our conversation. The transcript gives an impression of the amount of rambling that went on. My first 'real' question was very vague:

Keith: ...I wondered how your experience of sports...gives somehow a total view of what the end product will be rather than a fragment of lesson plans...

Goodness knows what I was trying to do! I think I wanted to encourage Alan to talk about his vision of a scheme of work rather than a specific lesson. His response was, in part:

Alan: ...I like to tell children at the beginning of the term or the beginning of the year, the ends in view and actually talking it through with them...

I did not think that Alan's reply was taking me where I wanted to get to and so when he gave an example of how the GCSE had encouraged him to keep a file of what he was doing with his class, I asked him about notes he made of pupils.

He reminded me that the male physical education teachers changed their groups each term. Whilst the teachers thought this was "fair", it meant that Alan was seeing in all lessons in the school something like 720 children during the school year. At a recent first year parents' evening, Alan was able to recognise 40 first year names. He coped with the evening in the following way:
... some of the children came up to me because they wanted their parents to see me. I didn't know who they were so I said put your name down on that buff piece of paper, put a time and I'll copy it up later on... once they put their name down, I make a mental record of them and when I spoke to their parents, several parents said "you really know my child"...

Alan's frankness led me to ask about his knowledge of individuals. My loaded question was:

Keith: ...What I feel now is that we ought to feel something about the way children learn, but how do you do that when you have this flow of seven hundred children?

Alan's response was:

...schools falsely feel that they're there to cater for individuals. I think that most PE experiences are group experiences and not individual experiences... Because of the size of numbers, one to twenty, one to twenty-five, I don't think you can deal with individuals.

After Alan developed this point at length, I asked him to consider the model of physical education implicit in what he was suggesting. He did this by discussing a decision by the head of the physical education department to promote mixed ability teaching in the school year 1988/89. Alan contrasted his experience of mixed ability teaching with his experience of ability sets for football.

I asked him "do you have a feeling about what PE should be doing?" and he replied:

... that transformation from actually doing and going, if you like, through the motions to that higher plane of feeling good within yourself. Your body and everything's functioning and [...] nicely. I think that's what we've got to try and give children.

I wondered if it was possible to evaluate this kind of work and experience. The following exchange took place:
Keith: ...how would you ever know?[...] Sometimes when you're talking about it, it seems to be personal and subjective.

Alan: Yes, but there's nothing wrong with [...] You see, I've done a bit [...] Like, define the colour red. How can you evaluate whether that's red? You can't. It's never red...but I've seen children with it and I think they've got it, partly through contact with me...

Keith: I certainly agree about this empathy, that you can sense when other people are sensing things but if one was to follow some of the prescriptions for rational curriculum planning, somehow, at the end of the process of instruction or education, something can be evaluated as to whether it has been a success or not.

Alan: I'm not a rational curriculum planner!

Keith: I don't think any of us are! The thing that I would ask I suppose is: is this experience you're talking about available to all, or is it in some sense already, not divisive, but you recognise that not everybody will have that anyhow?

Alan: I think it's available to all. I think that feeling of well-being is available to all. One word I latch onto when teaching children is, "have you transformed them?" ... I'm not talking about putting them over to your point of view but you actually enthuse them, or uplift them...

During the course of Update:One and Update:Two conversations I noted Alan's use of 'reflection' and 'transformation' to discuss the process of teaching. I did not ask him to develop these ideas, it might have been interesting to do so. In Update:Two, Alan seemed particularly keen to wax philosophically about teaching.

In addition to his relation of evaluating the experience of physical education to evaluating the colour red, Alan invited me to consider what Rousseau had said about the 'rational mind'. The last piece of transcript I have for Alan is just before the tape ended on the third 90 minute tape I had used with him:
Keith: ...are there certain activities that facilitate well-being more than others or is it varigated with any activity that's possible?

Alan: ...you're obviously now looking for a magic formula which will say that there are certain activities which will develop that feeling of well-being better than others. Perhaps they all do. But perhaps you're getting a [...] perhaps you're wanting a drink in its purest form rather than dilute it. I would actually go along with that [...] 

My tape recorder seemed to have an uncanny knack of switching off at interesting moments. Our conversation continued for some time after this point. As in the nature of such events, I made no notes.
3.3.5 Alan's Questionnaire Responses (23 March 1988)

Even after two years' contact with teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside, I was aware of how little I knew about their backgrounds. On the one hand, there was always so much else to talk about, on the other hand, I was acutely aware of not wishing to appear intrusive until such time as it seemed right to ask such questions.

By 1988 I felt that the teachers knew me well enough to trust me with some biographical detail. In Appendix 4, I provide an example of the questionnaire I used to elicit information from the teachers.

Alan's responses to the questionnaire are the first presented in the thesis. Two other questionnaires were returned to me and these are included at the equivalent points in the thesis. I have chosen to place the responses at the end of my account of Alan so that you receive additional information about him.

Year of birth: 1954

Marital status: Single

Present post (scale/grade): Treated as confidential

Previous employment in education: None

Secondary school attended: Local grammar school

Higher education (dates, qualifications gained):

1972-75 Certificate in Education, Advanced Level Pass in Physical Education

1982-84 BPhil (Ed) in Curriculum Studies (one year full time, one part time)
Other qualifications (professional, coaching etc):

14 coaching qualifications including football, rugby, badminton

Sporting achievements/interests:

County, at schoolboy level: boxing, soccer
Interests are across the board

In-service/special courses/seminars/conferences attended:

None since 1984 but in spare time keep up-to-date with current educational issues and do a bit of writing on these.

In your present post, what extra-curricular activities have you engaged in (school teams, clubs, outings/field trips)?

At present, deliberately leaving a void. I have refereed a couple of matches.

To keep my self esteem and to show that I can produce results, I do take the boys' athletics team. 100 hours 'overtime' on this last year. Borough champions.

What non PE responsibilities do you have in your present post?

Timetabling and co-ordinating internal exams. Joint secretary of external exams. 300 hours per year spent on this.

Have you been involved in any curriculum development initiatives/projects in the school? (If yes please give details)

I do believe this is a blanket term as if you are looking for titles. Isn't curriculum development on-going? Changes, many of them are subtle, do occur. For example, after your visit last year, I try and
see things more through the child's eyes. I think I am more sensitive to less able.

Less (but still over-) aggressive. Other more eye-catching changes:

1. Tennis in Years 1&2 (reducing the amount of cricket)
2. Two games of rugby in a lesson. Kids referee.
3. Leaving field changing rooms open.
4. Encouraging (but not demanding) the taking of showers. (This relates to (3)). In some classes this has been very successful.
5. Doing more warm-up activities. Trying to make kids more supple. NB this is due to my personal changes. As I notice my own body getting older, I am developing an interest in yoga.
6. Starting and finishing the lesson with a small talk. Getting the children to change and then leave the changing area together. It helps build up a corporate identity and gets the slow ones changed more quickly.
7. On cross-country runs (6) does not apply. No competition, do the run in your own time - social influence here: seeing people jog in the evenings. No stop watches here!

These seven have occurred in the last two years. There are probably many more.

8. I've spent about 2-3 hours per week all this year writing the GCSE PE syllabus.
9. In 'Lifeshkils' in year one, there is a 'leisure' component. I've now established what I think is a good course. Guess what? The planning is to delete 'Lifeshkils' from the curriculum next year.

What do you regard as areas of particular strength in your teaching?

Expertise (I believe I am a good coach)
Ability to communicate to groups
Conscientious approach. Pride in what I do.
Deep thinker, always reflecting

Thank you for not asking me my weaknesses
What aspects of your work would you like to develop?

Basketball in the curriculum (need someone to put the rings up)
Convert pole vault into long jump pit
Recycle football boots

What could be done on an institutional basis to facilitate your work?

I wouldn't like to ask too much. Perhaps one could start by asking them to spend 1 hour per year helping us.

Do you have any informal/formal procedures to make these feelings known?

I have on occasions (once every two years) mentioned these type of things to the Head - sympathy, no action.

Could you summarise what you think the status of physical education is in your school at the present time?

No, I do not have the words.

Finally... I would like to know what you think the role of 'research' might be in developing teaching. Perhaps you could say something about your own experiences with me - your feelings etc. You might also like to say something about your own 'research' which goes on every day!

I would like to talk to you about this. NB Can I recommend that you read Judgement, Planning & Ed Change, 1987 Maurice Holt. He attacks the aims-objectives-planned action model of curriculum development.
3.4 Mark

3.4.1 Introduction

At the start of my field work, Mark was twenty-six years of age and had been teaching at Bridgetown School for two years. Of the three teachers in the department, Mark was the most recently appointed. In addition to his school post, Mark also ran a community youth club near to the School. His additional responsibilities in the community post took up three evenings per week. He was a graduate of a college in the South West of England.

During the intensive field work stage of the research, I spent lessons three and four every Wednesday with Mark. Throughout this time, he was timetabled with a third year group, 3B2. On occasions, I also joined him at the local swimming pool for his lessons with first year groups. The table overleaf identifies specific occasions when I was in and around Mark's lessons.

The account that follows draws upon a range of material: notes of conversations, lesson observations and transcript material from recorded conversations.

3.4.2 Early encounters

I met Mark for the first time in December 1985. On this occasion, both physical education departments (boys and girls) were meeting to discuss arrangements for the forthcoming Spring Term. I was introduced to the staff at the meeting.

Afterwards, Mark and I had an opportunity to meet informally and I tried to explain my interest in the teaching of physical education. Mark was most polite and offered his help.
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>L.A. pool</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3&amp;4</td>
<td>3B2</td>
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<td>Games Field</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cold, rain in lesson</td>
</tr>
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<td>3&amp;4</td>
<td>3B2</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>Games Field</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3B2</td>
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<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3B2</td>
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<td>Games Field</td>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2.86</td>
<td>3&amp;4</td>
<td>3B2</td>
<td>Indoor Games</td>
<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Snow on ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.2.86</td>
<td>3&amp;4</td>
<td>3B2</td>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1S</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>L.A. pool</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3&amp;4</td>
<td>3B2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sports Hall</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Games Field</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bright, warm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At our January meeting, when I went to confirm arrangements for the term, Mark suggested that I might like to go with him to first year swimming at the local pool. I welcomed the opportunity and arranged to meet him at the pool, two days hence, for the first swimming lesson of the term (co-incidentally the last timetabled lesson of the week).

This was my first opportunity to observe teacher and pupils in my research role. It had a 'first date' quality to it and I recall arriving early. Here are my notes:

Friday, 10 January 1986

First year swimming at Alderman Pool. I arrived at 2.55pm, negotiated entry without paying and went to the spectators' balcony. At 3 pm the first year boys filed quietly along the poolside with Mark. There were twelve boys of various shapes, sizes and swimming costumes. Eleven girls were already sitting quietly by the pool side.

Bridgetown's allocation of time was signalled by a blast on the pool attendant's whistle. She was also the instructor and proceeded to organise the group on the basis of junior school visits to the pool. There were two groups: deep end swimmers (5 girls/ 8 boys) and shallow end learners (4 boys/ 6 girls). The whole group was quiet and attentive.

Mark worked with the group in the shallow end. The apparent aim of the lesson was to assess swimming ability.

3.04 Mark asked his group to enter the water. One boy dived in proficiently (he later produced swimming goggles). An Asian pupil seemed a particularly weak swimmer. Mark's instructions were clear and understood. Well organised.

3.11 Class out of water for Mark to make teaching points (TPs): ambient temperature warm

3.13 Front crawl

3.16 Mark uses best swimmer in group for demonstration of body position in front crawl

3.19 Asian boy second nearest deep end for practice

3.20 Exercise to put face in water. Two boys do not do this.
3.21 Same good swimmer demonstrates float position for face in water

3.26 After some practice the two boys get face in water (one of them is Asian boy). Latter makes determined effort for one and a half widths.

3.27 Mark brings group together to give feedback and praise. "Well done". Reinforces TPs. Some pupils shadow his swimming stroke demonstration.

3.30 Free play: good swimmer and another boy join friends in deep end group. Girls and boys go separate ways.

3.32 Boundaries of deep and shallow end groups merge.

3.33 End of session (whistle). Mark resumes control of the whole group. Group leaves quietly and quickly.

NOTES

1. Observations about Mark: clear instructions, well organised and aware; dress casual; lesson content - hiatus after 5/7 mins?

2. My observation process: was I aware of what happened? Where do I focus attention - teacher or pupil?

3. Memory note: for next week, prepare a scheme and lesson for small group of non-swimmers.

4. Other notes:

I sat in the spectators' balcony and made notes. Interesting experience negotiating the ticket barrier - explaining that I was with the school. I am also aware of the two pupils I mentioned. The Asian boy was thin and fairly tall, the good swimmer was short, wore white trunks and was the active kind of pupil that I think I would have noticed as a teacher. Impish.

I ought to mention that transport to the pool is by school bus for which Mark holds a PSV licence and that the travelling time from school to pool is 10 mins. It also occurs to me that the swimming lesson ended after the official end of school (3.30 pm) and provides an example of both voluntary overtime by pupils and the issue of the care of pupils at the end of the school day. Those pupils who lived near the pool were allowed to go home rather than travel back to school.
3.4.3 Mark and 3B2

Lessons three and four on Wednesdays were timetabled to take place between 10.30 and 11.40. Mark taught biology on the school site until 10.30 and if, as in the Spring Term 1986, he was due to teach off-site in subsequent lessons, ingenuity was required to get away from his laboratory base on time. 3B2 also had to move around the school site for physical education and for the Spring Term they would either be at the Games Field (half term 3) or the Sports Hall (half term 4).

I have notes on ten lessons with 3B2. These represent half the term's allocation of physical education for the class. I was unable to be at their other double lesson. Here are some extracts from my field notes about Mark and 3B2.

3.4.3.1 Football

15 January 1986

Weather much colder than in lessons one and two. 20P 1NP (sprained wrist). It started to rain midway through this lesson with "lower ability group". Some disruptive behaviour.

Mark's warm up game/practice was to hit ball below knee. This was followed by two small sided games of football. I joined one of the games, Mark the other. Boys worked well and were responsive.

22 January 1986

Weather much worse than at the start of the day. John Adams & JJ arrive very early and say Mark is "under the weather". Play game of football 8v8, I join in (goalkeeper). 3NPs. No further notes.

5 February 1986

19P 5NP. Frost coming out of the ground.

During the lesson I was aware of three aspects: "turd arse", "forty-fouring", and mud throwing. I noted that:
despite the excellent weather and the structure of the lesson there was considerable traffic in non-authorised activity.

Whenever Mark asked pupils to do an activity there were numerous examples of short-circuiting. In some cases an acceptable culture of 'cheating'. For example, in a passing practice (number of passes in one minute) many pairs seemed to invent their score.

Mark used prevailing conditions well. Introductory warm-up was different and interesting. A run interspersed with pupils showing exercises to group to follow. John Adams particularly unhelpful and opposed to activity.

As a remedy for the poor quality of play Mark introduced a conditioned game of 3 touch football. When Mark said "winning goal", there seemed to be a change in atmosphere and attention. Why did this become so important for the boys? It was not a good game of football but I described it as "committed in a way".

The end of lesson comes when Mark arbitrates on a shot at goal (isn't it strange that when the chips are down the deciding goal is always contentious - somehow, real or imaginary posts act as magnets for the ball!). The result brings 'joy' to one team and a series of taunt and counter taunt from victors and losers. Taunts, mud throwing, threats, and changing room debate ensue.

My notes for this particular lesson also include some retrospective jottings about phases of physical education stimulated by Mark's lesson and other lessons I had observed at Bridgetown. I speculate about phases of this lesson that involved: a game event; intervention in the form of a concluding strategy; catharsis/arousal; ongoing dispute. I noted that:
I have seen a number of situations where a teacher-invented conclusion has created 'management' problems. Threats of pupil/pupil physical violence and intimidation arise and it might be useful to have a look at this incident in regard to: Mark; this particular group; teaching in general. I am interested to know how disputes are resolved following such an incident since the off-site location leaves pupils with distance and time on their hands.

26 February 1986

Lessons 3 & 4: Third Year 20P 7NP Rugby

I walked across from the Sports Hall. Journey time: five minutes. No one at Pavilion when I arrived at 10.35. A very cold day, chilly yet very sunny. My notes reflected how cold my hands became!

10.45 First boys arrive. Colin says some have gone to Sports Hall.

10.48 Mark arrives with Alan. They discuss who should be where. Alan goes to Sports Hall.

10.59 First boys venture outside. Some seem keen, others are very aware of the temperature!

11.05 Most of the boys outside and Mark sends them for a run. I follow them and there is a second run when everyone is ready. Half way round second run Mark divides group. I work with half, he works with half. He kindly gives me the pleasant half without saying so. Thereafter I organise the group: warm-up then with partner; races with shuttles; 5v5 touch I play. A small game on small pitch with emphasis on activity. Bargain struck 15 minutes work then in. Boys work hard and we end on time. Mark brings his group over to play but my group have had enough and choose to go in.

At half time in my game I talked about squabbling. 1:9 teacher:pupil seems fine! Wind very cold at end. I thanked the group, they ran off to change. Activity ended 11.27 which left 15 minutes in changing room.

Some notes on lesson:

Owain did not do PE and was reticent to say why. Mark deducted merit as school rules dictate. At the start of the lesson many boys talked about the cold. Some were very cold but became more involved. Sean only boy in my group not to have tried fully - but he at least made an effort! Mark said he was pleased to be out. He was concerned that his message
about clothing (wearing track suits or similar warm clothing) had not sunk in. Some boys commented on our warm clothing and said "It's easy to talk when you dress like that." The playing surface smooth and unrutted. At end of lesson boys walked off chatting.

Today was the first day for a year that Robert Smith did PE. Even he was able to use the term "turd arse" without a hint of embarrassment! How integrated is Taig? Will Trevor Lord ever take part? He has already received 5 demerits in this first week of the second half of the term (in two and a half days).

3.4.3.2 An Intermission

My field notes trade on my second record of events. Here are some characters mentioned so far:

Mark a physical education teacher at Bridgetown
I/me a participant observer
Alan another physical education teacher at Bridgetown
John Adams
JJ
Colin members of 3B2
Owain
Sean

Josh my next door neighbour, son of a local primary headteacher, another member of 3B2

Robert Smith a reformed non-participant
Taig a newly arrived pupil of Irish ancestry
Trevor Lord an unreformed non-participant and sometime absconder

NPs non-participants

Here is a note on common parlance:

"Turd arse" (vulg.) n.: a term of rebuke, reproach during 3B2's lessons on Wednesdays. John Adams is often the source of the phrase but equally often is the recipient of someone else's use of it. On some occasions it is elevated to the status of a link in a stream of conversation, normally prefixed by "f------".

"Forty-fouring" n.: a game developed by non-participants in physical education lessons. Usually takes the form of a five or six versus one play fight. On muddy days can become messy!
3.4.3.3 Bad Weather Diversion

I kept a record of weather during the field work and although it was not based on operational definitions employed by the meteorological office at Bracknell, my view of temperature, rain and frost was not so idiosyncratic as to be unrelated to what teachers thought. I include here an example of a 3B2 lesson diverted because of bad weather.

29 January 1986

Lessons 3 & 4: Third Year (Mark)

The weather had deteriorated to such an extent that Mark diverted his group to the Sports Hall where they joined Alan's group. The lesson reminded me of days when I taught in a comprehensive school (half a year group a time on wet days).

Two boys had already changed when Mark arrived at the Games Field. Others who had arrived were reluctant to change. Mark drove to the Sports Hall with some of the boys in the minibus and I walked over with Josh and Owain. The group in front of me were loud and singing.

When I arrived at the Sports Hall there were boys playing football, table tennis and some NPs sitting around. One boy played with a yo-yo until it was confiscated by Mark. An initially small number of pupils gradually disturbed all table tennis games. Disruptive games were played with table tennis bats and a tennis ball. A variation of this was to smash a sequestered table tennis ball at your partner then run around and "bundle" (fight).

Some boys seemed determined to try and play conventionally come-what-may. I played a game against Dean and friend. I showed JJ a pen grip hold and he seemed quite happy.

Alan organised the football in a sheepskin coat (he was keeping a record of the temperature in the Sports Hall). Mark spent most of the morning organising pupils. He seemed very aware of the difficulties posed by weather.

At the end of the lesson, I took refuge in the nearby cafe and wrote up my notes which include the following questions:

1. What expectations do staff and pupils have in wet/ poor weather?
2. What do senior management expect?
3. What happens to pupils' understanding of PE in doubled up lessons?

4. What account would they give?

5. Do the staff engage in a damage limitation exercise at such times (conceptual and structural!)?

The Sports Hall is cold and gives an impression of being under siege. Windows have been (repeatedly) broken and are now continuously boarded up. There is no heating. The nearby shopping centre provides a refuelling stop for pupils.

6. Do pupils remember more what they bought at shops than what they did in the lesson?

7. Do such occasions provide a rationale for the day? (Do pupils plan to eat around the timetable?)

8. What physiological/biochemical problems occur because of length of school morning? (Can sugar poisoning account for some of behaviour?)

9. Does the institution recognise such factors? What strategic planning for: staff/pupils/atmosphere/ethos?

10. If PE is marginalised by planners, how do teachers cope with day's timetable?

11. What counselling required during bad weather? How do staff develop? (PE staff assumed to be able to cope)

12. What do children do at home during wet weather?

In the first half of the term there was another occasion when timetabled lessons had to be changed. Snow and Alan's absence on this occasion made for some difficulty.
3.4.3.4 Scheduled Indoor Lessons: 3B2 Badminton

The physical education curriculum at Bridgetown was structured around a system of half term blocks of activities. After the Spring half term, 3B2 shed their outdoor regime for the badminton block of their programme. Ironically, because of the absence of heating and natural light in the Sports Hall, it sometimes proved to be warmer outside than inside in this second half of the Spring Term. The change in the programme also coincided with changes in my approach to note taking.

In the first half term, I had spent a good deal of time participating in both football and rugby games. Now I was conscious of a desire to step back from my practical engagement with the group. On some days I sensed that I was over-eager to observe and note. On other days events seemed to flow. I have chosen an example from the latter kind of day.

'Exit To The Sound Of Gunfire'

5 March 1986

After lessons one and two, I walk over to the Sports Hall and arrive at 10.41. No one in sight.

Lessons 3 & 4: Third Year Badminton (Mark) Sports Hall 16P 6NF

10.45 The Sports Hall is locked so I wait outside White House for first boys to arrive. A cold wind is starting.

10.48 First boys arrive. Decisions to be made about options are the main conversation point. John Wilds shows me his completed form. Mark arrives.

10.48 JJ arrives on bike.

11.01 Mark starts lesson. A verbal exposition whilst holding on to the badminton equipment. A pupil announces that he has cut his hand on the broken glass in the Sports Hall door.

11.02 John Adams arrives.

11.03 Groups of four on each of the three courts. Mark hands out racquets and shuttlecocks. Activity starts.
Mark polices the 6 NPs. John Adams goes to the small gym.

11.06 Mark moves from court to court explaining how to grip racquet

Sean is a NP today and responds to my presence by calling me "baldy". (Whilst this is an accurate observation, I ponder on what I have done to elicit this response. I also wonder why it is important to him.)

11.07 Mark has visited all three courts. Danny and Adrian are drawing on the blackboard. (They had not brought their kit, they tell me that they were confused about the activity.)

11.12 Mark continues to move around. A command/instruction is lost in the acoustics of the hall. Mark whistles.

"In you come and sit around the court." (It takes 1 min to gather in group, they sit around the middle court.)

"What we are going to do [...]" (He waits for silence, the boys are restless.)

"Can you just put your racquets down in front of you?" (Audible noise of racquets being put down [metal frames on hard surface]). Mark sets up demonstration in half court and asks John Wilds to demonstrate. The noise continues. Mark looks at NPs.

Mark explains the service rule in badminton. He then conditions a small court, 1v1 game. He and John Wilds demonstrate.

11.14 Boys are sent back to their courts. Activity restarts. Small area 1v1. On the middle court Josh and Ben are moved off to accommodate two Johns. The former move to play between courts with no net.

11.15 JJ's group is still playing 2v2. Mark moves in to organise game.

11.17 Josh and Ben have moved onto court 3 and swap places with Owain and friend.

11.18 Mark on court 1 demonstrates technique. Meanwhile 2NPs (Danny & Adrian) are playing coin game on mat. I try to divert 3 other NPs.

11.21 Mark is on court 2. Danny & Adrian continue to attract attention of other 3NPs.

I wondered if I could use friendship pairs for interviews with pupils. On talking to NPs, I discover that physical education (written as PE on the school option form) is included in option 2 for the next school year. Danny has made a mistake in filling in his form. He does not know
PE means physical education. He is concerned about this when he discovers his mistake.

11.26 Mark organises court 2. Moves to court 1. Says to 3NPs "Can I see you at the end please?" In the small gym, the players are still working quietly. Mark tries to explain serve technique to court 1.

11.30 As Mark passes by he tells me about court 2: "They have decided that what I set up was boring so they have developed their own game. That's fine."

11.32 Mark patrols and as he passes he says "They are working quite well."

11.33 Mark whistles to bring group in but this raises noise level. Mark shepherds the group to the middle court. He waits for silence. 3NPs are told to shut up. Mark then goes through service TPs.

11.35 Group grows quiet. Mark makes TPs about serve and service reception. John Wilds serves. Mark shows smash response to weak serve.

11.36 Noise is growing.

Mark: "Paul, why don't we have our racquet down?"

Paul: "Because it would take too long to get up to hit."

Mark: "Yes."

In his moment of glory, Paul turns his racquet around and uses it as a machine gun. He supplies the sound effects to go with his actions.

I made some notes about pupil response to me at this stage. I noted that the most familiar form of address was to call me "Sir". Robert asked me how long I was going to be with them. Daniel was worried about his option mistake "Will I be able to change?" Whilst noting this I hear one participant say to Mark: "Can we go in, it has gone half past."

11.40 Mark calls group in. Paul is still machine gunning. John Wilds says "Paul, you spastic." John then chases Paul. Meanwhile Mark is trying to organise continuous/lives badminton on court 2. Six pupils play the game. The remainder are involved in other activity. Mark who was playing on court 2 returns to patrolling.

Sporadic gunfire can be heard in the small gym. Meanwhile, in the Sports Hall, Owain and friend are at the edge of the court playing a rally game. One boy is standing on the badminton base.
Mark whistles. "OK, finish there."
Three NPs (Sean & Tery included) whistle loudly.

John Wilds asks me:

"Are you writing about all them naughty people?"

Mark collects in the racquets and shuttlecocks and supervises 3B2's departure from the Sports Hall. Three NPS (see above) await his return. He tells them off about lack of kit and their behaviour. By 11.45 Sports Hall is empty again.

Amongst the sounds emanating from the changing rooms can be heard occasional bursts from a lone machine gunner. Mark and I exit.

After the lesson, Mark and I had an opportunity to talk about the lesson which extended into a discussion of teaching in general. He referred to the energy and dynamism required to work with 3B2.

We talked about his demonstrations in the lesson and I asked if he thought that one appeared to work better than the other. He thought that was the case. ("Yes, I noticed that.") We talked about the lesson and Mark's day. He felt he needed to be "on top form" for this group. He said that similar content would have worked well with 3A1.

I went off to the cafe to write up lesson notes. At 12.01 pupils were still coming in to buy food.

3.4.3.5 The Boys from 3B2

As the term progressed, I became more familiar with friendship groups in 3B2. Thanks to Mark's help, I got to know names relatively quickly. I was also fortunate that one of the pupils in the group, Josh, was my next door neighbour! (He was so taciturn that he was an excellent key non-informant.) By focussing initially on Josh's group of friends (Owain, Sean, Ben, and Ginger), I gained a sense of their relationship to others and to Mark.

The following notes from a badminton lesson were the outcome of observing pupils interacting in the context of Mark's teaching and organisation.
19 March 1986

Lessons 3 and 4: Badminton Mark 25P ?NP

I arrive at 10.38 and Mark shortly after at 10.40. First boys arrive at same time. The Sports Hall is unlocked. I have a brief chat with John Wilds. Mark hears John's interest in being a teacher so jokes "You can teach the rugby lesson next week". John is so surprised he runs off!

Mark tells me of a "great" lesson with this group the day before:

"They really got involved. Even Ginger. He's usually very timid but he scored a try. He ran 20 yards with the group chasing him."

Mark seems much better for his week off. He is bearded and rested.

"The week off helps put things in perspective. When you are here you are too close."

My notes for this lesson attempt to outline some of the friendship links between pupils. I had been struck by the various alliances in this group and thought it would be helpful to follow as much as possible for the double period.

10.50 Mark starts the group working. Paul Fisher deals out racquets and keeps the best two for himself and partner. Groups work in fours. The marginals are forced into the small gym or the edges of the main courts. Josh's group of 4 at edge of court. Mark integrates these onto courts.

11.00 Mark has visited all the courts. JJ and Taig are partners. Mark explains service procedure to them. Owain, Sean, Josh and Ben now at edge of court 3.

11.04 Richard, Ben and Paul are brought into the Sports Hall. The hall is noisy with pupils screaming and wailing.

11.05 Spencer leaves game with Colin on court 2 to be replaced by Ben.

11.06 Josh and Ben now on court 3

In the small gym boys are playing with the junior gym beam as a net. Mark watches court 1 with back to 2 and 3. Owain is playing around on mat.

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11.07 In the small gym, Spencer now lying on mats. Taig and JJ have left court 1 and are attempting a rally at back of court.

11.08 Mark explains service to court 2

11.10 Mark stops Spencer and John Adams (they are tidying the mats). Ginger, Danny, Adrian and large Raymond are playing quietly in small gym.

11.11 JJ invites Mark to play

11.12 Darren wanders out to changing room. Spencer is tidying the mats carefully.

Mark asks JJ if they should challenge anyone to a game. They challenge Ginger and Danny (Danny and Adrian both have new haircuts).

11.13 Darren returns and Mark asks him where he has been. Darren plays against John Adams.

11.14 Gym group move onto court 1. Fisher comes onto court 1 and takes off his glasses (two weeks ago they were broken in this lesson)

John Adams is relatively sensibly dressed. No scarf today, tennis shirt, black shorts, school socks and trainers. Fisher is wearing a school shirt. I am near their court so as to have a view of Sports Hall and small gym. This puts me in direct line of fire and after one shot Fisher says to his partner "You aren't trying to hit the teacher are you?"

11.16 Mark and John Adams on court 1 v Ginger and Danny. JJ and Taig are playing a game against a wall. Owain and Sean are seated and talking. Josh and Ben are playing in channel between 2 and 3. Court 2 has played throughout unchanged. Spencer has made a neat job of the mats. JJ and Taig are now hitting shuttle high above court 2.

11.18 Robert Fisher is 'racing' around small gym. John Wilds shouts at JJ to get off the court.

11.20 Danny has lost to Mark and John Adams. "Give us another game". Mark organises court 1 whilst John Adams and Ginger knock up.

11.21 Raymond and Adrian appear but Raymond refuses to play. Adrian partners John Adams. Danny and Adrian argue. Mark works with those on margins of court: JJ and Taig, Owain and Sean.
11.22 Josh and Ben are still between courts 2 and 3. Spencer is now repositing in a bed/camp made of mats. Raymond has joined him. Adrian is also part of this group. John Adams remains on court 1 and is playing 1v2.

The play continues in small gym.

11.28 Mark whistles group in. There is a tremendous din of whistles and calls. He organises run around game.

11.30 Run around/continuous badminton game ends. JJ and Taig are running around the Sports Hall, Mark stops them.

Another game starts. Colin's group, Owain's group, Taig and JJ join in. Sean and Nicky sit out. Games continue on 1 and 3 and in small gym. Josh has joined run around game. Ben and Darren play on court 3. Taig is eliminated and immediately starts to disrupt one of the lines of players on court 2.

11.32 Groups start to drift away from 2 to the other courts. Mark returns to organise. Danny offers to judge.

11.34 JJ and Taig are shadow boxing Ginger.

11.35 Mark announces "One last game" Acoustics in the Sports Hall are awful! It seems that the teacher's lone voice is minimised and pupil noise maximised.

John Adams now unable to concentrate. Mark polices game on 2. Colin and Ben back to 3.

11.36 In the small gym, the boys are now hurdling over the beam. The run around continues: Taig, JJ, Danny and Sean are last 4. Danny wins and runs out in triumph.

11.39 Games end.

Mark and I went to the Sports Hall office to chat about the lesson. He found the lesson very tiring! I told him of my experience last week. Mark thought he would teach rugby next week. He was concerned to give "a balanced PE programme". I asked how one decided on content and the difficulties democracy poses. We talked about pupils.
Paul Trowels, Trevor Lord and others had been sent to changing room because they did not have kit. Paul Trowels and another pupil had been stopped by the police during school hours last week on Queen's Common (Remarkably I had seen them at Queen's station on that day).

I left Mark in the Sports Hall and went to the cafe. There I noted some points about note-taking/making procedures: specific difficulties; logistical problems; write up delay; observation as a conspicuous activity - the more detailed the notes, the less involved the observer?

3.4.3.6 An End of Term Event

A bright, warm morning greeted those pupils who had turned out for the last day of the term (26 March). Bridgetown senior management had decided that, in the light of continuing industrial action, there should be no afternoon school. Pupils would leave school at the end of lesson four and third year parents had been invited to the school that afternoon to discuss option choices.

Mark's lessons three and four with 3B2 were the last of the term and my last of the intensive field work phase. In retrospect, it turned out that my first and last lesson observations were with Mark. On this final visit to 3B2, I joined in the end of term festivities.

On his arrival, Mark announced that today's lesson would be rugby. He told me that the previous double lesson with the group had developed into a most enthusiastic game of rugby in which he had been actively involved. John Wilds gave me his version of the same lesson in glowing terms. Mark had told the group that the final lesson would be a rugby game.

Four boys (John Adams, Raymond, Paul, and one other) arrived without kit and Mark set them to work cleaning sports equipment. They set about their tasks whilst the rest of the class, Mark and I played a game of rugby. In the notes I wrote up after the lesson, I made the following points:
Alan's group were also playing rugby this lesson. Mark and Alan decided to share the rugby pitch (half each). A number of 3B2 asked for a "real game" and complained loudly when they were restricted to half the pitch. Mark moved the group to the hockey pitch to enable a whole pitch game.

A lot of whingeing went on. Adam, JJ and Robert Fisher perceived themselves to be on the weaker team and gradually opted out. All three claimed injuries during the game. Eventually, Adam and Robert opted out completely. Robert disappeared into the changing room announcing "I'll have to go to the osteopath again".

Bickering was a feature of Darren's team. He was a strong runner but decided early on in the game that he would prefer to monopolise the ball. This provoked discontent in the team and fuelled Darren's isolation. At one point he sat down on the sidelines.

During the course of the lesson, I was interested to note the different levels of skill and games playing ability. Josh's group of friends formed the core of one team and exhibited a sense of awareness of team play that contrasted with the individualism of the whingeing members of the class. Josh, Ben, Owain, Ginger tried hard and their efforts seemed to spur Taig into action. Mark and I were on separate teams and notionally involved in passing and enthusing.

At half time, the two teams talked tactics. The game had been one-sided with Mark's team dominant (Josh and friends). My team lamented the unfairness of team selection. In the second half of the lesson, the more Josh's team played as a team, the more my team fragmented. JJ, Adam and Darren became more frustrated as the lesson wore on. Adrian and Danny, on this occasion were separated on different teams. Both tried hard as did Sean.

Meanwhile the cleaners were (not) at work. John Adams had arrived at the lesson armed with food and a Chelsea FC bobble hat. The four "no-kitters" were given the footballs to clean but only one of the four seemed to be actively engaged in the process. Throughout the lesson, John Adams provided a loud commentary on what was happening on the sidelines. Occasionally he would shout out "They're kicking the balls while I'm trying to clean them". Well before the end of the lesson, John had withdrawn his labour. Raymond and Paul were busy doing other things. Paul was happily riding his bike. Mark spoke to the cleaners on a number of occasions.

The game ended when Josh's team scored the winning try. As we walked into the changing rooms, John Adams was crying. He told Mark that he had been punched in the mouth by Taig because JJ had accused him (John) of breaking his (JJ's)
watch. Between sobs, John Adams insisted that the watch was broken when he was given it but JJ was saying that "you'll have to pay for it".

Mark dealt with this domestic dispute. Taig and John Adams shook hands at Mark's behest. JJ stormed off in a stony silence. Mark made a pretext for keeping John Adams back and then drove him back to school. Throughout his sobbing, John voraciously devoured an orange. In a pompous field note, I wrote:

John Adams's playfulness during his cleaning tasks and his happy wearing of his Chelsea hat were in marked contrast to his sadness and apprehension at the end of the lesson. Is this a good case for the non-applicability of the catharsis notion of physical activity?

Prior to departure, many of the boys in 3B2 were keen to get news of what happened to John. John Adams repeated the story a number of times. Danny and Adrian revelled in the newsworthiness of the events and they extracted from John all the information they could, including a response to the question "Did it hurt?" In passing, I asked Adrian about bullies in the school. He said there were lots "but you've just got to stand up to them".

Mark offered John the sanctuary of a mini-bus ride back to school. I joined them for what turned out to be a silent journey. At school, John jumped out and was encouraged to make his way home. Mark urged him to "Take care".
3.4.4 Talking With Mark

My sense of Mark and my presentation of him to you is based on being with him in and outside his lessons. There are particular rhythms associated with the teaching of and participation in physical education lessons. Teachers and pupils have to change out of one kind of uniform and don another. The time provided for such changing varies considerably. Whilst at Bridgetown, I spent a good deal of time chatting with Mark, Ed and Alan. After the first few self-conscious attempts to find common ground in such chats, the flow of events in and around the lessons I witnessed/observed/experienced/missed became the common currency of exchange. In Mark's case, 3B2 provided a particularly strong bond.

Whilst I treated our conversations outside the formal lesson time as a time to relax from the rigours imposed on teacher and researcher during lessons, they added to my knowledge of Mark as a person. I hope that during the course of the term we were able to chat and exchange information and news as friends. I want to present extracts from transcribed material of two taped conversations with Mark.

3.4.4.1 Talking About Teaching, June 1986

I arranged to meet Mark on 25 June at 1.30 pm. We went to the Year Tutors' room a few doors along the corridor from the staff room at Bridgetown. I had already, that morning, recorded a talk about teaching with Ed. In all, this meeting with Mark was the third opportunity I had to work through issues related to 'Talking About Teaching'.

Despite my efforts to reassure Mark, I sensed that he was extremely apprehensive about our 'talk'. I asked him if he would mind if I audio taped our talk and he agreed to this. In the preamble to turning on the tape recorder, we talked about what had been happening to both of us since the Spring Term.
These preambles, in retrospect, now remind me of the verbal distractions osteopaths use to lull clients into a naive belief that nothing is going to happen! I also recall the occasional conversations I have had with people who wanted to borrow money from me but delayed the request until some smoke screen comments had been passed. How 'natural' is it to have your voice recorded during the course of a conversation? I do not mean to suggest that I was trying to manipulate Mark in either of the senses of the term outlined above, but I wonder to what extent I was impelled to collect material for my purposes.

I noted at the time that Mark and I sat down to talk in the tutors' room at 1.38 pm. I have no notes of when I turned the tape recorder on but it was at least ten minutes later. In the recorded talk, we covered four topics:

(i) Personal background
(ii) Professional development
(iii) Experiences of teaching
(iv) Perceptions of learning and relationships with pupils

The transcription of the talk runs to forty-five pages of A4 and like all other material is available as part of the case record. I present segments of the material to let you in on our talk. In one sense, of course, the talk was conducted for your benefit as I envisaged a wider audience at the time.
We talked initially about Mark's early experiences of sport.

Keith: ...both Bob at Riverside and Ed here seem to think there was a strong family influence in their own growing up with sport. Is that the same for you?

Mark: Yes, though I'm not sure which came first really, whether it was the family interest in sport or whether my involvement came first then my family interest... but I can remember Mum and Dad going along to football with me at an early age and that's my early memory of sport.

After a brief interchange about family albums and photographs, I asked Mark:

Keith: How did you get involved in football? Was it through friends?

Mark: Yes, neighbourhood friends and an elder brother. I can always remember playing street football.

Keith: And did football become the main activity for you or were you able to do a range of things?

Mark: Yes, it was mainly football, almost exclusively.

There followed a discussion about school teams and Mark noted that he played for the primary school team for three years: "I was physically quite big for my age."

When I asked Mark about the range of sports he was involved in from an early age he said:

I only started doing anything other than soccer when I was at the secondary school, quite a lot later but, again, soccer was carried on throughout the year and that was the main interest.

At secondary school, for the first two years when he attended a grammar school, Mark played rugby and represented his district. In his third year the school was amalgamated with another school and became a
comprehensive. At this stage, Mark picked up his school soccer career and at the same time developed an interest in athletics.

This trend in the conversation seems to have triggered in me an interest in Mark's experience of physical education teachers. When I asked him about his teachers, Mark thought he could remember all the physical education teachers that had taught him: "I don't know if they influenced me in a positive way". Mark had no recollection of any negative experiences either.

Of his secondary school experience, Mark said:

I don't remember so much about the grammar school. I know there was a lot of rugby and soccer. We dabbled in cricket. We were restricted by the facilities; we only had a small field and a hall and I remember doing a lot of indoor lessons like box work and gymnastics. But I think that the programme was broader than a lot of comprehensive schools, including athletics and tennis.

When asked about extra-curricular involvement, Mark replied:

Every Saturday, at that stage we were doing something and by the third year at secondary school there was rugby, football and in the summer I was involved in athletics and also by that time, I was involved with the Rovers. So Saturday afternoons there were all sorts of things. I travelled down to play and Sundays sometimes for trials and things. The majority of holidays were spent there playing football as well.

The Rovers, a professional football club, had become interested in Mark following his selection for his county football team. Mark chose that particular club despite offers from other professional clubs because:

Rovers was a good side. It was a nice club as well and I enjoyed it and I'd been going there for quite a long time. I started when I was about thirteen so I knew everyone. For me it seemed the natural thing to do.

At this point in the talk, I moved on to ask Mark about his interest in teaching.
(ii) Professional development

I had chosen to talk about professional development with the teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside partly because of my own career development. I applied for a PGCE course in physical education because of my interest in sport in general and rugby union in particular. I even chose a first appointment that would be in close geographical proximity to the senior rugby club for whom I wanted to play.

In retrospect, this hedonism seems particularly cynical but at that particular time many successful university sportsmen chose physical education as a vehicle for access to sport. The postgraduate route was, at that time, a convenient staging post for students and institutions to achieve sporting excellence.

At no stage did I have a personal sense of 'vocation'. My questions to Mark and the other teachers about professional development were posed against this background.

Keith: Did you decide on teaching as a career way after you'd left school or had it occurred to you during school years?

Mark: I'd always thought that I'd play football but I realised it wasn't a certainty and I was lucky enough at sixteen that I'd got all the exams I wanted. I'd made a decision to go into football but I did not think what else I could do. From quite an early stage I thought it was something involved with sport and that seemed to narrow down directions so I wasn't too aware of what else I could do, not very aware at all.

Mark left school at sixteen to join the groundstaff of the professional football club. Four years later, he was released whilst "badly injured". No other club was "prepared to take me on until I'd passed the medical". By coincidence, a member of the same staff had been released a year earlier and had gone on to higher education. Although Mark was released at the end of May, he was able to secure a place on an ITT certificate course in physical education for the following academic year. In year two of his course he was able to switch to the four year BEd course.
I asked Mark about his memories of the course. His immediate response was to mention the problems he had experienced with regard to his soccer-playing ability. In his first year, after the first term in the college team, he asked if he could be allowed to play for an outside club both to further his own playing career and to supplement a grant "that wasn't very good". The head of department refused Mark's request "and said no and that was that."

Mark continued:

That was a breakdown in relations there. It was a very bad experience. I had problems with grades.

They tried to get me off the course at one time. It came to a head and I said I wasn't going to play because it was two years of wasting away really. In the end I said I wouldn't play. My grades were well above average and they found excuses to try and get me off the course. That went to 'higher up'. I won the battle but it caused a lot of ill-feeling.

For Mark, this became his overriding memory of college days.

...I always thought "well, I should be enjoying this. There's not as much pressure as I've been having for the past two and a half years". There shouldn't be as much pressure but there was a lot of pressure.

A short time later in our talk, Mark observed:

...When I came out of football I was disillusioned with the people involved in football and how unprofessional they were. How uncaring they were. And when I got to college I made the mistake of thinking well, these people are educated people and they will be caring and supportive. I felt very let down by that...

My response to Mark was:

...Do you think that affected you in the way you treat children? Because having observed you, for me the main thing that comes across in your lessons is the amount of care and concern you have.

This led me to introduce the next series of questions about experiences of teaching.
(iii) Experiences of teaching

Keith: ...I just wondered if that, in terms of your experience, had led you to view the way you taught in a certain way or the way you treat people in a certain way. Because it is obvious from your lessons that you do care about people in your lessons.

Mark: Yes, I always find it difficult to cater for the very able children and yet not forget the less able. I'm sure I don't succeed. In the group that you've been seeing, it's easy in that group because they're not very able. There are a lot of different personalities, people like Joshua - quiet, and John, who's exactly the opposite. But in terms of ability there's not a great deal to choose between them so in that case I know how to pitch the lesson. But I do find it difficult in some of the groups that we have not to ignore the less able or even the able ones. Who is to say that I should spend all my time with the less able and let the able kids get on with it? It's very difficult to know where to pitch the lesson.

Contained in my response to Mark was:

Keith: ...I wondered whether you were consciously aware of a teaching style you adopted for a particular group...

Our conversation developed as follows:

Mark: I don't think you can generalise and say that I have this approach for all third years [...] I think it's down to groups and you get to know the groups quite well, hopefully any way. You do need different approaches for different groups. But again, it comes down to personalities. You have to try and get to know the kids. A lot of the kids have a lot of bravado and if you can overcome that [...]?

Keith: Do you have a lot of time to get to know them [...]?

Mark: ...Well not in the school context but doing the extra work outside I get to know a lot of the kids that way. It can be very helpful. There are some disadvantages of seeing the lads out of school but on that level you cut through a lot of barriers that they put up in school, because a lot of them do. Perhaps they get to know me better as well [...]?

Mark's observations about the duality of his contact with pupils in and outside school led me to ask about any special relationship with the pupils he sensed because of his physical education teacher status.
Keith: ...I wondered whether the bond you had between yourself and the pupils was different than perhaps in other relationships between teacher and pupil?

Mark: I'm sure it is, because I don't think we'd survive otherwise. Well I certainly wouldn't, not doing the jobs I do because I have to drop barriers and some, I think the majority of kids, can cope with the dual image they have. Most of them can appreciate that. Some overstep the mark in school but I don't see that as a major problem.

In our conversation, I linked this knowledge Mark had of the pupils in a variety of settings with my interest in the ways he motivated pupils to engage in lessons. Mark's first response was that he would work at a personal level. With regard to groups, "A lot of it is down to the content".

I asked whether Mark used his own participation in games as a means of motivating pupils. He replied:

Yes, I tend to but at some stage, it's difficult to get the balance between instructing and going around coaching - if there's any coaching involved. I certainly get involved in tournaments and games at the end of lessons...

I recalled one lesson I had observed in which Mark had become particularly involved and I said that to me it seemed an appropriate time to have been involved. I then asked him:

Keith: ...Do you think that the way you motivate the pupils now is different from when you first started or is it basically the same person with small refinements?

Mark's reply was:

Well I think it's changed because I think when I came initially I did everything by the book but I think if I'd continued doing that, I'd have been dead and gone by now [...] or ended up having a nervous breakdown...You have to drop your standards initially and say what do I want to get out of the lesson. You can spend forty minutes doing practices in pairs and grids and say "Well, if you're good, we'll play a ten minute game at the end" and they'll say "well sod that, we're going now". So you have to change your approach. I think it's a compromise. If you say at the start of the lesson "we'll do forty minutes practice and a ten..."
minute game" and then if you say "well okay, if you're good we'll do a twenty minute game at the end"...

I linked Mark's reply to another issue I wanted to raise concerning the atmosphere of lessons and a teacher's sensitivity to changes in atmosphere. I asked Mark if he had a sense of the flow of a lesson and an awareness of when to change the lesson. He replied "Well, I hope so, but I don't know if I do but I think I do." After another prompt he said:

Well, yes. In my own mind I think there's a time to change if it's not working but whether I can think or know enough to practice it is another question. Because sometimes it's very difficult to know how the kids are going to react.

I was keen to get a sense of Mark's thinking about teaching. I used one of his lessons I had observed as a way in:

Keith: ...Do you think you have basic rules or guidelines that help you solve most problems that you'll meet in a lesson, even though you have not planned for them? ...I just wondered whether you were aware that there were certain things you fell back upon?

Mark: Not too aware, no.

After another prompt, Mark suggested that there were particular practices that could be used to improve games-playing. I asked where such practices came from - college? teaching experience? Mark said they came from a variety of sources.

In my own probationary period as a teacher, I had resolutely reproduced lesson plans from my postgraduate course and these had become the basis of my contact with pupils. I asked Mark about his experience in this respect:

Keith: Because many students when they leave college reproduce their college notes in their first year of teaching.
Mark: I'm certainly aware that I did when I first came here. Certainly for two terms I taught as a student teacher would teach. And then I found that no one cared anyway. No one decided to check, so I decided to be myself.

I was interested in what Mark considered to be 'good' lessons or series of lessons and how he might evaluate such lessons.

Mark: Involvement I suppose. That's the thing I strive for, is involvement. And I like to see the kids enjoying themselves because I think they'll learn things. I mean if they don't think they are being taught then they'll learn but if you start teaching, then a lot of them tend to switch off. Well that's not strictly true [...] I keep coming back to that group that you [...]

Keith: But there was an excellent example you see because I know what you're talking about... So, for instance, a good lesson with them, even though they're a different ability group, may have the same outcome as say Group One in the third year: they've enjoyed it, they've been involved and possibly learnt something.

Mark: I'd expect the Group One children to have picked up more technically. I think technically I don't teach that group a great deal because I don't have the energy to organise [...]

This exchange led us to talk about 'that group', 3B2:

Mark: I wish I could teach them. I don't think I teach them enough.

Keith: That group or all groups?

Mark: Generally. But I don't think that that situation is conducive to good P.E. teaching because we're off-site, the lessons are too short, the kids abuse the situation by taking their time to get down there. You have half a group ready to start and you have to get the other half out; to finish them early to get them back to school; and it's so much hassle at the start of every lesson. That in itself wears you down because if you were there, waiting afresh, the kids are there. Get on hit them hard at the start. It's a poor start to any lesson.

Keith: Yes I'm sure. They're out of your control and they can't [...]

Mark: They come down undisciplined, half of them are eating. They have to finish what they're eating and get changed.
I wanted to find out something about how Mark negotiated the ideal/real aspects of physical education teaching:

Keith: ...Did you find that you tried certain things at one time and they didn't work so you changed? Were there important lessons you have learnt?

Mark: There's a lot that I've tried before. I still think the practices are valuable but I no longer use them unless I'm doing coaching courses in the summer because in the teaching situation here, it's unrealistic. There's too much organisation involved with the less able kids, and I think that time is of a premium with us. I don't want to switch kids off by not getting them involved - just learning a practice for the sake of it. I mean, if skill is that important, I'm sure there are other ways of learning a new skill.

I used two examples from my own experience to highlight the next point I wanted to make. I hoped that these might facilitate a discussion about critical moments and reflection on practice. Mark's response was:

...there have been cases when I've felt sorry for kids after I've said things and I've had confrontations with children but afterwards I've thought I could have avoided and I try to avoid confrontations. It's not to say that I let things go but I think there are other ways...

Another problematic area in my own experience of teaching in the secondary school was dealing with the significance to be attached to showering at the end of the lesson. Mark pointed out that at Bridgetown:

...the policy of the department is not to make the kids shower because we don't have the time. It would take another five minutes off the teaching time...

Mark's reference to departmental policy gave me an opportunity to discuss the collaborative work of Mark, Ed and Alan as a department. In response to a question about this, Mark said:
Yes, I think we do discuss these things. I feel it's done informally. We don't sit down at departmental meetings and discuss the problems of going to the fields etc. but we're all well aware of it and I think we all experience the same problems. Perhaps I'm more aware occasionally because I don't have personal transport. I'm left to walk to the fields. Having been caught by registration and being caught by someone [...] I'm ten minutes late getting there and then I have to get back to another lesson. So it adds to the problem.

I think there is a fair amount of discussion that goes on [...] done informally.

This seemed an opportune time to discuss the implications of off-site provision for physical education. I asked Mark about the way he traded off the conflicting demands of his job. He suggested:

Well I see it as a big problem. I don't think that enough is done to help the school solve the problem. There have been instances where I'm so late getting to a lesson and so harassed getting there that I occasionally say "OK, I'll scrap the lesson I had planned and we'll do something that will give me a bit of a break" before I rush back to the classroom, get the science equipment out and do a practical session. Basically, it's for me to recover. I mean, what sort of way is that to go about your job?

I asked Mark about awareness of the difficulties of timetable arrangements on the part of those members of staff responsible for the school timetable. He replied:

Well, I don't think there's any thought that goes into it whatsoever. In fact when you're teaching in the classroom for the first two periods and then go to the fields for periods three and four, it doesn't give you a great deal of thought does it? Well, I don't think people are aware of what they're doing.

Mark's comments prompted me to ask about the effect of the 'Teachers' Action' on his current practice. I wondered how he balanced the conflicting demands of school, extra-curricular and community work.

I think there's no way we'll return to normal as such. The headmaster has been to departmental meetings and has asked us to consider doing fixtures etcetera again next year [...]

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and there's a certain amount of pressure to go back to doing that as school activities. There's no way that I can do that and my community jobs, so I've decided to withdraw from all my evening activities, community jobs [...] But that's not to say that I automatically accept the fixtures and clubs. It doesn't make it any easier, the way things have been dealt with...

He went on to discuss the allocation of scale posts for responsibilities at Bridgetown and indicated that extra curricular work in physical education was expected:

...the boss sees it as part and parcel of our duties. He would expect us to go on, needing to stay on and do extra-curricular activities.

Mark, in his even-handed way, noted that other teachers were doing well:

...So I think you have to question the value of what we are doing. If we are not doing it, then why do more of it after school?

Following on from Mark's comment, I wanted to raise with him the issue of curriculum and personal development. The following exchange took place:

Keith: ... if you were to sit down now and say, next year in order to improve my lessons I will do this [...] Is there anything you could do that would change [...]  

Mark: I'd probably change to a school which had all on-site facilities [...] I suppose having less commitment after school, outside of school would improve my teaching because my teaching obviously suffers from my being tired and doing all the community work. I just feel the biggest problem is overcoming fatigue and the stress of the situation here. That all detracts from the teaching. If I go in and not have to work in the evenings [...] Go in on a Wednesday morning, I can actually teach. I feel like I used to feel, where teaching is the focus of the day. Unfortunately, now, the teaching is of secondary importance with all the extra jobs we have [...] well, that I certainly have and that is wrong but the situation dictates it I feel.

Keith: So we're talking about teaching becoming a quantity rather than a quality [...] just turning up to do the work you're paid to do rather than being an enjoyable experience [...]
Mark: I do enjoy it but not as much as if I was doing it well.

I then asked Mark about opportunities to observe other teachers in action. He acknowledged that physical education teachers often had the chance to teach in the presence of other members of the department but group responsibilities usually distracted him from anything other than brief glimpses of what the other teachers were doing. In his first year he had gone along to watch other teachers teach.

We then talked about my presence in his lessons. I suggested that all three teachers must have felt under pressure having someone observe their lessons throughout the term. I said I would have found it stressful. Mark's response was:

I found it[...] That term you were in, I felt [...] and I was struggling to keep my head above water anyway [...] With your presence, although I would like to have been seen to be doing some reasonable teaching, I wasn't physically or mentally able to sit down and prepare anything special. But, what it did do [...] it made me very conscious of the fact that I'm not doing the job as well as I ought to be. I've been aware of that for a long time but I got to the stage where they were putting all those extra demands on me, so they must expect something to fall away from the teaching.

When you were around, I became aware of the fact that I'm not doing as well as I'm capable of [...] that I should be doing. And yet I thought that, well, why am I not? I've been considering for a long time to say, well, I'm not actually interested in the responsibility. I'd just like to go back to Scale 1 and do the job properly. That's really what I'd like to do but from a career point of view it'd be a bad move but [...] at the end of the day, I'm not going to have a career worth going on with.

In the face of this painful confession, my inadequate response was:

But ironically, I felt that I was privileged to watch your lessons because that group did things in a way [...] I don't think [...] many other teachers could get them to do things...

and I pointed out my experience with 3B2 when Mark was away.
I wanted to end the discussion of Mark's experience of teaching on a positive note and so I asked him what it is he would miss most about teaching.

Mark: Not a lot at the moment really. I can't think of anything that would keep me here. I'm staying here because [...] I made a mistake by not resigning this term and really I'll be getting out as soon as I've got something else to go to.

It would be the kids [...] It's contact with them that I enjoy. I'd miss some in the department a little bit. I think we've got a good relationship among the staff [...] I can't really say that this place offers anything I couldn't get elsewhere and the only thing that's kept me here have been things that I've wanted to develop in the community and that seems to have developed as far as it can go. So under the circumstances that's probably why it's time to go.

(iv) Perceptions of learning and relationships with pupils

In the 'Talking About Teaching' framework, I wanted to get to know about the teachers' sense of learning and pupil identity. Mark's community work placed him in a strong position to meet pupils outside school and he felt his acquaintance with them outside school was important. He also met prospective first year pupils at the summer activity weeks he organised.

With regard to learning:

Keith: Are there chances for children to talk to you about their interests, likes and dislikes? Do you have a chance to observe them learning or not learning as the case may be? Are you aware of moments like that?

Mark: Yes there are. I think there aren't enough moments like that. I think again that comes back to our situation with us always running from pillar to post. There are the opportunities to listen to them. Again, I think that's something I get out of the youth clubs...I actually have the time whilst I'm there. I'm there for three hours and I'm there if they want me to be. I think that's where a lot of chats go on.
Throughout the intensive field work stage of the research, I tried to consider the implications of my observations for my own teaching. By the time of my focussed conversations with teachers in June 1986, I was particularly interested in how teachers profiled pupils. I asked Mark:

...if I named a pupil, could you tell me how he learned?  ...
...Are you aware of looking at them, over a year, in a sport, in a lesson?...

He replied with the example of John Adams in 3B2. Mark could tell me about John as a person but:

I always find it difficult when we're doing P.E. assessments to isolate P.E. ability from the whole person.

In respect of 3B2, for example:

...if you have Danny Weaver then you can understand why perhaps he's not very good at football, when he's playing with boys twice his size, much more mature.

In the light of the absence and non-participation I noted during 3B2's lessons in the Spring term, I asked Mark about how he dealt with gaps in pupils' knowledge in a developmental scheme. Mark replied:

Well, you adapt. Yes, unfortunately there's a lot of repetition but I suppose there'd be some from term to term, from year to year and unless they were particularly sick they wouldn't miss great big chunks but I don't think this system can cater for those children.

When I asked if he noticed 'objective' changes in the pupils' performance, Mark answered that he was aware of individuals changing and becoming more skilful. He felt that pupils were also keen to share their learning experiences:

And the feedback you get from them, because you do get a certain feedback from the kids. They're keen to show what they have learnt as well.

Following up this point, I asked Mark:
...how suitable do you think the curriculum you have is to what the children want to learn, are going to learn, need to learn? [...]

He replied:

If you talk about what they want to learn, then I think you're restricted to football and American football. I don't know what they'd need to learn. I really don't. I think it's important for them to experience a number of different activities. I would tend to think that we ought to have a broader base for the first three years but I don't think that some of the other teachers would agree with me on that, because they feel that if you're doing that, you just dabble and don't get into real teaching. But there's so much repetition in what we do that we could afford to introduce other sports and activities. I think it would make it more interesting for us and probably for the kids. But whether we would have the skill to teach those other activities is another question at this stage.

Our conversation had gone on for almost an hour and I was aware of taking up Mark's free periods but I was keen to conclude the conversation with discussion of two issues: kit and discipline/control.

With regard to kit, Mark said:

I personally don't mind what the kids do it in as long as it's some sort of P.E. kit whatever. I'd much rather a kid did it in that than not do it. I can see why we do push the kids in some senses. It's very difficult when you're teaching in such large groups.

Mark thought the issue of discipline/control varied according to lesson content and group. He emphasised the compromise between the strictures of safety procedures in throwing events in athletics and the more relaxed atmosphere of other kinds of lessons.

We concluded the talk with mention of the seasonal nature of physical education. Our talk had taken place indoors on a very warm June afternoon and yet we were recalling events of a cold, wet Spring when the temperature, on one occasion, plummeted to -14°F.
Keith: What can a P.E. teacher do to encourage all pupils to be involved if they are fit and healthy? How would one stop large scale bunking off? Or would you want to?

Mark: Well obviously the lessons have to hold some appeal for the kids and I think that that's where we fall down. Kids have been turned off football in their primary schools or first year of this school, and you ask them to do football for another two years compulsorily... I think there are so many kids who don't have confidence in their own ability. You don't have the time to sit down and talk things through with them, or even encourage them. A lot of these kids, I'm sure they go through whole days, even weeks without a teacher saying "That was good, well done"...

Participation was an issue discussed by the department, Mark said. He concluded our talk with this point:

...Some people feel that our onus is to encourage as many people to participate in sport in this school as possible but others feel that ... we're simply providing the opportunity to take part and we shouldn't feel as though we've failed if kids at the age of sixteen decide "No, I don't want to take part in physical activity."

The 'Talk About Teaching' ended at 2.45 pm according to my notes. My final comment was "Thanks, I hope that wasn't too painful." The next time we were to have an extended conversation would be a year later when both our circumstances had changed. It seemed appropriate to me that we concluded our talk with Mark's concern for the pupils.
When Mark and I next met, we had both changed our career paths. Mark was now employed by Parkgate in the youth service and I had moved from my post in higher education to a new life style in the South West of England. Mark's move to the post and my move nearer to his cultural roots provided the backcloth to our focussed talk.

We arranged to meet at Bridgetown during the course of what turned out to be a warm, sunny afternoon. Our conversation took place on a bench in the school playground. Mark seemed quite a different person. He was relaxed, confident and showing real signs of enjoying life to the full. This time the tape recorder was placed between us on the bench. We sat looking out away from the school towards the chain link fence and Riverside School.

During this time with Mark, I renewed my sense of: his commitment to the 'community'; his joy of working with children; and the depth of feeling he retained for former teaching colleagues at Bridgetown. I was aware, also, of the affection in which he was held by the staff. His new post enabled him to liaise with the Bridgetown staff and retain his links with the school. In the staffroom, his presence was treated with a good deal of humour which included comments about his appearance (tee shirt, jeans, unshaven and suntanned) and a forthcoming field trip to Dorset. In passing, Mark mentioned to me that he was very busy, had secretarial help and was on a higher salary grade than when we last met.

In our conversation, I followed up issues linked to our previous talk:

(i) Teaching
(ii) Relationships with pupils
(iii) The Physical Education department
(iv) Curriculum development
(v) Personal development
(vi) The 'good' lesson
(vii) Learning
Throughout our seventy minute conversation, I was aware that Mark's changed personal situation had made it possible for him to act as a kind of chorus to events at Bridgetown. My sense of Mark as a chorus became clearer after I read, some time later, Charles Olson's Call Me Ishmael. Olson noted of Melville's use of Ishmael in Moby Dick:

\[\text{Like the Catskill eagle, Ishmael is able to dive down into the blackest gorges and soar out of the light again.} (1967:57)\]

In order to convey Mark's choric role, I present extended extracts of transcript material. Our first topic of conversation was 'teaching'.

(i) Teaching

Keith: ... I wonder whether you've eventually found a style of teaching or a method of teaching which was sensitive to age and ability? Are you conscious of having a style?

Mark: I think [...] I was conscious. When I stood back and looked at the way I taught and my approach compared to other members of staff, I was very aware that my approach was slightly different. But I don't think I ever sat back and evaluated my own methods. I don't think I'd have time.

I asked Mark whether it was then a case of fine tuning which occurred almost sub-consciously:

Mark: I think it was subconscious... with experience you get a feel of the group and of the children. You can actually anticipate problems and really prevent them arising. I think that was probably one of the biggest things I gained teaching here.

I asked Mark whether anticipation involved thinking about three factors: the environmental conditions; lesson content; individual pupils. His reply was:

I think that you always tend to be aware of environment although I know it sounds so obvious. I mean, when the kids say they don't have their kit, en masse, then you know
there's a problem like it's too cold or whatever so I think you're maybe aware of that at the start of the lesson.

Content? When you're dealing with the same groups over a long period of time, you become aware of what they can actually cope with and also different approaches. You can use the same content but maybe in a slightly different way. Some sort of different approach.

I recalled the groups that I had seen Mark teach the previous year. I suggested that he knew the groups, helped them and, bearing the John Adams incident in mind as I said it, protected them. Marks reply was:

Yes but I assume that all teachers [...] once you get to know the children like I do, would react in a similar way. I would hope so anyway.

We talked a little about whether physical education teachers had better access to pupils to get to know them. Then I asked him whether from a different perspective, teaching seemed easier or more difficult

Mark: I've realised how difficult my job here was because of the off-site facilities, the amount of extras imposed on me. I really do appreciate the job the rest of the PE staff are attempting to do.

We also talked about stress.

I feel less stressed in my present job. I think being involved with children is stressful anyway but I would love to be in a position, dealing with the kids in this school, with purpose-built facilities on-site. That would cut down the hassle enormously.

I took this as a signal to ask Mark what he would do differently if he were to come back to Bridgetown to teach:

Keith: ... how would what you do now differ from what you did full-time?

Mark: I'd probably come back on a Scale 1 but not be involved with anything extra. That's the only way. I was aware when I was teaching here I wasn't doing the job as well as I could and there's always a temptation to say "Right, I will go back to a Scale 1 and be happy with the work I am doing" [...] but then you get into career structures and it wouldn't be a good career move. If I came back, I wouldn't come back and try and spin plates like we spoke about before.
considerable time in the company of Bridgetown pupils outside school hours.

I asked him how he built up a picture of an individual pupil. His reply was:

I tended not to think of people purely from their physical sense. It was really their relationship with me. I would look at certain aspects of them in isolation but initially it would be how do I get on with him, how does he relate to me. I think that's the initial thing. It's interesting now that I've come back into school and I've seen a much [...] I've seen a change in these youngsters so much more noticeably.

I wondered whether the bonds Mark had with the pupils had given him a lasting relationship with them even though he had changed jobs. In part, his reply was:

...When I come into school now, I get such a positive reaction from the youngsters that I think "Christ, I've given all this up" but I tend to forget that when I was in school, I was often too busy to say "Hello John, how's things?" I used to try but it wasn't always possible.

I have always felt that there was something about physical education that made for potentially close ties between teacher and pupil. With my own tutor group in a comprehensive school, I often found that in lessons they called me 'Dad' or even 'Mum'. At first I thought that this was a slip of the tongue but when it persisted I started to regard it as indicative of a particular kind of relationship. These kind of memories stimulated my questions to Mark. I asked him whether relationships with children were to do with the teacher's personality as well as the subject:

Mark: I'm sure [...] I don't think I would have been able to have the same relationship with the youngsters had I been in the classroom. I think it was a combination of personality and subject. I think it was possible to carry over that relationship into the classroom to a limited extent but I
think if I had been a classroom teacher, no, I wouldn't have had the same attitude.

We discussed opportunities to talk with pupils during the course of the school day. Mark mentioned that one of the reasons he had chosen not to follow "the year tutorship bit" was because that "was really going against what I'd built up in the past four years".

This set me off on a line of conversation that sought to explore how sensitive Mark's approach was to individuals. Mark suggested that pupils had different problems at different times. My response was to ask him if he either invited comments from children about his relationship with them or whether he just listened to what they talked about. His reply was:

I think you tend to pick things up. I never really actually invited comment but I think you can sense [...] the children can sense how you feel towards them and you can sense that in the opposite direction. And I suppose, maybe wrongly, but I assume that in the youth club setting outside the school, they actually made the effort to speak but I think that must be a positive thing, positive response or action. I think it's easy for them not to speak to you outside of school [...]?

This is how our discussion of relationships with pupils ended:

Keith: ...if a pupil was describing you to someone who was not at the school, what kind of thing would he say about you? Do you know what he would say in terms of teaching style, discipline, appearance or interest? ...

Mark: I don't think I've ever seen it as an easy option. This may be wishful thinking but I just had the impression that they thought, he sets his stall up early on and if you stay within those parameters, everyone gets on fine and it's quite enjoyable. But if you overstep too often and too far, then he'll come down on you.

Keith: The feeling I had was that no child was ever threatened in a negative way in your lessons and I think it would be because the atmosphere was always so pleasant. I think if I was a pupil, that's the thing I think I'd pick up more than anything, the atmosphere. It wasn't stressful at all it was very [...] in difficult circumstances, outside and indoors.
There was never a kind of tense environment. So I think I'd pick up those.

(iii) Bridgetown Physical Education Department

In the next part of our conversation, I was aware of trying not to ask Mark anything that might compromise him. He had left Bridgetown in January 1987 and our talk was taking place six months on into his new job. I propose to try and convey the flow of our conversation by using edited transcript material without my commentary:

Keith: ...Was there a sense of working as a team? What would you say about the relationship of the staff in the department, particularly the male staff?

Mark: I think the boys' PE department had a very good working relationship. I think we all understood each other. It's very complex. You have to know the history of the department, which we won't go into [...] ...I think there was respect for each other in the department. We all realised that we were all very different and we seemed to complement each other.

Keith: ...Was there ever a time, say when you were team-teaching or when you observed a teacher or when you were observed by a colleague? Were you able to make comments, or receive comments about the way you taught?

Mark: I think that there probably was the opportunity to do it but it was never taken up...one person would be teaching in the gym and I'd be sitting in the gym office and I'd have the opportunity to go in. I'd quite often walk in on someone's lesson, have a quick look and come back out but [...] I'm sure if we sat down at a meeting and said how about doing this [...] as long as we had a good reason for doing it, I'm sure people would have accepted the [...]  

Keith: ... in some schools they have curriculum leaders. With your football skills it might be that you could say to Ed or Alan "well this is the way I would tackle it and it works because of these reasons [...]"  

Mark: I don't think that ever happened. In some of the sports where Ed has particular skills, i.e. badminton ... and we
Mark: Yes. Mainly, I was very clear about what I had done with groups in the past. If I wasn't sure then after the first lesson I'd have been made aware. What I did find difficult was to piece together what they picked up from other teachers. I think we could have overcome that.

Keith: I wondered what kind of thing caused anxieties?

Mark: I think we began to resent not each other but things being imposed upon individuals which detracted from what they could put into the PE department but we began to resent the boss's attitude towards our subject and that caused tension and we often discussed that with the group.

Keith: ...what could anyone have done to improve the situation?

Mark: We could have put some scale points into the PE department and not for pastoral responsibility or exam responsibility or community provision. For PE. There was a great deal of good work going on in the PE department especially when I first came to the school. But I just felt that people were throwing up their arms and saying "Why bother?". We've been slapped in the face so many times, we've really put in a lot of hours of effort and we haven't got anything to show for it... We all felt that we were undervalued... and whatever we did we would never progress.

Keith: Is there anything you could have done about that?

Mark: I suppose really we should have all moved to a school that put more emphasis on the subject.

Keith: You don't think you could have done anything internally to have changed?

Mark: ... if I came back into the school, everything I did I would commit to paper and submit it as a memo to the headteacher, to make sure that he was aware of what was going on... what I would do would be to try and push myself on the academic aspects of PE and come in with all the up-to-date information and thoughts...

But if you're seen to be academic and [...] I'm getting a bit bogged down because [...] Alan always had a very academic approach to PE and various other interests. It never got him anywhere. I just don't know [...] I think it's basically just down to personalities.

Keith: ... We talked didn't we about when somebody might have said "Well done, you've got through a week of very bad weather and you're still smiling." Was there any kind of feedback from the Head or his group about what you were doing?

Mark: Never.
Our conversation about the Bridgetown physical education department ended with a discussion of multi-site facilities. From Mark's observation that a lot of time was spent moving around the site, I asked whether physical education was a job for a young person. Mark's reply was:

Well I'm sure the boss would like them to be young and enthusiastic members of staff that'll burn themselves out within three or four years and move on. But I think that if you look at people, some of the PE staff that have been here some time, they've merely said "well, enough's enough". You do really the very bare minimum. And that's what you're paid for basically. I think that's OK as long as you do your bit when you are teaching.

(iv) Curriculum development

In the preceding section, I made use of transcribed conversational material. In order to change tempo and to pose as problematic the reporting of a teacher's views, I am going to write up Mark's views as if it were an article he had written about curriculum development. It is constructed from our conversation.

I am in favour of experimenting with curriculum design in physical education. Although I am aware of a growing interest in health related fitness and I have heard of alternative approaches to the teaching of games, I still find that I am pressured into delivering a skills-based curriculum.

Pupils at Bridgetown want to get on with a 'real game' in my games lessons. It is quite a job persuading them otherwise. During my time at the school, I have been trying to strike a balance between skills/grids and throwing them the ball and saying "well there you are, get on with it". Sometimes I take an 'easy' option and play two small-sided games in a lesson.
Bridgetown has off-site facilities and successful lessons for me usually coincide with those times when I am able to get to the games fields before the pupils. That is not always possible. When you do arrive late they give you a lot of stick.

We have regular department staff meetings. Recently, we discussed proposals for a written PE syllabus. The new head of department had a go at drafting a document but after two or three weeks we stopped discussing it. We were unable to agree about some basic approaches to teaching.

The Teachers' Action encouraged me to think carefully about the relationship between the curricular and extra-curricular aspects of physical education. Although I went back to working with school teams once the Action was over, I have been aware that I no longer spend the same amount of time preparing teams. I suppose my situation is slightly different because of my youth club role. That went on and I saw a lot of the pupils outside school.

As a result of our experiences in the Spring Term 1986 with bad weather we thought carefully this year about lesson planning. However we decided that we did not have sufficient indoor space to make such plans feasible. We also have a problem with equipment for indoor sessions. Last term there was a problem with 'lost' table tennis bats and damaged ping pong balls.

When it comes down to it, these small things mean so much. Curriculum planning has to take into account such difficulties.
(v) Personal development

Part of our update conversation covered 'personal development'. In the previous section, I constructed an account and gave Mark the first person pronoun role. I am taking that role back for a short while.

Most of my 'working' life seems to have been directed by chance. I was not driven by any particular vision of what kind of work I would do. My discovery of the hedonism of sport diverted me into teacher training and a first appointment. I performed so badly at my interview at the comprehensive school that I almost contrived to lose the job even though I was the only candidate.

When I talked with the teachers in the research, I was genuinely interested how they were dealing with their own personal and professional development. I was delighted that the tone of the second conversation with Mark was so different to the first.

No one had offered Mark career advice. But the decision to leave Bridgetown was made easier by his part-time work with the youth service.

...they were obviously keen to get me more heavily involved. So it seemed a natural move really. At no time in school did anyone ever talk to me about where my career was going and my strengths and weaknesses.

One compromise for Mark would have been for the school to endorse its community responsibilities and outlook by employing him on a joint appointment with Parkgate's community department. Although he had talked to the headteacher about this idea "there was never any positive response to it".

With regard to the problem of ageing as a physical education teacher, Mark felt that:

...if I was going to stay in PE, I would probably do a further degree and probably start doing more research and implement it into the school rather than just having the straight teacher's role.

... they were giving secondments but very rarely to PE teachers. I think really it would have been a case of getting out of the school and doing a course and seeing what happened at the end of the course.
A little later in our conversation, we got to talking about supportive environments and personal development. Mark observed:

I think the crux of it is to actually reward and value the teachers properly. I mean, they're doing a difficult job often under difficult circumstances. Make them feel that PE is on the timetable because it has to be. It's not all about winning shields and cups. ... It's just knowing that the senior staff value what you're doing and take more interest.

(vi) The 'Good' Lesson

In Plato's Republic, the question is asked:

Is there any point in having all other forms of knowledge without that of the good, and so lacking knowledge about what is good and valuable? (1974:303)

This is not a question I put to Mark and in all honesty I discovered it some time after our conversation. But I suppose that my reason for pursuing Mark's ideas about the 'good' lesson owe something to my interest in philosophical discussion. Plato becomes an accessory after the fact, but it is the kind of quote that could be used to some effect when physical education teachers have to go cap in hand for curriculum space. A little bit of Plato can go a long way!

Mark thought he would characterise a good lesson by the amount of activity and enjoyment evident and:

where there is actually laughter and a bit of good humour between the teacher and the children ... If you provided that environment, learning would [...] maybe I'm wrong but [...] I just felt it would happen.

In addition to my interest in Mark's responses, now that I come to look at the transcript, I think I was also trawling for quotes to support my 'alchemy of moments' thesis about physical education. I was keen to find out whether anyone else experienced what I called 'goose pimple moments' which occurred for me when:
you'd made all the points that you had planned to make or that the points that you wanted to make were made well and they seemed to be adopting those points and improving.

Mark's response was:

I think if you actually tried to make a teaching point, or made a teaching point and then at some stage that was put into practice, then that was nice. But what I liked even more was when the kids would say "look, I've tried it that way and I still can't do it in the game [...] Can you help me?" If that actually happens, you think "Christ, I'm actually serving a purpose here. They're coming to me because they want to learn." That didn't happen often but when it did, it was lovely.

I then asked Mark what he thought a 'good' lesson might be from a pupil's point of view. He suggested:

if they've actually enjoyed themselves. Having a pupil join in all these different things. I mean, sitting out for the whole lesson and watching may be enjoyable to some, for others it's total involvement and coming off the field sweaty and dirty and muddy. Others, they enjoy the lesson if they've managed to stay clean the whole time. But I think if there's some good humour and [...] What I tried to discourage was kids, able children, having a go at less able children.

If that goes on in the lesson then no one really enjoys it. It spoils the atmosphere and for the children. And I think that as long as they can go out and do what they can and they get praise for making the effort, and not told continually how bad that was or how bad they are compared to everyone else, then they're going to start enjoying the lessons. But that's difficult to do.

At this point in our conversation, we started talking more about learning. I mentioned to Mark the importance some American physical educators attached to so-called 'minimum competency standards'. I invited him to consider the implications of this for assessment. So we moved on to discuss learning.
(vii) Learning

Bridgetown already had experience of a CSE physical education course and was actively considering GCSE possibilities. This gave Mark the link between learning and assessment. He thought that practical competence was not essential as he was more concerned with a pupil's appreciation of skills and interest in discovering about them. In fact if a child left the school at the end of the five years and appreciated how difficult it was to acquire skill "then we had succeeded in our task".

I wondered how Mark dealt with apparent reluctance to learn as evidenced by non-participation in lessons in the form of no-kit and sick notes. I asked if threat was one way of getting results. Mark said that:

... if you threaten them and get them involved, they're doing it against their will, I don't see that they're actually going to learn a great deal or enjoy themselves... If you could offer other activities to the youngsters so that everyone at least for a few weeks a term can actually achieve something and enjoy an activity, then maybe [...]

... There's a lot of children who don't really seem to be very good at PE in the lower school but they flourish in the upper school where there's some sort of choice ... Quite a lot are turned off activity altogether by the end of the third year, if not beforehand.

I asked Mark if his break from teaching and the new job gave him an opportunity to reflect on teaching in a way he was not able to do whilst at Bridgetown. He indicated that:

When you're not actually involved in it on a daily basis, you think [...] you assume that the teachers have time to talk through the reasons for the exercise [...] why aren't you actually taking part?

You don't really have that time. It usually gets referred after a few weeks to the head of year and he sends a note home or whatever. But you never actually discuss with the youngster [...] or if you do [...] if you do talk to John as to why he doesn't do PE, he'll say because the rest of the kids take the piss out of him.
So why do they take the piss out of him? Maybe if you could take John away in a small group then you could talk about [...] negotiate with them about what they're going to do. If you can negotiate, then I am sure they would take part and maybe even enjoy what they're doing. It's interesting that John now goes to the sports club and is involved in all sorts because he makes that choice to go.

The time available to me to talk with Mark was rapidly running out. I asked him to put himself in the role of advisory teacher for the staff at Bridgetown and to suggest ways of dealing with the disruption by the weather to planned lessons. His advice was:

... We could do the health and fitness. We could talk about diet. We could do some ten pin bowling. I don't know [...] there must be numerous activities you could do in this sort of area, something different which would generate interest in PE. I think [...] You could take them into the classrooms and start talking about fitness and [...] I think that's important. I think it has to be done in the right way to generate interest and enthusiasm. Rather than religiously stick to four lessons of PE a week, probably just two a week sitting in a changing room or a classroom doing sports quizzes. If you planned that in advance, you could turn it to your advantage.

Mark thought that such pre-planning could take place during school holidays unless a member of staff was given specific responsibility for contingency planning.
"Do people who have lost their voice have to do it?"

On a bright but cold Spring morning, I am sitting outside the changing rooms used by Bridgetown School for its games' lessons. The changing rooms are off-site and, depending on the motivation of teachers and pupils, are between five and twenty minutes walk from the main school site. During my field work, I have usually arrived first at the changing rooms and awaited the arrival of teachers and pupils. This is the case this morning. I am waiting for Ed and the second year boys for their double lesson of rugby union.

The first pupils start to drift in some five minutes after my own arrival. From my seat outside the changing rooms, the postilions of the main group of boys are visible on the approach road to the playing fields. Shortly after this first sighting, two pupils arrive on the same bike (the kind made popular by the film E.T.). One is riding whilst the other (Ritchie) perches expertly on the rear spindle which seems customised for this type of transport. As the bike is parked, two pedestrian pupils arrive and the four set about devising games to pass away the time until the arrival of other pupils and Ed. Such creative, playful activity characterises much of the waiting time pupils have at the Bridgetown games field.

On this occasion the two walkers play a game of 'splits' with a penknife, whilst the bike riders set about a game of pretend shooting and gun fights. I find it particularly ironic that one of the gunfighters is a Vietnamese boy who has settled in Parkgate following his family's escape from South East Asia. I wonder if his play is a response to a universal urge to enact fights (however technologised), or an habitual mode generated in a violent society, or evidence of the impact of television on constructive play ideas. As the boys appear to play near me, I take it that my presence is not intrusive and that the
daily business of play can take its course.

Some five minutes after the 'official' start of the lesson (9.30 am), the main group of boys in the class can be heard on the approach road. With the prevailing weather conditions, conversations and some singing are audible. The second years are on their way! Two minutes later they are at the changing rooms and some of the pupils, with whom I have a nodding acquaintance, greet me and I them. Small groups form and I assume that these cohere around friendship preferences developed inside and outside classrooms. It is a time for banter and informal games playing. Some boys decide to climb nearby trees and I am prompted to think about some of the ethological literature I have skimmed through on the social behaviour of primates. A grounded member of the troop tries to sell me a rather grubby Smurf sticker "for charity". I decline his invitation because of implausibility (clearly marked on the sticker is advice for dental hygiene) and lack of ready cash. I make both these points to him and he moves off to try his sales pitch elsewhere.

Nearby, a pupil whom I recognise as a regular non-participant in the formal physical education curriculum, is chatting with a small group of friends. This pupil, Stuart, is small and bespectacled and is talking about his and others' recent "escape" from the top ability group in the second year games course. He opines that "the top group think they're it" and this draws from one of the group the comment that "yeah, if you miss the ball they tell you off". As this conversation ends they start to offer me a variety of excuses for not taking part in today's lesson. (In the event, only Stuart sticks to his non-participant role)

Ed arrives sixteen minutes after the 'official' start time of the lesson. He reports that he has had to organise cover for Mark (one of the other two teachers in the boys' physical education department) who is away ill and observes:

"What a way to start the day!"
He unlocks the changing room doors and encourages the boys to change quickly. As he does this, the tree climbers rush back to collect their discarded kit bags. Ever-hopeful, some of them ask:

"Can we do football?"

A pupil tries to negotiate his non-participation in the lesson:

"Do people who have lost their voice have to do it?"

Neither the pupil nor Ed seem aware of the paradox in this question. Ed treats this question and others with a cultivated deafness that is the hallmark of a teaching tradition focused on a curriculum model that provides curriculum content regardless of consumer preference.

Meanwhile, other pupils are engaged in the variety of routines that mark one of the unique aspects of the physical education lesson: undressing in public. The changing room is cold and windowless. On this occasion the floor is clean as it is the first lesson of the day, and fairly pristine feet come into contact with the cold concrete floor. At this time of the day hopping around is mainly due to the temperature of the flooring and the imperfect balance prompted by forcing feet into football socks. Later in the day, boys will be hopping around trying to shake off the chewing-gum like pieces of mud that find their way into the changing room notwithstanding teacher exhortation to remove boots at the door. (Such exhortation always leaves those pupils without football boots, who contrive to slip and slide their way through outdoor physical education lessons, a semantic escape.)

The ritual of undressing proceeds at a variety of speeds. The first to change today are those enthusiastic to get started and those who have come to school dressed for physical education under their school uniform. The motive for the latter group often appears to be a desire to participate although a small number of boys seem to use it as a way of dealing with (not) undressing in public.
Ed gives those who have changed quickly a rugby ball. They go outside and start an impromptu game. I pump up some rugby balls and decide to observe from a distance today. As pupils change, they go out onto the pitch and engage in varying forms of activity, some related to rugby others more to do with continuing conversations and news-swapping.

Twenty-four minutes after the 'official' start of the lesson, Ed leaves the changing room, calls the group in to him, says a few words and sets off with them on a warm-up run. Two slow changers are left behind. Ritchie, who has given Ed a verbal excuse for non-participation (a sprained ankle), runs after the group in his school uniform. Ed demonstrates exercises in the course of the run. The two slow changers, both wearing track suits, catch up with the group by careful orienteering.

The circular route of the run returns the group to the rugby pitch. Some boys are puffing. Ed organises the assembled group:

"Right, find a partner a similar size, then come in over here."

The boys are able to find partners without too much fuss and Ed then focuses their attention with some introductory remarks about today's lesson:

"Right, what we are going to do ..."

He sets up a demonstration with a pupil for a mauling/ ball-ripping technique. The boys watch and then Ed hands out (somewhat reminiscently of feeding time at the zoo) a ball to each pair. Half an hour after the 'official' start to the lesson the boys are involved in the first teacher-defined rugby practice. After a minute of this practice, Ed whistles and draws the boys' attention to points he has previously made about the mauling technique.

At this point, enter the almost obligatory external interruption ...just when the second years are beginning to 'work'. A teacher from a local primary school is returning some gymnastic mats borrowed from Bridgetown
Sports Hall. She heads straight for Ed and he spends a couple of minutes sorting out keys for her to get into the Sports Hall and giving instructions about where the mats are to go. She departs and Ed is left to collect the group which, during the diversion, have been creatively interpreting the maul technique. All but three pairs are either wrestling with or without the ball or kicking the ball.

Ed whistles the group to attention and proceeds to organise the next phase of the lesson. He numbers the pairs "One [...] Two [...]" until all pairs have a number and then:

"Right, listening [...] listening [...] shush [...] listening [...]"

He organises a practice in which a pair number one and a pair number two will be playing against each other. There is an audible mutter of "boring" from some pupils. Other pupils seem genuinely happy when they see with whom they have been paired. Ed then suggests:

"Quick, can we get through this? Then we can have a game."

He explains the grid organisation for the practice in the dead ball area of the rugby pitch and sets the game condition:

"The idea is to score a try without running."

The outcome he is trying to achieve is a more-or-less coherent form of a walking-mauling game. Ed sets up a demonstration involving himself and three other boys, the rest of the class watch from the side of the grid. He then sets up six grid games in the dead ball area but there appears to be some confusion about his instructions. Some boys think they can run and tackle and the ensuing grid games reveal a range of interpretations of Ed's instructions. The pupils seem to resolve the situation themselves and some can be heard shouting out "No running". During this part of the lesson, Ritchie, still in school uniform, has joined his Vietnamese friend in a grid game. He has made up the extra player in a game that was operating as two versus one. Ed returns one of the groups of four to their grid. Thirty-eight minutes into the lesson,
the group is working in a concentrated way on the task. Ed is moving around the games offering encouragement and making teaching points. He patrols the try line.

After three minutes of this activity, Ed whistles and calls in the group. Some pupils ask the almost universal question:

"Can we have a game?"

Over the years, 'having a game' has assumed the equivalent of parole in the penal system. In many pupils' experience of the games lesson, the game is the end point of a linear lesson structure that locates games playing (in the full-sided sense) as the outcome of good conduct and/or the climax of a particular model of the 'good' games lesson.

On this occasion, Ed explains:

"Right, listen please [...] listening [...] listen [...] hush [...] hush [...] what we are going to do is..."

He outlines the size of the pitch - a whole-pitch game - and conditions the start and re-start of the game to a one-versus-one chicken scratch. He draws attention to the maul practised earlier in the lesson. Ed picks the two teams by allocating a number to each pupil ('One' 'Two'). On completion of numbering, some pupils greet selection of friends in the same team with cheers. Some leap enthusiastically to embrace in a celebration of balletic proportions. "Twos" are given bibs to wear and are sent to the far end of the pitch.

Four minutes have elapsed since the end of the grid practices and the start of the game. It is forty-five minutes into the lesson. Ed emphasises the 'local rule' that four passes must be made before a try can be scored. Some of the boys are energetically involved in the game. Two minutes after the game has started, the first 'maul' occurs. The game continues: it is vocal and lateral. Ed whistles to stop the game and sets up a demonstration with himself and two other boys in order to make teaching points about the maul. The rest of the group sit down to watch.
This interlude takes two minutes and when the game restarts some of the boys, with an interest in the game and prior rugby experience, direct their team members:

"Oy, you lot [...] in a line."

A minute later a try is scored and Ed reminds the group about the four-pass rule. Most of the boys are involved in the game. The exceptions are a boy who bears a striking resemblance to the Milky Bar Kid (MBK), two of his friends and a boy called Donald. All four are practised in the art of being where the action is not. They are the obverse of heat-seeking missiles.

Ed is commenting on and directing the game:

"Well done, Richard [...] Nice bit of play."

Some of the team members are shouting "Spread out". MBK and his friends are talking, Donald is threatened by Spriggs (a neophyte bully). Ritchie remonstrates with Spriggs.

The game ends eleven minutes after it started. There has been one try and a number of attempted mauls. MBK and his friends are the first back to the changing rooms. I ask MBK if he enjoyed the game. His answer is "No" but I am not sure whether this is an emphatic negative or one borne of a reflex response to physical education content. I try to follow up the Spriggs incident:

"What was Spriggs doing?"

"He was trying to step on Donald's laces. I was trying to stop him."

The remainder of the group walk back to the changing rooms at various speeds, most of them immersed in chat. They have four minutes until the 'official' end of the lesson and with a walk back to school to undertake. They will have to change and get back to school in time for lesson three at 10.30 am. I help Ed put away the rugby balls and bibs. He and I chat about the lesson briefly and he encourages the boys to
change as quickly as possible. Whilst some of them would do justice to a quick costume change in the theatre, others are still changing when I leave at 10.38. There is no evident clamour for a shower. Ed and the pupils have been saved by the internalised bell of the school day. Neither party need confront the sheep-dip/shower ritual that can ensue at the end of a physical education lesson, so graphically enshrined in the film Kes.

I leave Ed and the last changers to the muddy, cold changing room. I have volunteered to sit in with Mark's third year group and so I walk back to school. I am intent on spending a double lesson in a classroom with this 'lower ability' group discussing their experience of physical education at Bridgetown. I am going to get them to write about their experiences as well.

What is about to happen probably explains the smile on Ed's face as I take my leave.
3.5.2 A Time-Lapse View of Ed's Lessons

I have introduced Ed in a different way to other teachers. In order to locate the transcript material of our conversations about teaching, I have included my term's notes about Ed's lessons.

I attended his lessons with a second year group first thing Wednesday morning. In the first half term 2A1 had soccer and in the second half term 2A2 had rugby. I did also go along to fifth year classes on Wednesday afternoons. I have very few notes about such lessons and saw them as an opportunity to be with Ed and to have an occasional game of football (always as a goalkeeper!)

The observation notes presented here are intended to give a time-lapse view of a term's work ... for teacher, pupil and observer.

15 January 1986

Arrived late at 9.20pm.

Lessons 1 & 2: Second Year Games


Midway through the lesson 11 boys arrived. They had been waiting at the Sports Hall for badminton. Ed tells them they should have been at the school gym.

22 January 1986

Arrived late at 9.30am. A wet, windy, cold day.

Lessons 1 & 2: 16P 5NP

Weather got worse during lesson. Similar process to last week. Walk to fields, wait to change, slow to change, into warm-up, small-sided games. Ed keen to introduce skills. This week: 2v1 pass to marked player who can shield or pass back. Aim: to attack line behind defender. Ed set up practice whilst group watched. Boys worked in 3s. There was one group of four. Ed moved from grid to grid making points
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>26.3.86</td>
<td>1&amp;2</td>
<td>2A2</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Games Field</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bright, warm</td>
</tr>
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I also went along to a number of Fifth Year lessons with Ed on Monday afternoons.
and encouraging. Boys tried to follow but often lacked skill/understanding to carry out practice.

As the temperature dropped and rain started, game introduced. Used rugby pitch, because other pitches unplayable. Some boys actively involved whilst others became gradually colder. One boy left the game because of a sore leg and immediately joined one the NPs in a yo-yo game. All 5NPs involved in yo-yo.

Lesson ended abruptly with a goal scored. No pre-warning.

Boys walked back to school, some asked for lift.

29 January

I get a lift to the playing field with Ed in minibus.

Lessons 1 & 2: Second Year Football

17P 12NP. Weather deteriorated throughout lesson. A considerable flow of sick notes at start of lesson. Already raining. A number of boys were sent to the Sports Hall.

Lesson started at 9.45am with 6P & 8NP. Very brief warm-up and then small-sided game. Some pupils arrive from sports hall in trickle. Many talked of desire NOT to participate. 3 pupils only had trainers. One was wearing white tennis shoes. Kit of various kinds.

Lesson restarted at 10am with warm-up/practice of man-to-man games. Then played 9 v 9 game with man-to-man marking. Weather now much worse: cold chilling wind. Some boys active but remainder getting cold. Two pupils (Skinner and a friend) went for a lap to get warm - when they came back they stood still!

I was aware of the 'foul' language of some boys.

The NPs are not allowed in the changing room (they are locked out). Today they spent their time playing penny-up-the-wall; pushing each other; writing on hands. They swarmed around the changing room door for warmth. I wondered about a hard core of NPs: what factors influence their choice? having a laugh?

The lesson ended at 10.20 and boys clustered in changing rooms for warmth. (No one showered) Some boys had talcum powder. Some sang!
5 February 1986

Arrived 9.15am. Beautiful, sunny morning, frosty ground.

Lessons 1 & 2: Second Year 20P 5NP

Started at 9.45 with cross country run. Ed led group for first half then let group race. I followed at back with stragglers, some were either extremely unfit or unwell. Richard Skinner in pain but finished run. Stuart took part (regular NP), Darren tried to hide. Pupils cut corners on run. Vince had stitch.

This prompted me to think about the fitness required of a participant observer! Also wondered about effect of weather on spirit. The atmosphere was well-mannered and even-tempered.

I refereed one of the two 5v5 games. Boys played well.

12 February

Snow still on ground. Arrived at 9.10am and was informed that groups would double up in Sports Hall.

It was not a day for notebooks. In lessons 1 and 2 pupils were offered choice of five-a-side football or table tennis. I sat in the small gym and helped to 'supervise' table tennis. It was a time for chatting and watching. During the lesson, Stuart (not taking part again) tells me something of penny-up-the-wall games. His story of the games included his eye-witness accounts of games played with £1 coins for £5 stakes. He said that he had lost £28 in one day at the game but had learnt his lesson! He now played 'friendly' games with very clear rules. In addition to table tennis and football, some non-participants include wrestling in the choice of activities.

26 February

Lessons 1 & 2: Rugby

First lesson back after half term.

9.30 No arrivals
9.38 Pupils start to arrive
9.39 Ed comments re behaviour

My notebook was locked away for the lesson! Tried to note framework afterwards: 21P 2NP

9.50 Lesson starts. Warm-up involves "Get into groups of x".
9.55 Ed demos pick up
10.00 Move to next practice - pick up and pass
10.05 Channels
10.20 Corner ball

In observing the lesson, I calculated that there were some 7 minutes available for pupil activity after warm-up: organisational points; TPs made to restless group; considerable time waiting for silence.

10.26 Late end to lesson. Ed says he will write note to French teacher for the class.

I spent part of the lesson talking to Stuart one of the NPs. He spent his time playfully wrestling, sliding on benches, racing about and eating peanuts. In the midst of this activity, he told me about his interest in martial arts (spirit combat) and his like of warm weather.

5 March

Lessons 1 & 2: Rugby

Prior to my departure from school, Ed had said "we might even be able to get out". The ground was wet and slippery. I made use of the time to write up some points:

1. What longer term planning takes place to develop with extended bad weather? (teachers, pupils, school, parents)

2. Given the teachers' action, how has leisure time been reallocated?

3. If results were part of the process of assemblies, has their absence for 12 months alerted other staff to the lack of extra-curricular PE or even the work of the PE staff?

4. The creative use of off-site provision by pupils to avoid PE?

9.31 No arrivals. The changing rooms have been left unlocked and I have left door open visibly for pupils. Will this change structure of lesson?

9.33 First pupils arrive "Are we doing Rugby today?" "Oh, good" "Are you taking us or is Sir?"

9.35 Late arrivals. The Vietnamese boy is changed and asks for a ball. He also asks "Are we doing Rugby because some have gone to the Sports Hall?"

Two pupils offer me excuses for NP.
9.37 Stream of pupils arrive

9.38 Ed arrives and hands out three rugby balls. To the rest, "Right, quick as you can." He interrogates the NPs: "Got your record book?" "Where is everybody else?"

A number of pupils say: "Mark Spriggs said..."

Ed sends NPs to get pupils from Sports Hall.

9.40 Pupils start to move out of changing room.

9.45 Ed ready

9.48 He calls boys in: 16P 4NP. Round the pitch warm-up begins: run/exercise/run...

At this point Stuart and friends arrive: "Sir, are we in this group?" They have a brief chat about their inability to be in this group.

9.52 Two NPs arrive from Sports Hall from their errand. Ritchie is playing on his bike.

9.54 Group return from warm-up. The following exchange occurs:

"Find a partner, please."
"Anyone without a partner?". One pupil says "Me!"
"Come with me then."
"One ball per pair, I am going to give them out... What we are going to do is very simple."

Ed organises passing practice. Note there is a boy without a partner yet there are 16 in the group! Ed gives directions. "As soon as I give you a ball, you may start."

I withdraw from the side of the pitch to a distance to observe lesson. I lean against an oak tree.

9.56 Activity starts across rugby pitch. Ed cries out "You cheat..." Another group cuts corner as well. A second group remonstrates with them.

9.58 Ed demonstrates a floated pass: "Let's try and keep a nice swing."

"What makes the pass easier?" The boys watch but seem restless. Re-start practices across whole width of pitch.
Ed stops them after one width of pitch and gives TPs (inaudible to me so far away)

10.00 Demonstration and Q/A. Then moves to tackle demo and Q/A. Makes safety points and the boys are able to give basic points (how have they got this knowledge?)

10.02 Activity restarts: "Find a nice piece of ground."
10.03 "Five each then change over". Boys work along a line. Ed moves around group. Boys are getting muddy.

10.04 "Once more each" Ed whistles. "Back on the line."
10.04 "Come on lads [...] Stop that! [...] David don't sit on him!"

10.05 "What we are going to do now is..." (At this point 3 NPs are playing behind changing room, some hide behind trees.) Ed calls Ritchie over and tells him to get everyone to sit down on the benches.

10.07 "Lads, at this rate we are going to get a five minute game." Some of the group act as policemen for the group.

10.08 Ed explains rules. Chicken scratch 1v1 scrum. Tackling and pitch 22m

10.10 Game starts and boys enthusiastic.
10.11 Game stopped for Ed to make point about space. "No lineout. Start with pass."
10.12 Ed conditions game. "You must have 4 passes before you score" (No side near scoring yet) "Great pass. ... That's better!" (3 passes and team passing goes backwards)

At this stage 4 NPs in front and 1 behind CR. (I have made a note to think about space given to NPs and the ethical dilemmas posed by their behaviour.)

10.15 Whites score try from five yards out. Three attempts at chicken scratch.

10.16 Try scored: "Well done, Chris" "Come on blues" There are now two NPs behind pavilion. Blues manage to pass ball for 1 min but cannot manage four passes. Ed counts and comments.

10.19 "Good tackle Reesy" (Reesy gets up and holds his head). 2NPs are playing a game behind the trees. A third NP joins them.
"Nearly there blues."

10.20 A dangerous tackle and Ed says "You know the rules".

10.21 "Last chance blues" A boy drops the ball and is called a "Nurd" by some of his team mates. The game ends here on this mistake.

10.22 "In you come... Super stuff ... Showers ... Now next week, let's have you here early."

The boys have worked hard and in the changing room, one of the boys asks "Sir, can we have a team now the strike is over?"

10.26 The shower debate starts: "Do we have to have a shower?" "Are you having a shower?" "Spriggs you told us..."

Some boys shower but most get dressed unwashed.

10.27 Ed walks through changing room. "Remember your towels next week." Conversations in full swing.

10.28 "I've given you extra time." (lesson ends at 10.28)

10.33 The boys are still changing. Ed chivvies boys. He is late for his next lesson and will have to write a note for the boys as well.

19 March
Lessons 1 & 2: Second Year Rugby 17P 4NP

9.31 First boys on the road. Small and large groups. Ritchie and Vietnamese boy on bike.

Whilst awaiting Ed: boys greet me; eat & drink; engage in conversations; play; discuss options and careers. Richard Skinner talks about skiing "Moguls are well brilliant." Some boys start to change outside.

9.42 Ed arrives
9.52 Last boy out of changing room is Milky Bar Kid.

NP's include Ritchie and Spriggs. During the time before lesson starts some boys practise and one boy is crying. He has been kicked but Ed did not see (did I?). A friend consoles. The pitch is muddy. 3 boys have trainers, 5 have tracksuits, 3 have tracksuit bottoms. The Vietnamese boy has a short-sleeved shirt.
9.53 Lesson intro: hare and hounds; stretch

9.57 "Groups of 3"
"Watch carefully we are going to do some scrummaging." "We'll build up slowly." Ed gives TPs for binding and cues pupils. Ed has two boys lean against him. Demos 2v1.

10.00 I volunteer to act as post for a scrum to release Ed. I work with two groups. Ed gives TPs for body position

10.06 Ed organises teams. "Listen carefully or we won't have time for a game"

10.09 Game starts with 2 man scrum. All boys seem to be involved

10.11 First try scored with a dive. Whilst the scoring team wait for kick off one experienced player (mini rugby) orders his team "Get in a line! Spread out!"

10.12 Ed organises scrum. Boys offer instructions to each other. Game continues Ed encourages and comments.

10.14 Game becomes static

10.17 MBK has a foot fight following a tackle. A 2v1 scrum, the 1 collapses. MBK's opponent follows and threatens him.

10.18 "Last minute" Some boys look very cold
10.19 Ed gives TPs for passing the ball, MBK has withdrawn - he is still being threatened.
10.20 MBK being chased! He alerts Ed and has long since removed his bib. Chase resumes.

10.22 Game ends and one of the more able players asks "Sir, are we having a team?" Ed does not hear him so he goes up to ask.

10.26 Two boys in mock fight. Shouts of "Ruck"
10.32 I leave changing room with some boys still changing.

I discover, in passing, that Ed has applied for another job.
26 March

Last day of term dawned bright and relatively warm. I arrived at school at 9.05am and checked with Ed that lessons one and two were on. I walked down to Games Field. I was at changing rooms by 9.25am. Ritchie and Vietnamese boy were not the first to arrive. I subsequently discover that Ritchie is away.

Pupils who arrive early debate what the end of term activity should be: pirates? softball? I direct their enquiries to Ed. Stuart is back looking suntanned after a holiday in Portugal (I wonder whether he won a fortune at penny-up-the-wall?)

Ed arrives and organises the group for rugby. I volunteer to stay with the no-kitters and clean hockey sticks. There are eight no-kitters, one of whom has a note. Ed tears up old shirts from lost property to use as rags. Each boy is allocated four sticks. I help and informally supervise. I note that cleaning groups reflect friendship groups and also reveal territorial habits. Stuart, Richard and Spriggs go to the side of the pavilion, Lost Voice and friend out in front of the pavilion.

The task is completed very quickly and so I ask the boys if they would like to complete a questionnaire. We retreat to the changing room where I explain my interest in teaching and learning from as many points of view as possible.

The group contains regular no-kitters: Stuart, Richard, the boy without the voice, and Spriggs. They start out on the questionnaire enthusiastically but attention and concentration declines rapidly. One boy completes all the questionnaire and talks to me about his interest in snooker afterwards. Spriggs wants to take his home to complete. I suggest that as it is the end of term it might be more convenient if I collect it at end of lesson.

No record of Ed's lesson. Approximately, 12 took part. On the way out MBK last one out. At end of lesson boys come in muddy and talkative. The cleaned sticks are returned to Ed and he takes them back to school in mini-bus.
3.5.3 Talking About Teaching

There had been plenty of opportunity to talk informally during the Spring Term about teaching over start-of-the-day cups of coffee, lunchtime sandwiches and after-school gossips. Ed and I also had time to talk in lessons in those buffers of time at the start and at the end when pupils were getting changed. There were also those days when we travelled down by car or mini-bus together.

But I also wanted to talk with Ed over an extended period of time about teaching. The first opportunity came in June 1986. I arranged to meet Ed at Bridgetown on 25 June at the end of lesson two. We met in the staffroom and then set off in search of somewhere quieter. Fifteen minutes and three rooms later, we settled in the Tutors' Room.

Ed had previously received a copy of 'Talking About Teaching' in which I outlined some of the topics I wanted to talk about. I had a spare copy with me which Ed used for the conversation.

In the time available to us, we were only able to talk about Ed's personal background. In order not to get in the way, I will report our conversation with Ed's voice only.

From an early age, I had positive feedback from home when it came to games and sports.

My father is interested in sailing and in sport in general, although he doesn't participate to that great an extent. I've always been pushed [...] well not pushed but helped. Whenever I've found an interest, I've always been supported. I've been lucky in that respect.

At secondary school, it certainly helped that my parents taught at the school. It gave me chances to use facilities that I might not otherwise had. The teachers there were very good and very supportive. I don't know really how much natural talent I had but I felt that I was being pushed. I became successful at sport and being successful made me more interested.
I was lucky, in a way, that I did not specialise in one sport. I found that I've tried and enjoyed every sport that has been offered to me. A lot of the activities I could do locally. The school had a large sports hall and two gymnasia but I had to travel ten miles to the nearest swimming pool and in actual fact I couldn't swim until I was fifteen.

Whilst I was at school, I was also involved with local badminton, tennis, rugby and sailing clubs. I made my own way to the badminton, tennis and rugby clubs but my parents used to take me sailing. They also drove me to badminton and tennis coaching when that took place out of town.

The PE teachers at my school were all gifted in some way. The head of department was a footballer and a good motivator. Another member of the staff was a good rugby player and pushed me in that way.

If you were to ask me if I modelled myself on either of these, I think my answer would be that I think you do certain things that have worked for you at school. But to be quite honest, I've never really said "I must do this ... the same way as somebody else". I don't even think I can remember back to my lessons or the way they were structured. I was too involved in what I was doing.

I do remember times when I was being taught things and times when I was actually involved in a game situation. As far as my memories go, I think the positive things I got out of PE outweighed the negative. That's one reason why I was pushed into PE and why I've continued to do PE because I've found success in it. I was used to demonstrate things.

The only negative experiences would be going out in atrocious weather and having to do certain sports. It could be painful in hailstones!

When I first started at secondary school, the school was a secondary modern, the PE curriculum was limited and we didn't do any rugby. We didn't start that until the third year. It was basically a soccer school with gymnastics. Those were the two main sports. When it was summer, it was basically athletics but with some cricket. Then we went comprehensive in my third year and it seemed to open up doors that might not have otherwise been opened. We were taught hockey, rugby, cricket, tennis and so the options seemed to widen at that time.

With my extra-curricular commitments, I didn't have much 'free time'. What free time I had was spent either kicking a football or going fishing. I didn't sit down and read very much. When I was a little older, I became involved in school clubs like the debating society and generally got involved in anything that was going on.
When I was at school I started to think about two careers. One as a PE teacher and one as a boatbuilder. I think if I'd failed academically, I would have gone into boatbuilding. But I did get on academically and went on to PE college.

At that point in Ed's story, time and the call of other duties truncated our recorded conversation. Although we had opportunities to talk informally on subsequent meetings, our next recorded conversation was some twenty months later in March 1988.

3.5.4 Update

I had spent two hectic days at Bridgetown and Riverside schools at the end of the Spring Term 1988. In view of our short conversation in 1986, I tried to ensure that we had an extended period of time on this occasion. We agreed to meet at the end of school and to talk in the Tutors' Room. My brief notes say we took a cup of coffee to the room at 3.55pm and finished at 5.15pm.

I seem to dominate the first few pages of the transcript which indicates my nervousness, I think. I was keen to talk with Ed and I think my ramblings must have been intended to put him at ease as well. In putting our talk in context, I said to Ed:

... since we first met, you've got married and had a baby. I've moved house and got a new lifestyle ... Mark's gone to the Youth Service, Bob's got married and has a baby; Tony has a baby on the way...

I then hurriedly moved on to talking about the teacher's questionnaire.
(i) Institutional Support

Ed: It's probably more informal than formal ... It depends on what you're going to sort out. I mean I can go to people and open up but whether it's the right thing to do, either for myself or for the thing that I want to be done, is a different matter.

Over the next hour we talked about a number of issues.

(ii) The Research Process

Ed: I think that people are always critical of research if it's not being done with them.

Keith: ... teachers could research their own practice...

Ed: We found something that works very well and I think it's been used on a number of occasions but I think it's even more used now and that is small-sided games ... You get a lot more from putting on two small-sided games and being involved in both. The kids get a lot more out of it.

(iii) The Physical Education Department

Ed: I can't even remember where I was in '86. Head of boys, I think I was at the time.

Keith: And there was still the debate about who was going to be head of department and what was going to happen.

Ed: Yes ... But now obviously I've got Head of Year, which although it should have changed my role quite a bit in the PE department, I still do a lot of the organising. The boys' side [...] I still play quite a role and that has been discussed in quite some detail with the hierarchy also. There are still frictions in the department and I'm the person [...] the 'go between'.
(iv) Extra-Curricular Involvement

Keith: ...have out of school matches restarted?

Ed: Oh, yes, they've restarted. They've been reshaped. We don't do Saturday mornings. It used to be virtually every Saturday morning. Now we play occasionally on Saturday but that's because I've the district matches. I've taken on less. Because I'm Head of Fourth Year, I take on the fourth year teams so I've done football and rugby and still maintained the borough cross-country and help out with the athletics. as well as just doing general school practices. We have a fourth year sports club down at the Sports Hall.

Keith: ...is there a different emphasis now to the extra-curricular, or a different feeling...?

Ed: Not really, no. This year there haven't been any cups or leagues. It's all been friendlies. I get very torn between wanting to do more and doing more.

(v) The Physical Education Curriculum

Keith: We talked about the curriculum before, whether it was going to be a written curriculum... is that going to be Sarah's responsibility?

Ed: Yes, she's written a syllabus in a brief way, certainly not a detailed one for each of the sports.

Keith: And the GCSE?

Ed: I went to Phase II with Sarah and she's now one of the leading people in GCSE in the area... I've done the anatomy and physiology side. I've taken on that side although I haven't been able to devote the time that I would have liked to and in fact Alan has taken over the present fourth year and is playing a much greater role. In fact he has written his own [...] 

Keith: ...has the focus of the curriculum changed at all or the policy in the last two years in terms of competitive, non-competitive, mixed-ability, mixed [...] 

Ed: It's been discussed. When in '86 or it might have been '85, I tried an upper school mixed options which didn't work. Basically the children that age, couldn't choose and stick to choices. Maybe that was a result of trying it the wrong year and it should have been brought in lower down.

Although we do a first year programme, which I think now is a very good programme, which has some mixed and we do the
The rest of the programme is very similar.

Keith: And was the First Year programme based on evaluation of other year programmes or was it an idea you invented jointly?

Ed: I think it had two ways of [...] Firstly, we recognised that swimming must be in, for all first years. That's where we started. Initially it was tied in with mixed gym but we changed that. Sarah brought in this ball skills programme where they could actually evaluate children and come up with a set of numbers or figures for each pupil which is needed and reported in profile. So that was done just to give us a ground work and it's been successful.

Keith: ... do you evaluate? ...

Ed: Not in a formal way, no.

(vi) Pupils' Interests

Keith: ... is pupil interest still as extensive, or has it grown since the Action stopped?

Ed: It grows from year to year. It also affects what we do in GCSE. It affects which subject we offer...

Keith: ... in that Spring Term [...] there were a number of no-kitters and people not taking part. Have you had any problems with that increasing, or decreasing. Is it seasonal?

Ed: It's seasonal. It depends on what group it is. It depends on what sport they're doing. It's very interesting. You can go to some groups and there'll be nobody, or possibly just one with a note, and yet I had a group last week where there were ten not doing it, eight of which had their notes and twelve doing it. Yet the next lesson, everybody was doing it. The same group.

Keith: Do you still use demerits?

Ed: Yes...
Hopes and Expectations

Ed: Recently, I suppose my expectations have moved away from this place [...] I can't see there being a great deal of change here...

I think the trend is more involvement of children [...] not worrying so much about discipline side of you must have the correct kit. It is more, get out there and take part in something, some activity.

Keith: And do they respond?

Ed: I think they respond a lot more to that than they do to a regimental type [...] you know, check the kit, register [...] I think at times I might feel slightly guilty that I'm not teaching them as much or I'm not talking as much to them. Yet at the same time, they're probably getting more out of it.

Keith: ... what about footwear? Is there a problem? ... don't people buy boots any more?

Ed: People don't buy boots. You get those who take part in football or rugby outside who have them, the other families don't have them...

... 

Keith: ... if you weren't to stay here would you be prepared to apply for a pastoral post elsewhere without PE?

Ed: Yes. I have looked and applied for jobs in that light. I think the thing that will hold me back will be my inexperience.

... 

...I still want to do PE. I'd like to be head of PE in a school where I know I could be given the right support and the right environment.

...

I would want to go to a school that was fairly well established [...] anywhere. I wouldn't want to go to a place where there was a great battle from the word go!
(viii) Forces for Curriculum Change

Keith: ... Are you aware of the pressures from outside the profession for change?

Ed: I am aware ... I still think that it comes back to the basic model, with a few changes but not many.

Keith: Do you have access to outside information [...] For example, the PEA's Commission of Enquiry into the state of PE in schools...?

Ed: ... there are magazines that come through. We don't have the whole range.

Keith: ... do you ever have chance to read?

Ed: Very little, particularly at the moment.

... The people who seem to want change or introduce change are those people who are actually not in the teaching side of it, because there isn't the time.

... Certainly the health-related fitness side has affected what we do. We do a lot more circuit training. It's much more giving reasons for exercise and the effects of exercise rather than no explanation. That certainly is much more evident now.

... (ix) Atmosphere

Keith: ... has the atmosphere of the school changed following the Action?...

Ed: ... now with directed time, we have a few volunteers wanting to use their time in sport...

... Keith: And how about the children ... did they go to clubs and stay there or did they come back to school activities?

Ed: Because we stopped Saturdays [...] I'm sure that there'll be a difficulty over the older pupils on Saturdays now that we have lost that. But midweek wise, there's no difference. In fact, I would say that the lay off for one year did them the world of good ... they realised that it wasn't to be
expected that we would do this after school. Some of them appreciated us spending the time.

Keith: ... have things expanded or have you consolidated on certain areas that were there before? ...

Ed: ... I think we still offer the same but in a more skeleton fashion. I'd like to offer more...

...

(x) Process or Product?

Keith: ... is teaching about the outcome or the way you deal with it? ...

Ed: ... it's all about working together.

Keith: Is that a personal thing from your own background? ...

...

Ed: It's quite interesting [...] people's comments to me also in private like "Oh, you're not like a normal PE teacher!"...

...

Keith: Do pupils need to achieve things? ...

Ed: It's difficult in some groups but it very much depends on the make-up of the group as to whether they can work together and produce a superb result at the end. Whereas some groups, whatever you do with them [...] you'll find that some of them don't gel therefore the end results will never be [...] even if you shout at them or take a more direct line, you still won't get [...] 

Keith: What reference points do they have for excellence? Do they have your verbal, visual demonstrations?

Ed: Yes, probably the visual. That's one area again where I feel fairly strong. I feel that I am quite reasonable all round and therefore can set a good example.

Keith: And do you think your experience to be able to demonstrate more and more effectively is because you cut out what is irrelevant and just do the main thing?

Ed: Yes.

Keith: ... what mental map do you have of your pupils and their needs and their achievements...
Ed: If you gave me a pupil's name, I could probably have quite a good picture of him and I think that's fairly important in my role as a teacher ... but I think if I wrote it all down on paper I wouldn't know [...] I wouldn't be able to refer to it as accurately as you can spend nearly all your time observing.

... if a child does something in one lesson that you've not seen him do before, then it registers.

... do you have a developmental idea of PE? ... what a child should be doing in years one, two, three ...

Ed: ... I don't think you can ever say by this stage you will be at this level.

Keith: So how do you decide what the appropriate level of expectation is for the pupils?

Ed: A lot goes on your initial sighting, your initial impression ... If they've progressed from there at the end, then yes, you have had an effect and you have a success.

Keith: ... is their performance and achievement relevant to something or is it just themselves?

Ed: It would have to be the pupil peer group, as opposed to [...] From years [...] this person was similar ten years ago [...] ... but I don't think it's a point to judge.

Keith: But ... you have an overall impression?

Ed: Yes. That's why PE or sport at this school has changed so much because I think that the standards have gone up.
3.5.5 Ed's Questionnaire Response: 24 March 1988

Ed supplied the following information in response to my request.

Year of birth: 1959  
Marital status: Married  
Present post (scale/grade): Head of Year  
Previous employment in education: None

Secondary school attended: 11-18 Comprehensive School

Higher education (dates, qualifications gained):  
1977-1980 College of Education, BEd (Ordinary)

Other qualifications (professional, coaching etc):  
RFU Prelim., ASA Prelim. Teachers, RYA Instructor  
ESBA Teachers

Sporting achievements/interests:  
Winner, county schools sailing championships. 20th in nationals  
Windsurfing  
Tennis - county junior squad  
Badminton - county junior  
Rugby - college 1st XV, local club  
Hockey - college 1st XI  
Interests - all sports!

In-service/special courses/seminars/conferences attended:  
Counselling, GSE PE, GCSE Phase II, School INSET - drug course
In your present post, what extra-curricular activities have you engaged in (school teams, clubs, outings/field trips)?

Ski-trip organiser, Adventure Week- Dorset- organiser. U15 Rugby, U15 soccer practices and teams, Fourth Year sports club, cricket team/practice, Cross-country - borough manager, Fourth Year 5-side competition.

What non PE responsibilities do you have in your present post?

Head of Year, PSE teacher, 5th Year Geography Teacher

Have you been involved in any curriculum development initiatives/projects in the school? (If yes please give details)

Yes CSE and GCSE PE; 4th & 5th Year Mixed PE Options. Introduction of hockey and bowling to boys' PE

What do you regard as areas of particular strength in your teaching?

Relationships with colleagues and pupils
Ability in a number of sports

What aspects of your work would you like to develop?

Become more organised! Given time, play more of a role in PE.

What could be done on an institutional basis to facilitate your work?

One base!
Time and expertise to develop new initiatives

Do you have any informal/formal procedures to make these feelings known?

(Not answered)

Could you summarise what you think the status of physical education is in your school at the present time?

Recognised as being important but not having (or allowed!) a driving force to take it forward.

Finally... I would like to know what you think the role of 'research' might be in developing teaching. Perhaps you could say something about your own experiences with me - your feelings etc. You might also like to say something about your own 'research' which goes on every day!

(Not answered)
4.1 Riverside Tuesdays

During the time I lived in Parkgate, I had only visited Riverside School once prior to my fieldwork. That had been back in 1978 when I took a third year cricket team to play against a team from the school. Thereafter I had passed the school on numerous occasions but never had occasion to enter the grounds and buildings. It was one of our teaching practice schools but because of its proximity to the college and the quality of its welcome, it was reserved for more senior staff.

I found it quite easy to be seduced by the atmosphere of Riverside School. The process started on my first visit in December 1985 and has continued throughout the research. I have tried to use this seduction to make clear some of my assumptions about place and schooling.

Shortly after my eleventh birthday, I sat and passed the 11+ examination that marked a watershed in my life chances. For three years, I experienced a grammar school education in a small Welsh town. It was a rite of passage in my community and a source of family pride. My 'success' had initiated a process of differentiation that used 'academic' achievement as a discriminating factor. Some of these memories were stirred by my fieldwork at Riverside.

Riverside is a fee-paying, independent day school. It also is selective in recruitment. In his letter to prospective parents, Mr Wells writes that:
Most school prospectuses are copiously illustrated: Riverside's - as you see - is not. It seems to us that facts and figures are needed to set out what the School offers; we hope that you will in any case wish to see the School for yourself...

You might, for instance, like to come to one of our informal Open Afternoons, held each autumn on a normal teaching day...

But we are also very happy to see parents individually - please ring the School to make an appointment. You will meet either myself or my Deputy, and afterwards you (and your son if he is with you) will be shown round our buildings and grounds - perhaps by one of my colleagues, perhaps by a senior boy. You will be welcome to talk with any boys or staff you meet, and to ask any of us whatever you wish ...

The School is approached by a wide drive. In December 1985, I noticed a sign on the lawns requesting 'Please Keep Off The Bulbs'. The main entrance to the school is away from classrooms and approached through double doors. Near the headmaster's study, there are seats for visitors. Rowing trophies adorn the walls in this area in addition to pupils' art work. After my first visits, I rarely used this entrance and normally went straight to the school gym.

In the first week of the Spring Term 1986, I confirmed with John, Bob and Tony that Tuesday would be the most suitable day to visit the school. My note taking/making practice was the same as at Bridgetown. My agreement with the School was to come and go as I pleased. Whereas Bridgetown's industrial action made me circumspect in my role as fieldworker, I perceived no such problem at Riverside. I was still aware, however, that I was a guest in the school.

The physical education and games timetable for the school week at Riverside in the Spring Term 1986 was:
We had agreed on Tuesday as the 'best fit' day. Bob and Tony were not teaching at the same time on that day and I could see similar age groups to those at Bridgetown. In order not to impose too much on Tony, we agreed that lesson four on Tuesdays could be my 'free lesson': a time to write up and catch up on any jobs.

The time line for a Riverside Tuesday was:

8.55  Registration and form masters' lesson or assembly
9.25  End of registration etc.
9.30  lesson one
10.10 lesson two
10.50 Break
11.10 lesson three
11.50 lesson four
12.30 Lunch
2.00  lesson five
2.40  lesson six and seven
4.00  End of school

The physical education and games programme ran for the whole term and each group had the same teacher throughout the term.
I arranged to spend lessons one (2H) and three (3A) with Tony and lessons two (2P) and five (2J) with Bob. It was agreed that during lessons six and seven I should move around the various activity groups to gain a sense of the range of work going on. The second year physical education groups I saw on Tuesdays, also had a second physical education lesson per week.

School started at 8.55 am and as with Bridgetown, my time-keeping was not as punctual as it might have been! My arrival times for the term were: 9.15, 9.15, 9.20, 9.20, 9.40, 9.15, 9.00, 9.10, 9.25, 9.00. I was concerned not to interfere with Tony and Bob's pre-school routine and so my late arrival allowed them and me to get ourselves sorted out. On those days when I did arrive earlier than usual, there was little action. I usually made my way to the North Gym to meet Tony or to await his arrival from his form tutor's lesson.

During the Spring Term, I gradually got a sense of the school and the teachers. In my field notes, I recorded details of:

(1) Starting the day

Tuesday, 14 January 1986

Arrived at school at 9.15 am. I met Tony in the staff room and he accompanied me to changing rooms. We chatted briefly about the structure of lessons. Year two get two lessons of PE per week whilst year three get one. In the small gym there is an emphasis on activity.

I tried to reassure him about my presence in his lessons.

Lesson 1: 2H North Gym (Tony) 9.30 -10.10 am.

(Note: there is a leisurely start and end to lessons. Boys change where they wish (in either of the North Gym's two changing rooms) with no supervision.)

Tuesday, 21 January 1986

I arrived at 9.15am. A cold, wet morning. I met Tony and he gave me keys to the North Gym changing room. I made some notes of questions I wanted to explore. These included: the development of the curriculum; school fixtures and support;
lunchtime activities; non-participation; expectations of pupils.

Lesson 1: 2H North Gym (Tony) 9.30 - 10.10

The lesson started at 9.45 am ...

Tuesday, 28 January 1986

I arrived late at school this morning. As I arrived there was an ambulance at the main door of the school. It was attracting a good deal of interest, boys were shooed away by matron. Inquisitive but not malicious?

Lesson 1: Second Year (Tony)

Volleyball 27P. I arrived before Tony and sensed real excitement in the group. He had set up volleyball nets before the lesson and this had led to anticipation/ excitement on the part of the boys.

(ii) Break Times

Break Time (14 January)

Chatted with Bob and discovered his interest in health-related PE. He is extremely enthusiastic about his work. We discover we have mutual acquaintances. I mentioned BJPE and my interest. I asked if College could be of help. We went to staffroom for coffee. Busy and bustling with conversation. Coffee brought in in jugs, staff help themselves.

(iii) Lunchtimes

Lunch Time: Fitness (14 January) (Bob)

Bob organises a lunch time fitness group open to staff and pupils. Also in evidence Rowing club and their four rowing ergometers. Bob's group has weights, rope climbs, stretching. 28 boys and 3 staff. Bob stretches. Athletes a small chatty group. Weights group worked in twos and ones.

Note the rowing group supportive and solid. They emphasised work rate.

Questions prompted by this session: can I map voluntary activities?
Lunch Time: South Gym Weight Training and Rowing (21 January)

60 people crammed into the gym. ST was working with mainly 4th yrs on weight and rowers were also training.

The master in charge of rowing was loud, aggressive and dominant. He bellowed instructions and exhorted more effort. Gave the impression of pupils as machines. At one point a pupil on completing his session on the ergometer failed to stop it correctly. I recorded the episode thus:

"Who was that?"

"Next time you do that I'll put you through the window!"

"Wait until you do some real work, then see how you feel!"

It seemed that the pupil, not the same somatotype as others in the group (he was podgier although wore rowing shorts and I later saw him in the 4th yr 8) was at the fringe of the group. The senior rowers worked to exhaustion on the ergometer.

These events stimulated me to think about: the position of rowing in the school; the authority of the master-in-charge; the commitment and response of pupils (their supportive/tactile relationship; understanding of rules and organisation of training). In a wider sense I wondered about how pupils learned to be rowers.

I noted that the m-i-c appeared to have remarkable dress sense: wide lapel jacket and unco-ordinated clothes. He appeared to have absolute control of the environment. He timed, noted and checked the performance and pulse of 3 rowers. All 3 started with polite chat and ended up in a heap! How can they sustain the relationship?

Lunch Time: Swimming (28 January)

I went to lunch time club with Tony. Teacher-in-charge Helen. 20 pupils & 3 staff. Both Tony and Helen keen to promote swimming.

Paul Fisher at the club and in playful mood.
Games Lessons

Lessons 6 & 7: Fourth Year Games (28 January)

I decided to have a look at the rowing today. A fleet of cars/land rovers ferried boys to boat house. Some boys cycled the 3.2 miles from school to Boat Club. Rain in the wind.

(v) After School

Cross-Country Meeting (11 March)

After fourth year games, Bob and I retreated to staffroom to chat. Tony came in and asked if I would mind taking some runners to a cross-country meeting. I drove five boys the six miles to the event and stayed there to watch. Tony very efficient in organising and immaculately dressed. Returned to school at 5.45 with three pupils.

When I returned to Riverside after the half term break, I felt that I was becoming familiar with the school. In writing up my field notes for my first day back after half term, I tried to summarise my sense of Riverside:

One of the features of the school is the vast amount of activity about the corridors and quadrangle. There is a considerable traffic of conversation between staff and pupils and it is possible to see most teachers involved with games or physical education engaged in long discussions or cursory comments with pupils. Pupils are keen to discuss games and greetings between teacher and pupil often take this form.

There are many opportunities for staff/pupil interaction. The South Gym on Tuesday lunchtimes is an excellent example. I have noted in my field diary the atmosphere of these sessions and once again staff involvement is considerable. I have been forcefully struck by the organisation of rowing and the authority of the master-in-charge. In fact, rowing provides an excellent example of the development and sustenance of an interest in an activity (by non-physical education staff).

...I have watched a first XV rugby game, had long conversations with Tony about athletics. I have visited lunchtime swimming, the basketball club in addition to Bob's lunchtime fitness club...
The walk from the staff room to the gyms is along a corridor/quadrangle that lists all games notices. Team lists are pinned up and left intact, although the boys do seem to put their own comments on the sheets. Staff often add their own messages to the boys. The numbers of activities and boys involved is striking. Perhaps I could get a profile of a 'typical' Saturday?

For lunchtime practices, the storeroom is left open and the boys take and return equipment they require. The boys are left to change at their own pace in lessons and although both Bob and Tony have their own starting procedures, most boys are in the gymnasium in plenty of time for the start of lessons. The lessons start as soon as the teachers are in their respective gyms and any latecomers are obvious. There is very little non-participation and it is not uncommon with the younger groups to hear boys with quite bad coughs trying to take part.

In the lessons, it is interesting to note how the boys arrange their off-court time. There is no disruption of the game in progress and very few, if any, negative comments. The store cupboard in both gyms provides a haven for off-court activity. Some boys prefer to sit on the wall bars.

There is a sense of comfortableness about the school and an impression that learning is not only possible but enjoyable as well. I have seen contrasting examples of 'care' for children. I noted Bob's treatment of Anush and contrasted this with relations between rowing staff and pupils.

Over a period of three years, this picture of the school provided a framework for me to explore the teaching of physical education. There were a number of contrasting experiences within the school that enabled me to focus my interest. Riverside visits preceded visits to Bridgetown each week.

There were considerable amounts of time available for talk at Riverside. As at Bridgetown, I tried not to be an inconvenience. Whenever possible, I tried not to engage or be engaged in conversations during lessons but such was the working atmosphere in the groups that Bob and Tony felt disposed to talk with me during lessons.
The on-site facilities at Riverside meant that both Bob and Tony were close to the staffroom for breaktimes. At lunchtimes, two sittings enabled staff to eat and organise a club or organise a club and eat. This meant that whatever time one went into lunch there were other members of staff available with whom to chat. Throughout the research I accompanied either Bob or Tony to morning break and lunch. At the end of the day, tea and biscuits were available in the canteen for staff and this provided a further opportunity to share news and exchange jokes.

Riverside Tuesdays ended for me at 4.45 usually. After school, I sat in the canteen or the staffroom chatting about this and that. As with Bridgetown, I found that by following the same class each week, I developed an interest in the teacher's relationship with his class. I got to know some pupils' names and was able to ask about them.

Riverside Tuesdays always left me with a sense of possibility. The task for me as researcher was to deal with the seductive atmosphere of the school and to focus on the teaching of physical education. And to retain a sense of proportion about my experiences at Bridgetown in a school stressed by industrial action.

As Daphne Johnson has suggested, although some assistant teachers in the independent sector were unhappy about their salary structure,

\[
\text{this was so overshadowed by the industrial action of the maintained school teachers, in pursuit of the 1984 and 1985 pay claims, that employer/teacher relationships in the independent sector appeared entirely equable by comparison. (1987:74)}
\]

Making sense of 'the best of times, the worst of times' was quite a challenge but ultimately beneficial in thinking about the teaching of physical education.
4.2 Physical Education and Games at Riverside

A definitive history of Riverside School records mention of "a playing field for the grammar school boys" as far back as 1878. In 1919, land was purchased around the school for playing field use and in 1922 a pavilion was built on part of the land for the old boys' association. By 1989, the school had some thirty-five acres of playing fields and a Sports Hall.

At Riverside, a clear distinction is drawn between games and physical education. At the time of my first visit to the school and for the remaining period of the research, John was the head of games. He was not a trained physical education teacher and his responsibilities were shared between games and the religious studies department. His main sporting interest was cricket. In the winter he taught soccer.

The teaching of physical education was the responsibility of Bob and Tony. Both of them had followed a PGCE route into physical education and both were accomplished sportsmen. Bob had been at the school longer than Tony and had served a short apprenticeship under the former head of physical education who was in post at the school for over twenty years.

Separate to and distinct from physical education and games at Riverside is rowing. The school had developed a considerable reputation for rowing and on some games afternoons could call on eight teachers for the sport. In 1986, the master-in-charge of rowing was an international rowing coach and his deputy was an Olympic oarsman. Some years earlier, a publication to mark twenty-five years of the Riverside School Boat Club claimed that the school had become "one of the top six rowing schools in the country with a record of success comparable to that of the traditional rowing public schools".
In the Spring Term 1986, my intention was to focus on the teaching of physical education. This effectively meant that I worked predominantly with Bob and Tony. Each of them had a gymnasium in which to work. Tony's home base was the North Gym and Bob's the South Gym. Between the two gyms was a small playground which had been marked out for paddler tennis. On the back wall of each gym there was a fives court. In addition to the playing fields, the school also had six tennis courts.

In 1987, the school opened its Sports Hall a few yards away from the old gyms and near to the chain link fence that was the boundary between Riverside and Bridgetown. At that time, the school appointed a former Army PTI as a sports hall attendant.

Bob and Tony worked together to develop a physical education curriculum that drew on their expertise. When I arrived at the school there was no formal written curriculum but both had clear understanding of the kind of content involved. Both were particularly interested in a health focus to the curriculum and had developed a regular system of testing and measurement of pupils. In the games curriculum, Bob was master-in-charge of rugby and Tony of athletics.

All physical education facilities were on site at Riverside. Until the Sports Hall was completed in the Autumn Term 1987, the Boat Club used the South Gym for training.
4.3 Bob

4.3.1 Foreword

When it came to allocating pseudonyms to the teachers in the research, it seemed 'natural' that I consider the use of the name Bob. As an extremely naive probationer teacher, I received enormous professional and personal support from Bob Mordell who was my head of department at that time. Since then (over fifteen years), 'Bob' has been a trigger for much of what I consider to be the craft of teaching. After a short time in the intensive fieldwork phase of the research, I started to think of using the name for a teacher at Riverside. He, like the original Bob, was at ease with teaching and made lessons happen.

4.3.2 Introduction

When we first met, Bob was twenty-seven and had been teaching at Riverside for three years. He had followed a postgraduate certificate in education course in physical education. His first degree was in Russian. He was also extremely keen on rugby and had had an accomplished rugby career that had been cut short by injury.

Our first meeting, in the nature of such events, had been formal but Bob had volunteered his 'help' willingly. In a short time, I felt comfortable in his presence and his lessons. Let me give an example of one of Bob's classes to show what I mean.
Tuesday afternoons meant one thing in particular for 2J - forty minutes of basketball with Bob. Teacher and pupils seemed to be excited by this timetabled encounter. In the other single physical education lesson in their school week, Bob focussed on skills and drills. Tuesdays were the days for cramming as many games as possible into the time available.

On this particular March afternoon, the end of the term is looming. On the last few Tuesdays, games have become more accomplished and exhibited a high degree of involvement. When I arrive, shortly after two o'clock, thirteen members of the class are already in the gym playing informal games of basketball in a mix of half-court, whole-court figurations. They have come upon a treasure trove of basketballs in the store cupboard and are making the most of their unexpected bounty.

Bob walks in a few minutes later. The boys of 2J and I look at him apprehensively. In the past, they have been 'told off' for entering the gym before his arrival. On one occasion, I had been in the gym when another group had been sent out - I had been there as an 'observer' and noted at the time the ambivalence of my position.

But today, there is no retribution.

There's no need for a whistle or command. The flurry of game activity has halted. I suppose that is what some of the prescriptive, how-to-teach texts call 'presence'. Attention is focussed on Bob.

In a clear voice, he says "Right, come in and sit down." Once the group is collected he asks where the rest of the group is.

"They have been to swimming club and they're late back", a number of boys report.

Bob looks at the assembled group and emphasises the kit requirements for basketball. From my vantage point there seems total compliance. (Mind you,
earlier in January, I had been in a lesson when Bob pointed out to a pupil that white socks rather than no socks were required for indoor lessons.) He follows kit comments with news of this evening's basketball club which is open to second, third and fourth years, "How many of you are coming tonight?".

As hands go down and the whispers about the club abate, Bob draws the class's attention to a mat under one of the basket backboards, "Take care there, that's covering a hole in the floor."

He organises the class into teams and divides them into 'shirts' and 'skins', 7 v 6. In the usual way of things, the fattest boy in the group, Anush, is in the skin team. He seems reluctant to take his shirt off which does not surprise me. A couple of weeks earlier I had helped Bob with the half-yearly fitness testing and measurement. When I came to do a skinfold test of Anush's waist, I found it difficult to give a reading (as it happened, I 'invented' one near to his previous measurement from the Autumn Term).

But Anush does take his shirt off and takes his place on court. The first game starts fifteen minutes into the lesson. At the tip off, Bob reminds the boys about the contact rule and recaps, quickly, the foul acknowledgement procedure.

Almost immediately, 'shirts' have a shot at the basket. "Beautiful shot", is Bob's response. Within a short time, it is an animated game with all the boys calling for the ball when their team has possession. Some of the boys exhibit tactical sophistication whilst others seem to respond to the scale of the court and the size of the ball by passing backwards.

Bob whistles loudly and the game halts immediately. "Stop. There's too much unproductive calling." He dramatises the kind of calling that has been going on. "Let's have five minutes of silent basketball. No calling, just use your eyes and get into space to receive the ball [...] and help the ball carrier."
The game is resumed. Bob starts a commentary:

"Bad luck, bad luck" as a shot hits the rim of the basket.

"Good cut, David."

Then in a loud voice, "I haven't seen a one-two yet."

The game is evenly contested. Bob has stage managed the selection to make this outcome a probability. Four minutes into the game, the shirts score the first basket and then a second. "Oh [...] beautiful".

One of the better players tries an ambitious pass which is intercepted and is greeted by Bob's even-handed response:

"Unlucky, Ollie [...] well nicked."

The game is still a silent one, except for the teams' cheers on scoring.

There is a clumsy challenge shortly after 'skins' score the third basket. Bob stops the game with a whistle and then says, "bad luck, Dave." Dave puts his hand up to acknowledge his foul. Bob's teaching and Channel 4's coverage of basketball seem to be paying dividends!

The game has been going seven minutes, latecomers to the lesson have filtered discretely into the gym and have taken their place on the wallbars. Bob whistles the game to an end, "Just hold it still. That was good play [...] you must still maintain urgency even though there is no noise." He proceeds to give feedback about the game.

The eleven latecomers are divided into two teams. These two teams, 'shirts' v 'skins', take the court for the second game. Meanwhile, the original thirteen take to the wallbars as spectators. Bob starts the game and continues his commentary of play:
"Good" [...] 

"Brilliant pass" [...] 

"Madness at the moment" [...].

The game has been going for two minutes when one of the 'skins' is fouled whilst shooting. Bob whistles the foul, stops the game and explains the free throw procedure following a foul whilst shooting. There is less than complete attention from the spectators on the wallbars so Bob whistles and waits momentarily for silence.

The boy who was fouled takes his free shots but misses both of them. The game continues for another three minutes until 'skins' score a late winning basket. Bob whistles the end of the game and organises the third game.

"Right, winners stay on and play shirts from game one." As the 'shirts' scramble onto the court, Bob adds a latecomer to the shirts team. A hectic, four-minute game of basketball ensues. Normal commentary is resumed:

"Take a foul there" [...] 

"Shot, Jamie, 1-0" [...] 

As Bob announces "Last minute", 'skins' score a second basket.

By design or good luck, his timing with exhortation is impeccable for as he says "Thirty seconds", 'shirts' score their first basket. This is greeted by "Oh, tremendous".

Bob whistles to end the game. The boys leave the court to his observation "What a great game of basketball that was."

The last game of the lesson is organised. Anush's team are slow off the mark and remain as 'skins' for the game. There are four minutes of 'normal time' left.
The teams from game three who served up such a 'great game of basketball' are dismissed as Bob sets up game four.

"Rest of you [...] buzz off." As they leave the gym for the changing rooms, those on and off court are told "Quiet for the start."

One of the talented players in the 'shirts' team, Matt, scores twice in a minute. Bob's response is "Oh, magnificent."

There is frantic activity. Bob whistles for a halt in proceedings. "Don't all converge on the basket". He asks the pupils to think back to previous games when they have worked on play around the basket.

The game restarts with a lot of activity but no scoring. In the last minute of the game, one of the quieter and less involved boys is hit in the face by a stray pass. The game stops briefly for a damage report. Bob checks that no harm has been done and says

"That's why we have to catch the ball."

In the last moments of the game, in true Boys' Own fashion, Anush receives a pass near the basket. For the first time in the lesson, he declines to pass and... he scores to everyone's delight. That is the end of the game.

As the boys leave the gym, Anush asks Bob about the basketball club, "is it still on?"

The boys from game four have three minutes to change. Bob chivvies them along.

Outside it is raining. Bob has Fourth Year games and will be taking Sevens practice. Almost half of 2J will be back in ninety minutes for basketball club. It must sound contrived, but Anush will be one of the first in the gym after school. This time he will keep his tee shirt firmly on.
**4.3.4 In and Around Bob's Lessons**

During the Spring Term 1986, I went along to the following physical education lessons taught by Bob:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Participants (non-participants)</th>
<th>Weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 January</td>
<td>2P</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>Cold, wet, windy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2J</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>24 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 January</td>
<td>2P</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>21 (3)</td>
<td>Cold, wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 January</td>
<td>2P</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>21 (0)</td>
<td>Overcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2J</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>23 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 February</td>
<td>2P</td>
<td>Minor Games</td>
<td>21 (4)</td>
<td>Cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2J</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>24 (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 February</td>
<td>2P</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>22 (1)</td>
<td>Cold (freezing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2J</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>23 (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 March</td>
<td>2P</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>22 (2)</td>
<td>Raining, cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2J</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 March</td>
<td>2P</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>23 (1)</td>
<td>Sunny, warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2J</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 March</td>
<td>2P</td>
<td>Padder Tennis</td>
<td>25 (2)</td>
<td>Overcast, warm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I also went to three games lessons taught by Bob and attended, on occasions, his lunch time fitness/weights class. I made one visit to the after-school basketball club he organised.

**4.3.4.1 Developing Relationships**

In 1982, I made some detailed notes of Michael Stubbs and Sara Delamont's *Explorations in Classroom Observation* (1976). The notes resurfaced when I was thinking about structuring my notes of Bob's lessons. Contributors to the book included Rob Walker and Clem Adelman. 
and it is their article that has helped me to order some thoughts I have about Bob's classroom. They suggest that:

the observer cannot draw conclusions about the quality of teacher-pupil relationships either from observation of the communication structure or from analysis of teacher-child talk. It is necessary to inspect teacher-pupil talk in relation to its overall context. (1976:141)

My feelings about my research led me to follow teachers and classes over a period of time so that I could have a sense of relationships. I was interested in classes as bearers of experience. In Bob's case, the Tuesday timetable enabled me to get to know two classes: 2P and 2J. Both classes followed a similar programme over the term. 2P had their lesson in the morning and 2J in the afternoon. By tracking two classes through I thought I might also come to know about intra- as well as inter-group differences in terms of experiencing physical education.

4.3.4.2 2P ... or not 2P

I have notes of eight 2P lessons. The class had an allocation of two single physical education lessons per week and a games afternoon. Bob taught both physical education classes throughout the year, and during games afternoons the boys were taught by a variety of teachers in addition to Bob. My sense of them as a class and Bob's relationship with them is thus partial. My account is based on the forty-minute lesson two on Tuesday mornings.

Here are some of the field notes I made.
(i) Basketball

14 January
Lesson 2: 2P, South Gym, 10.10 - 10.50am.

Basketball 26 boys. Bob called the boys in and said he was "disappointed" about the kit on display. Bob's lesson structured and interventionist (quite different to lesson one). Extremely effective and excellent organisation. Teaching points. Played corner ball and developed it.

The gym was divided up by benches. Four working groups. Bob was aware of boys' names and used them continuously. He has a strong whistle and uses this. Boys were active and the lesson is concluded with a whole court game. Bob asked the boys to remember their working groups for next time.

21 January
Lesson 2: 2P, South Gym, 10.10 - 10.50
21P 3NP

Similar framework to previous week. Gym divided by benches. Clear teaching style and interventionist. Extremely confident delivery. Developmental lesson content. Excellent working atmosphere and strong praise. Pupils worked very hard and kit as requested previous week.

Benches divide gym into quarters:

--- | ---

28 January
Lesson 2: Second Year Basketball

21P (note no NPs, yet many of the boys coughing involuntarily, Bob requested "Please don't cough for thirty seconds.")

Fisher arrives late without his glasses. Bob direct, didactic. Praised boys' work rate in previous lesson. At start of lesson he mentioned kit standards (one boy not wearing socks and one with wrong colour socks)

Gym organised as previous weeks with benches. Transition to benchball smooth.

For first part of lesson: quarters -|-
For benchball:      (two games across the gym)

When Bob moved into benchball game: used his strong whistle;
used Q/A; discussed problems. Throughout this the pupils
were attentive.

Later in the lesson he stopped the group for being too noisy
and told the boys of his displeasure: "I haven't enjoyed
today's lesson."

After the lesson we had an opportunity to discuss why Bob
thought it a bad lesson. He said atmosphere was not right. I
thought the boys were excited. Bob thought the lesson
suffered from: coughing; slow attention; level of noise; his
own mood.

As it turned out, that was the last 2P basketball lesson I noted. For
one reason or another, planned and unplanned, 2P and Bob moved on to
other things.

(ii) Diversions

On two Tuesdays during the term, Bob changed from his scheduled
basketball lesson.

Minor Games

4 February
Lesson 2: Second Year 21P 4NP

Bob announced "I'm fed up so we'll have some fun."

A game of non-stop cricket generated excitement and
spontaneous humour (throwing the bat at your team mates
accidentally!)

Crab football game. During this Bob spoke severely to one NP
with no kit about behaviour. He saw him about this at end of
lesson.

The conversation in the changing room at the end of the
lesson was animated.
And six weeks later:

Padder Tennis

18 March
Lesson 2: Second Year 25P 2NP

I arrived early at 10.00. Pitts was already there (ten minutes before start of lesson). When others arrive they accuse him of "skiving music".

10.12 Boys arrive noisily
10.20 Still changing although three boys in gym
10.21 Bob arrives and reports that the gym floor has been damaged again and there are even more holes in the floor now. Shortly after this, John arrives and says the gym is not to be used.
10.24 Arrangements are made to go outside to play padder tennis. Bob explains rules to the boys and organises the games.

Bob and I chat once boys have started to play. He updates me with news. The lesson ends at 10.50 and we go for coffee. Bob tells me that the headteacher has given the go-ahead for the pupil questionnaire but has suggested I put my name on it in case parents ask about it. In the staffroom it is report time. All available table space is taken up with piles of papers.

(iii) Testing and Measurement

Bob and Tony have established a tradition of testing and measurement at Riverside. Towards the end of the Spring Term, the second set of data are collected (the first in September). On three successive Tuesdays, after the half-term break, 2P were involved in testing and measurement. This change in lesson content also coincided with changes in my note-taking procedures.

I have included notes of all three lessons.
I attempted to write this lesson down as events happened to provide a temporal sequence for the notes. I left Tony at the end of lesson one just as the bell sounded.

10.15 Early boys raced into the changing rooms to change and have conversations. A time for acceptable noise, genuine excitement and anticipation?

10.23 Boys told to get out mats in order to start measurements of local muscular endurance (Bob did not use this phrase). Loud whistle from Bob brought class to order and around his feet. Exposition of lesson. Run cancelled because of weather and therefore today's tests would take place. Bob advises pupils to bring tracksuits for next lesson in case the run was possible and they could keep warm.

10.26 Paul Fisher and friend enter the gym, so group up to 24P. Paul, dressed in a school shirt complained about having to do "this fitness thing again". Bob commented that the lesson had been planned this way because he thought Paul enjoyed it so much! (Note: perhaps I could explore Bob's relationship with pupils like Paul and Anush. He seems very sensitive to their difficulties.) Bob's comments were to Paul but were audible to the group.

10.28 All the pro-formas are given out and partners go to mats. Boys seemed keen to start. All boys had their own pens to complete pro-formas.

10.29 Bob leads and joins in warm-up routine of stretches and activities on the spot. Paul Fisher behaving in a way to attract attention.

10.31 Bob demonstrates the exercises to be measured. He provides verbal and visual demonstration. Emphasis is placed on quality. The class is quiet and attentive during demonstration. The 'executive demonstration' is precise with key factors/points emphasised.

10.32 Activity group one exercise for one minute. Press-ups. End of time signalled by loud whistle from Bob.
Bob discusses the examples of press-ups he has seen and comments on some of the scores. He starts his comments with "Pay attention, boys". He explains that high scores can be misleading yet helpful. High scores mean incomplete press-up yet still remain a point of relative comparison if the same style is used in subsequent tests. "... so don't go comparing yourself with the person next to you" Bob proceeds to ask scores from group one. "How many scored [...] over forty? [...] Excellent [...] Thirties? [...] Very Good [...] Twenties? [...] OK that's fine".

Bob starts group two on press-ups. After a short time he observes "Superb press-ups that side" pointing to one side of the gym. He then moves round the class during the one minute activity period, encouraging each pupil working.

End of press-ups and Bob says "excellent". There is a ripple of noise as partners compare scores and experiences. Bob compliments the group on the quality of work and emphasises the need for quality. "Don't skip on the quality." He identifies two problems: the ethics of cheating and personal loss; and the danger of injury.

Bob verbally, then visually, demonstrates sit-ups. Key factors are emphasised and safety stressed. Group one do sit-ups and Bob moves round class to encourage individuals. Paul Green who is Paul Fisher's partner works extremely hard and is involving Paul Fisher in the effort. Throughout the minute's activity, Bob gives feedback about the effort expended and the time remaining.

Whistle to end. Bob says "very, very good".

Group two starts and Bob sets Paul Fisher a target of 25 sit-ups. Within seconds he has changed this to 20. Paul Green works hard at encouraging Paul Fisher. Paul Fisher works very hard following his partner's encouragement.

Bob's first words are to Paul Fisher, "How many, Paul?" "22". In a private aside, Bob says to Paul "Excellent".
10.42 Bob demonstrates squat thrusts. "Watch carefully, boys". Cheating is discussed and a standardised squat thrust is demonstrated. Bob summarises key points, "Backside low, long range of movement, knees to elbows, weight on arms". He then warns them, "Now listen [...] it's going to hurt but keep pushing." And later "It is a question of whether you stop or try to push through".

10.43 Group one starts. "We are after 60." Low whistle to end. "Any sixties? [...] fifties? [...] well done [...] forty plus? [...] excellent".

10.45 Group two ready to start. "Try to beat your partner" (note competition with others rather than relative to importance of own effort).

Whilst this group is working, Bob comes over to chat for the first time since the start of the lesson. I have my notebook open. I comment on the responsible behaviour of the boys. Low whistle to end the minute. "Sixties? [...] Sixty-three, excellent [...] Fifties? [...] very, very good [...] excellent".

10.46 Bob concludes the lesson. One partner hands in the pro-formas while the other puts the mat away. "Queue up sensibly those who are putting the mats away."

10.47 Boys start to leave the gym and conversations commence.

10.50 Bell sounds for break with most boys still undressed.

Observational Notes: I have become interested in the flow of activity in the lesson and decided to try to follow Bob through the lesson. I had my notebook open throughout the lesson and tried to record in longhand what was happening. My record is selective and partial.

Whilst concentrating on Bob, I was aware of the work of the boys and tried to follow Paul Fisher through with his partner. Paul worked very hard and seemed pleased with his effort at the end of the lesson.

The boys recorded their own scores or had their partners score for them. One boy had with him in the gym a biro, a pencil, a ruler and a bottle of Tippex.

The lesson went smoothly. All boys wore appropriate kit.
4 March
Lesson 2: Second Year 22P 2NP

10.13 Bell rings, no one in changing room.
10.16 First boy arrives
10.17 More boys arrive and conversations start.
10.18 One boy asks me "Do you know if we are doing the run?" My reply is "I do not know, sorry."

10.20 Bob arrives and jokes about run in the rain. 2NPs await him. Despite not feeling well he manages a moment of suspense when he implies possibility of run. Relief at announcement of indoor session. Bob tells me and subsequently the boys that he is not feeling very well. He arranges for the two NPs to set box top for him: "Put the top there for sir".

10.22 Basic organisation of equipment starts. "Chaps, when you are ready..."

10.24 Paul arrives in the gym in his school shirt and socks. Bob is organising mats and benches. He directs boys. Small groups of boys stand and talk whilst others try out their flexibility.

10.25 Bob whistles the boys in. He intervenes over one piece of behaviour: "See me after and we will sort something out."

10.26 Verbal exposition of flexibility. "I would like you to test each other...but it must be accurate... Now, watch. Let's assume..." Bob shows how to set up a metre rule on the bench. He shows hamstring and shoulder stretch for measurement. "Now watch this, this will be important." He sets up a careful demo and says "All turn round and look." Bob cues boys in to specific points. "Are you all clear?" Bob indicates that 10 minutes allocated to warm-up and shows shoulder stretch. He then adds "listen, the important thing is you must be careful." Demonstrates hamstring stretch. "Watch carefully."

10.32 "Try them out, off you go." Bob walks round gym to give out sheets and offers individual comments about performance. Boys go off and follow Bob's instructions. Implicit responsibility. The only exception appears to be Paul Fisher.
10.34  Bob approaches Paul, "Paul, here is your form. [...] You must be careful with him." As Bob arrives Paul is almost wrestling with his plump partner trying to stretch him.

Bob moves around gym. Paul stands on his partner's head to encourage stretch of shoulders!

10.36  Paul being stretched.

10.37  Bob loud whistle. "We are starting testing in three or four minutes." Warm-up continues.

10.38  Bob lets Paul demonstrate 180° shoulder mobility. Paul converses with Bob and after a while Bob escapes.

10.39  A second pupil comes up to Bob to discuss flexibility.

10.42  First boys arrive with completed sheets. Bob suggests they try to improve their score. They want to show Bob their 180° flexibility. (At this point I accompany sick boy to changing room: flu/cold?)

10.49  Bob whistles boys in to sit down and compare performance. Bob calls out group of individuals. Gives public account of their efforts and praises them. Talk through scores whilst group sits quietly.

10.55  Bell rings with some boys still to be discussed. Bob "I am sorry to have kept you till the bell."

At the end of the lesson Bob speaks to Colin (see 10.25): "You're lucky my mood is better at the end than at the start. I'm fed up of talking to you. Any more and your life will be unpleasant."

11 March

Lesson Two: 23P 1NP

I arrived late at Bob's lesson after helping Tony mark out the assessment run. It was 10.30 and by this stage the boys were in the gym with Bob preparing to start work. Bob had his usual box top seat from which he talked to the group. He outlines the purpose of the lesson:
1. to measure resting pulse rate
2. to fill in distance covered in Cooper run
3. to play crab football

Bob gets the boys to lie on the floor prior to taking pulse rate. He instructs them how and where to take their pulses. After some five minutes of quiet and patient lying, Bob describes exactly how to calculate resting pulse rate. He checks that everyone can feel a pulse. Three cannot and he takes time to show them. Paul Fisher is quiet and is still wearing his school shirt. Pulse is taken once and Bob asks for scores. Paul Fisher scores 56 and Bob congratulates him "That means on this measure of fitness, Paul, you are very fit". Paul smiles and repeats his score to Paul Green.

After this, Bob gets the group to fill in the details on their pro-formas of their pulse and Cooper run. There is excitement and lively interest as the boys compare their performance with the previous term. Lots of questions are generated and Bob is asked to explain. He decides to make two important general points "and then I will deal with the individual questions".

He explains that variations in scores could be caused by:

1. environmental conditions
2. the variability of measuring local muscular endurance and the need to standardise measurement.

Bob then takes a few individual questions before collecting in the pro-formas. I collect up the previous terms pro-formas that were used for comparison. Bob says to the class of me "Give the forms to sir."

The whole group is organised for crab football. Note that before the game can take place, Bob has to cover the most recent holes in the floor with mats.

A whole class game of crab football, first goal wins game.

At the end of the lesson, Bob advertises the Tuesday evening basketball club. Seven boys try to snatch a game of basketball at the end of the lesson. Bob tells them to go and get changed. One of them asks if he can play basketball over the breaktime. Bob says he cannot for safety reasons.
4.3.4.3 2J

I have already introduced 2J to you. They and Bob met each Tuesday at 2.00pm. There are gaps in my observation notes of 2J. Relaxation after lunch or participation in lessons accounts for such gaps. Similar gaps also occurred after lunch at Bridgetown. All my notes of 2J's lessons, except one, involved basketball.

In their second physical education lesson that took place each week out of my gaze, Bob either taught basketball 'skills' or followed up the testing and measurement. One Tuesday afternoon was taken up with skinfold, height and weight measurements. That is the occasion when I did some creative accounting with Anush's score on skinfold measurement.

By the end of term, the sense I had of 2J was out of all proportion to the volume of notes I had about them. I too was carried with their excitement about basketball. On two occasions I refereed games in their lesson and on the last day of term, I taught them myself.

The relationship Bob had with this group reminded me very much of the relationship Mark had with 3B2 at Bridgetown. At Riverside, I got to know more names in 2J than in any other group. One outcome was that 2J's lessons both stimulated conversation and, by following on from lunch time, also offered opportunities for extended conversations.

My lesson notes contain the following:

(i) Basketball

14 January

Lesson 5: 2J South Gym 2.00 - 2.40pm

from pupils. Clear organisational instructions. Activity started at 2.18.

I chatted with Bob about teaching methods and was impressed by his emphasis on learning.

28 January

Lesson 5: Second Year Basketball

23P 2NP. Bob gave verbal exposition. Teams for the games were numbered and each team had 2 games. Basic points were made before and during games. Very explicit instructions, structure and expectations. Boys worked very hard. At end of lesson Bob recruited more boys to Tuesday basketball club.

4 February

Lesson 5: Second Year Basketball

24P 4NP The Mars Bar Lesson. Bob had basketball lesson on lay up. Had offered reward of a Mars Bar. At the end of lesson in Q/A one of the pupils asked "who won the Mars Bar?"

The next notes I had of a 2J basketball lesson were those that informed the 'Anush and Basketball-Fever' account, 4 March. The following week, I decided it might be interesting to discover how Bob structures games playing in the lesson. This is my notebook account:

11 March

Lesson 5: Second Year 26P ONP

2.05 Boys already changed and in the gym playing basketball
2.08 Bob organises teams and refers back to last week's lesson "We need smaller teams." Six teams of four are organised.

Games are organised: first basket wins, winners stay on.

Game one: 15 seconds
Game two: 2 mins 10 secs
Game three: 2 mins 2 secs
During game two, Bob encourages teams to "Drive to the basket."

Game four: 2 mins 20 secs

Up to game four, 'winning teams' have stayed on for two games

Game five: 4 mins 45 secs (Bob sends both teams off)
Game six: 1 min 12 secs
Game seven: 2 mins 12 secs (Bob explains guarding)
Game eight: 2 mins 10 secs (Bob explains free shot)

At the end of game eight, Bob sets up a cut and drive situation. "A little tip for today..."

Game nine: 35 seconds
Game ten: 1 min. Bob explains skill of using the ball: "Get hold of it [...] Have a look [...] and then we can go"

Game eleven: 12 secs
Game twelve: there is a discussion as to who should be on court, Bob says "Someone who hasn't been on for a while."

Game thirteen: 3 mins (Bob explains zone defence)

At the end of the game, Bob sets up some game situations for demonstration purposes. "Last few things for the day..." Question and answer. "How can you make sure...?"

2.36 Game fourteen: 5 seconds.

Bob whistles the boys in. There is evident disappointment at the end of the lesson. Boys have waited patiently and attentively on the wallbars and in the store cupboard for their turn. Bob advertises the basketball club again and exhorts the boys to practise. He outlines what they will be doing in future terms.

As the boys get changed, Bob and I discuss the atmosphere in the group and we discuss private schooling. We also talk about the state of the gym floor.

As an example of how accounts can change in their recording and telling, here are some notes I typed up that evening about the same lesson:
The boys were finishing their secret game of basketball as Bob arrived. Lookouts posted to warn the group of his arrival had carried out their duties effectively. David enters from his usual side of the gym and asks about my work and the college. I tell him what my job is and where the college is. He joins the group.

2.08 Bob organises the group into six teams of four. He refers back to the previous week and suggests the need for space on court. For this week, the games will be first basket - winner stays on. Teams are organised by numbers.

In the lesson, fourteen games are played and vary in length from 5 secs to 5 minutes. Bob intervenes for points of law and game strategy. He sets up situations or re-creates them to make a point.

See field notes for specific details, but note, for example, in game nine when he tries to make a point about ball use. He sets up a situation, makes sure everyone is paying attention and then says, "Get hold of it, have a look and then we can go".

In game thirteen, he says: "Last few things for the day...". He sets up demo and game sit. and then poses questions for pupils to respond.

When the final whistle blows for the lesson, there is audible disappointment. Bob calls them in and advertises the basketball club. "You all need to practise..." He then outlines what they will be doing in the next terms.

The boys go out to change. Bob and I talk about the atmosphere. This leads to a discussion of private schooling. We also talk about the floor.

(ii) Testing and Measurement

I include here a set of notes about 2J's testing and measurement to indicate how Bob handled subject matter other than basketball with the group.

25 February

Lesson 5: Second Year 23P 1NP

2.05 Boys in the changing room and already changed into PE kit. Anush and friends playing a game with small rubber ball.

2.07 Bob arrives and tells boys to put on jumpers.
2.10 Boys collect around Bob to be told about the lesson: "I want you to do the measuring..." Bob goes through procedures and emphasises neatness required to record results. Height will be measured in North Gym.

2.13 Bob demonstrates how to measure and standardises procedure.

2.15 Activity starts. I volunteer to help with skinfold measurement. Boys work quietly and cooperatively.

Bob demonstrates flexibility tests.

2.34 Bob calls boys in.

2.36 "I want to explain a couple of things ..."

2.37 "Listen carefully..." Bob explains shoulder flexibility and effect of warm-up. He tells the group that next week it will be the run and flexibility. Bob points out they will have a lot of time and encourages them to "Use the time for a good score"

"Can we wear tracksuits for the run?" (This question was asked by the same boy who asked 'Who won the Mars Bar?')

"Two minutes to get changed". Boys run out and chatter.

2.49 Five of the boys are ready and wander off to Mrs Watson's lesson (she has been complaining about lateness).
4.3.5 Talking with Bob

About the talking that went on

In the three years since meeting Bob, I have had a number of opportunities to talk with him. I have no notes, only recollections, of our conversations on social occasions in each of our homes. I do have hastily scribbled notes of conversations in and around Riverside School. There have been times, however, when our conversations have been particularly focussed and recorded on audio-tape. This part of Bob's tale draws on all three types of talking.

In a different medium, it would be unthinkable not to have Bob directly involved in an account of his practice. Some of our talking in a narrow sense has had a selfish orientation. At the time of the focussed talks we had in June 1986 and July 1987, I was trawling for material for my research. The idea was to have 'useful', 'quotable' qualitative data to present to an imagined audience of supervisors, examiners and student teachers. Despite the rhetoric of the first person plural, as in our research, there is a sense that this narrow instrumentalism remains. I do hope, however, that in a wider sense, expressive talking also took place and will continue to do so.

For the moment, consider the focussed conversations we had. In our talks about teaching (19 and 26 June 1986) I raised a number of issues that interested me. In a third talk (10 July 1987), I invited Bob's retrospection of his practice since we last met the previous year, in part to enable him to have more control over the direction of the conversation.

I present the transcript material that follows chronologically.
The Talks

4.3.5.1 19 June 1986

I arrived at Riverside during the mid-morning break and went, as arranged, to the staff room to meet Bob. He was munching his way through a couple of digestive biscuits. The staff had arranged a shovehalfpenny world cup and this was in full swing near to where we sat. I received a update of form to date.

It was a warm, sunny morning. Bob suggested we go outside to talk. He was dressed for summer in tennis shirt and shorts. He chose a bench in the quadrangle near the staff room. Throughout our talk, teachers and pupils passed by at regular intervals. We sat down with the tape recorder between us. Our conversation lasted seventy minutes. I was very conscious that this was my first opportunity to experience a focussed field conversation.

I had rehearsed my technique but had done nothing so grand as a 'pilot' interview. (Try as I might, I still have visions of such an interview taking place on a flight deck!) During our conversation I was aware of trying not to intervene in the flow of Bob's comments. I tried to listen very carefully to what he was saying in order to link his thoughts with some of the issues I wanted to raise. I was conscious of trying to keep eye contact less than an unblinking stare and more than furtive glancing. Eventually, I hope I achieved a suitable balance. In moments of non-eye contact, I referred to my personal prompt sheet - a kind of poor man's autocue.

In retrospect, what I did in the conversation with Bob was to formalise everyday talk. After this first effort I relied more on my own social skills. This is in part why I keep using the terms 'talk' and 'conversation'.

page 222
Our first recorded talk covered:

(i) Personal background
(ii) Professional development
(iii) Experience of teaching
(iv) Perception of pupils

In order to give a graphic account of our talk, I have drawn extensively on the transcript material here. My approach is to present material in the order it came in our conversation.

(i) Personal background

Bob: ...my father was a sportsman which was the most important influence in sport that I had. As soon as I could walk, I was given a ball and I was always given racquets, bikes and other activity things.

I've got photographs of being nearly as big as the ball... I think that a kid who comes through to being an outstanding sportsman or an outstanding performer in PE of any kind with a non-physical education background would be very much an exception.

If we could produce more kids who are involved in some kind of activity, growing up to have their own families, would therefore do the same thing...

When I was a boy, there was often a green near the houses where we'd play football, handball or whatever. That seems to be happening less and less these days with more traffic, smaller areas to play in and around the home.

Keith: I've often thought that PE was one of the few voluntary homeworks that children did, but you see less of that now.

Bob: For all sorts of reasons. As I say, one of the reasons seems to me to be lack of space. You don't see kids out in the street playing football anymore.

Keith: But you came from a fairly urban area didn't you?

Bob: Yes. I came from an industrial town. There always seemed to be the game in the street ... Thinking about ... the relationship between teaching PE and kids learning in PE, I think one thing that PE teachers could remember is that a
hell of a lot of skill learning and, if you like, the
tactics and all sorts of co-operative things that go on
within the game, are learnt by the kids in that environment
with no teacher there at all... I think that if teachers do
nothing else but simply organise a classroom, playground or
field situation such as the kids can just get on and play,
that'd be two-thirds of the job... kids will organise
their own games often far better than members of staff will.

Keith: ...do you recollect the media having any effect on you when
you were young?

Bob: Oh yes. ... Me and my dad would always sit and watch sport.
He ran a football team. Nearly every Saturday, I'd go over
with him. He was manager of the team and I'd take my ball
and kick around and warm up with the players and just be
involved in that environment. You'd just get into the way of
Saturday afternoons being given over to sport, of training
nights. I used to go along and train with his team during
the summer when they used to do their pre-season training
and things like that.

Keith: How old were you then?

Bob: I was involved going around with him, and following him
around and doing kickabouts, from the age of five or six.
And the team were then fourteen and fifteen year olds. By
the time they went through, it was a 'man's team' and I used
to run the line...

Keith: Was your dad a teacher?

Bob: No. He was just interested in football but he was a
qualified coach as well and it was a good standard of
football. I got a good understanding of football from him...

Keith: ... did you find in primary school that you were ahead of
the group?

Bob: Well yes. There was the football team in junior school which
wasn't that [...] We didn't have a great deal of fixtures,
or not real coaching but there obviously was a group of
perhaps twenty kids and we would always have our games at
break times and dinner times. I think two or three of us
went on to play for the district and that experience as well
obviously puts you under a bit more pressure [...] understanding the pressure of the game at a slightly higher
level. That made it that much easier when I went to my
grammar school, where I started playing rugby, which I
didn't want to do. I hated the idea of it because my dad
hated the idea of it but I took to that very quickly.

...
Keith: ... I wonder whether PE teachers are made at this early stage?

Bob: One of the things that's important, I think, and perhaps one of my strengths, is that I've got a more general capability with several activities but that was just because I was lucky to go to a school where the rugby was very, very good. Football had been taken care of... I also played cricket a lot... we had a basketball team and a volleyball team. There was a wide range of activities and being one of the half dozen who, I suppose, played everything, that helped a lot.

... you don't have to be a good player at anything necessarily to be a good PE teacher but I think it does help.

Keith: Some people say that when you're in trouble as a teacher you revert to those early memories of how you were taught and what it was like to be a pupil. Is it like that for you?

Bob: Yes, certainly for me. My whole approach to teaching which encompasses the fact that I'm a technician. I like to get people to do things properly but particularly with the discipline and just the whole relationship between myself and kids of different ages and how therefore your attitude to them would differ comes from my own schooling. I remember very vividly my thoughts about the teachers, particularly the PE teachers, because I was very keen.

When eventually I got into the sixth form and became involved in a little bit of teaching myself, you'd follow and watch and be aware of what teachers said to me or other kids that were affected and things that had a particular effect on me when they were said to me. A lot of those have been carried over.

Keith: Is there a model [...] of the teachers that taught you or do you extract from all of them?

Bob: There are bits and pieces from all. From both the PE and academic staff because I think I was lucky to be taught by some very good people.

As far as PE and sport is concerned, I think that it is a mixture of the two members of the PE department when I was at school. One of whom was, I suppose, a very typical Welsh rugby teacher who was very small, very thick set, very frightening and a very good rugby coach.

The other one was a slightly more informed and up-to-date but nevertheless wouldn't be called a wishy-washy sort of teacher. He was once again a technician and was very hot on things being done properly, from formal activities down to behaviour and respect...
Keith: The discipline you have is strong as well. Is that in part based on your experience of school?

Bob: Yes. It's something I have endless, interesting discussions about and sometimes disagreements with people here. I don't think discipline is as good in schools as it should be...it should be that I can create the kind of situation when kids can learn what I want them to learn. There is a lot of benefit to be gained from discipline for discipline's sake, especially for younger kids. It can make problems a lot less later on...

The thing about here is that a lot of learning will go on in lessons, almost despite a lack of discipline because it's that sort of place. But to me that's no justification...

Quite frankly, here you could be useless and not be able to control a bunch of four year olds but they'll still learn because the whole environment helps in that way. I like to know that when I'm there explaining things, the kids are silent and they're listening to me and that once they start to do their activities they do them properly as far as performance is concerned, as far as looking after each other is concerned, in co-operation and all the other bits and pieces that go with it...

The difficult thing in teaching is to say no rather than yes. I think that a lot of people are frightened to say to the kids "No, you can't do that" either because they might actually be frightened themselves to do so or because there is a danger of becoming unpopular... It doesn't matter to me whether the kids like me or hate me. I think in the end they like me because they know where they stand and know that I'm fair.

(11) Professional development

Keith: ... was there ever a time when you thought you would be a PE teacher other than at the end of your first degree?

Bob: Yes. It was in the back of my mind when I was thinking about my career when I was in the sixth form and doing 'A' levels. A lot of my friends in the rugby team had gone on to Cardiff College and I was going to do the same thing but I was actually persuaded by my Russian teacher that a degree in Russian would be more useful eventually than a qualification in PE. Looking back, I'm glad I took that course.

Keith: Do you think three plus one is [...]?
Bob: I think it's difficult because I think in my case: one, I'd played a hell of a lot of sport that I had hopefully a lot of attributes to be a good teacher anyway. That's not meant to be boasting. So three plus one was fine. Some of the people doing postgrad. courses with me, three plus one would not have been perhaps the best preparation to be a PE teacher. I think it depends [...] and this is where there's got to be a lot more ... on the part of colleges to actually pick people who, if they have a degree in something else, they've got enough of a grounding in physical activities generally speaking to get the most out of a one year course. ...the one year course would have to be of a very high quality and mine at Madeley was outstanding. A fantastic course.

Keith: ... when it came to choosing a course, why Madeley?

Bob: That was completely pot luck. I'd put down Borough Road as first choice because my friend was there and he told me that it was a good place. I didn't get in there ... I got refusals from Carnegie and one of the Catholic colleges in Liverpool. Madeley was fourth choice and by that time I was really upset. I didn't think I was going to get in anywhere and because they were actually very keen to accept postgrads. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me.

Keith: ... were there particularly positive aspects of the course that you thought were important?

Bob: The arrangement as far as teaching practice was concerned was very, very good. Having spoken to other people who've done teaching practices at other institutions, things like travel arrangements were very, very good. Contacts with schools were very strong. There was ample opportunities to go and visit and get sorted out with various members of staff. The actual courses, whether they were four-week or eight-week whatever were timed very well around teaching practices. I think that everyone felt very well prepared when they went into their first teaching practice towards the end of the Christmas term. We did eight weeks on basketball, gymnastics, swimming etc. and I felt very well equipped. I think everybody did.

Then the second term was all teaching practice and the third term was concentrated on cricket and athletics.

We did a hell of a lot in my one-year course...

Keith: Was there any feeling of difference between you and the BEds?
Bob: Yes, certainly. Not on our part, but I think there was definitely a feeling that because of the very aggressive, very competitive and macho image of the typical BEd student, we were seen as the 'clever people'... But we were lucky because we did have a good group that year and we did manage to establish ourselves quite quickly within teams. I was playing in the first fifteen and played for the first eleven football and it all helped.

Keith: How about things like dress and standards?

Bob: Madeley were very hot with, for instance, the BEds. They were much more strict than they were with us. But they were strict as well about turning up for lectures in the appropriate kit and people were actually sent out of lectures regularly for not having the proper tracksuit bottoms or not having the proper vest or proper shorts even...

Keith: Did you fit in easily with that or did you find it hard?

Bob: It was something I'd always been used to because I was treated the same way at school. Having said that, some of the better lecturers were terribly anti any kind of uniform at all... an athletics lecturer said that he didn't give a damn about what the kids looked like as long as they were out doing things. Every little experience like that puts something extra into your own picture.

Keith: So how do you negotiate that?

Bob: What I do, having said there's a need for discipline in the junior years, which there should be in every type of school [...] I don't care what type of school it is [...], I tend to be very strict with the first and second years down to the last sock and untied shoe. Then when they get to the fourth year and I'm starting the health-related PE where the emphasis is on involvement and just activity, participation and a sympathetic approach to boys who haven't perhaps previously been very active, then concentrating on the activity being enjoyable rather than a punishment or too pressurized. I say the time has come that as long as they're there and doing something, I'm not really bothered what they look like. They don't abuse that. They come wearing what they like but their response to that kind of approach in the fifth year has been very positive.

Keith: ... I was so nervous during my first year of teaching, I tended to reproduce en masse my lecture notes and experiences of my postgraduate course. Did you find the same?

Bob: A lot more of mine comes from my own school, where as I say PE was very, very good. I've got almost whole blocks of
lessons that come from my memories of things I was taught at school. Obviously, a lot of things that I picked up at Madeley were 'flesh around the bones' as it were.

Generally speaking, apart from some of the more specific things which you wouldn't necessarily do at school, I wouldn't have had much of an idea about how to teach those effectively until I'd been to Madeley, but the major games and even gymnastics [...] my memories from school carry me through much more there. But then the health-related stuff comes from Madeley. That was the stimulus through to the sources and materials, and approach.

Keith: Did you ever see a lecturer teach at Madeley?

Bob: We saw films of lecturers teaching a class. One of them was filmed teaching three different activities which was interesting to see. He did that well.

We were taught by visiting lecturers as well. We had one or two specimen lessons of a health-related fitness class and generally [...] Some of the lecturers had as their policy to teach us as if they were teaching a class. Others were more aloof.

Keith: ... how did you manage to negotiate the academic with the physical side of your career?

Bob: ... at university ... it's very separate. At PE college, I feel your reputation can be destroyed or maintained on how you perform in certain ways ...

One thing that did stand out very much was the different intellectual/academic approach at the PE college. I approached the few essays we had ... in pretty much the same way as I'd have approached at university. I don't think I ever got a first for any essay at university but I got flying colours for all the essays I did at PE college, purely because it was stuff that they weren't used to reading. They were more used to dealing with people who were physically oriented than academically.

Keith: Is this still a problem for the profession do you think?

Bob: Yes I do ... At the same time, I think that most people, parents particularly, would put their hands on their hearts and say that having met a lot of the staff at school, they often like the PE teacher more than the others because they tend to be sympathetic, they seem to be helpful, they know that they have put a lot of time in ...

But ... there are several things to be careful of. First, ... we mustn't get too far away from the very practical aspects of PE. ... a lot of people are coming out of PE
colleges after four years who don't actually know how to teach properly things that have been, for a long time, traditional activities. I think that would be a dreadful shame.

Kids do like jumping over boxes and kids do like playing games and kids do like playing all the other things that have been associated with PE for a long time ...

I think this is one reason for looking for PE teachers from perhaps less orthodox directions than previously.

Keith: ... some people think that the PE profession is stuck with a particular recruitment pattern.

Bob: ... at Madeley, when we were doing the health and fitness course there which was completely new and fantastic to all of us ... I discovered that it was very difficult to get time for what seemed to me to be a very important aspect of PE, simply because there had to be cricket courses, rugby courses ... there's perhaps a balance that's got to be struck.

Keith: ... Do you think that in some way the profession is teaching for the past rather than the future or [...] ?

Bob: I must admit that having now been teaching something relatively new in PE for four years, which I was very, very excited about in the first and second years and which for me has now become pretty much of a muchness, obviously with the exception of when new material comes through or when you find a new way or a new approach, that I can't understand how a more refreshing or new approach to teaching the more orthodox aspects of PE hasn't come around yet. It still baffles me that here we're very lucky. We've got a very good department and we've got a good approach to all aspects of PE. When we compete against other schools [...] ... we still come up against emphasis on classic, traditional approach with large numbers, fallen attitudes generally and often the reaction of the staff at the school can be quite aggressive and hostile. They see you trying to do what they see as a liberal wishy-washy way of treating people, when all you're really trying to do is get the kids playing, having more fun and getting something from it.
(iii) Experience of teaching

Keith: ... I wondered whether you were aware of the style of teaching you employed?

Bob: I think it's the one that I like and the one that I think is best. I'm not so big-headed or pig-headed as to think there's no other way but I happen to think there are benefits to be gained from doing things my way which outweigh the benefits from doing things someone else's way.

Keith: ... you use the word 'technician'. Would you summarise yourself as a technician above all else? Or is that only part of the work?

Bob: I think perhaps 'adaptable' would be a better word because obviously my role with the first fifteen at school would be far more technical than my role with a group of fifth years who you're trying to persuade to be active. And there the emphasis is on sympathy, on friendly cajoling somebody who really isn't interested and wants to talk about how many fags he's smoked that day and he's trying to pack it in. Obviously to say you were a technician would be to ignore that side of things. So perhaps just 'adaptable'.

Keith: ... is your style age and ability sensitive? Is coping with mixed ability and motivation difficult or have you found it easier the more you have taught?

Bob: I think it fits in with my general approach to teaching that we talked about in that I do think that there are certain standards that have to be set fairly early on and there is a reason for setting those. Therefore you can then change according to the group that you've got.

Keith: ... Are you aware of changing at all or do you think that essentially you are now what you've always been as a teacher?

Bob: Yes, I think so. ... I think there is far too little in colleges that prepare teachers. There is too little emphasis placed on the sort of things that a teacher can bring personally to a class, rather than what you can bring out of a manual.

Keith: ... If you were asked what made a really special lesson or an ideal course, could you say anything about that?

Bob: It would depend very much on the class you were taking. I mean, if you were taking the first fifteen when everything clicks together and if you're taking a class of 'wallies' and the biggest wally does something tremendous and he gets a kick out of it, it's [...] It depends.
Keith: Are there elements like reproducing knowledge?

Bob: Oh sure. When you've been spending two or three sessions working on a particular skill of rugby and the first fifteen actually produce it on a Saturday effectively and it works for them and they get pleasure from it, then that's a big kick.

Keith: How about things which are much more difficult to assess or evaluate [...] when they reproduce behaviour patterns like fairness, evenhandedness, or respect for people who have done well. Are those some of the things that give you pleasure?

Bob: That's something that I think, even though I don't make a big point of things like that, there are times in a lesson when I become aware that I've spent so much time worrying about making sure that partner A is running to the right point for partner B to pass the ball to him, I've ignored questions like, for instance, if you knock the ball on but the referee doesn't see it, then it's your responsibility to say that's the other team's ball. I think that's something that could be stressed more often...

... I wondered ... whether there have been moments which you have remembered which have distinctly changed your views of teaching, or pupils or activities? ...

Bob: ... I do remember moments ... They often happen when I'm in a bad temper and I will later in the day suddenly think back and I will learn a lot from that. It's strange. It seems to me that a lot of teachers are frightened to lose their tempers and you shouldn't be because kids should see you in your natural way anyway or they won't appreciate how fair you can be, or how kind, or nice or jokey you can be, unless they see you in a foul mood.

Keith: ... how do you assess or evaluate your own performance as a teacher? Do you do it by reflecting on your own experience [...] or do you talk to the pupils about it or do you get feedback from other colleagues?

Bob: Occasionally you get feedback from your colleagues, people on the academic staff who don't actually realise what goes on in the gym and only venture down there on a rainy day when they've got nothing better to do and will actually compliment or otherwise on something you've done. I do tend to get feedback from the boys but a lot of self-evaluation comes into it.

Keith: Does that lead to change?
Bob: I learnt a hell of a lot from the mistakes I made with the first fifteen three years ago and that was a very important lesson to learn...

Keith: The one thing I wanted to ask all five teachers was if there is an aspect of teaching that could be improved in their own teaching, what would it be? An area of knowledge or a type of presence?

Bob: I don't know. At times, I think I'm a bit like a bull in a china shop in so far as the staffroom is concerned and things that I think should be done better [...] I'm a great believer in saying what you think and being relatively dynamic in that sense. I wouldn't like to lose that ... I'm pretty much the same in the gym as well with very strong ideas about the way I think things should be done and the way kids should behave...

... 

Keith: Do you have much chance to observe other teachers and for them to observe you?

Bob: No. I suppose in PE you get more chance than in any other subject because inevitably the two or three people in the department will be involved in the same activity on the same afternoon or going to a meeting, to matches or refereeing or whatever.

I think it's a shame that teaching is such a private profession. It's often the case that a bloke can go through a whole academic year without anybody else seeing him teach. [...] If you put that into an office environment or a shop floor environment, it's crazy.

Keith: Has the headmaster ever seen you teach?

Bob: ... because I was teaching with the head of PE who was a quite elderly and respected member of staff and I think that he knew that I was okay. I think the deputy head came to see me once ...

Keith: Do you think that having people watch you encourages you to work in a certain way?

Bob: Yes. I was very aware of my own teaching the year when we had a student here who, as it happened, we got on well with. And in the end, he was very much under my wing as opposed to anyone else's. My teaching improved a hell of a lot because of that, because I was taking more care to make sure I was standing in the right places, did the right things and was always thinking of little tips that I could give him and was therefore using them myself.
Keith: ... Do you remember any of your teaching practice with any great clarity?

Bob: Yes. One or two lessons from my first teaching practice which was in a very awkward school for me... The head of PE was brilliant ... with the sort of kids he had and it took me quite a while to get used to the different kind of kids ...

... Have you had any problems at all meeting the demands, expectations and even the physical impossibility of various time expectations of your job?

Bob: No...

Keith: How do you trade off your private life and career with the open-ended time you spend with pupils?

Bob: I think you just get used to it. Having been involved in a lot of ways at school and being used to leaving school very late through my own involvement and then through university, being involved extra-curricular wise, it's always been part of my life really ... And being married to someone who does the same thing [...] ...

Keith: Does the school recognise the time you put in ... ?

Bob: I don't know, I'm not sure. I'm sure they recognise it. The emphasis in this school is fairly and squarely placed on the academic side ...

(iv) Perception of pupils

Keith: ... Are you aware of having a style of dealing with pupils, based upon a model you have of a pupil?

Bob: I think that once you realise what makes a kid tick and what his problems are, you can approach it [...] My best way is probably with a good degree of humour, mixed in with a big helping of understanding and occasional bouts of bad temper and physical violence!
Keith: Humour has always seemed to have been part of your teaching...

Bob: Obviously, it helps being perhaps a humorous person anyway. You do learn how to fit that in. You learn that with some groups of kids you can offend if you take the mickey out of them. Some kids love it [...] You always make mistakes [...] but it helps to brighten up the day a bit.

Keith: Does that work in your classroom teaching?

Bob: Yes. I couldn't stand it otherwise!

Shortly after this brief exchange about perceptions of pupils time ran out on our conversation. I thanked Bob for his frankness and willingness to talk and made preliminary arrangements to return to school at a later date to continue our taped conversation.
A week and a few hours later we were back at the same bench. Bob was an accomplished and enthusiastic conversationalist. He was putting me at ease with comments like "You give some prompt questions and I'll answer." This conversation was much shorter than that of the previous week. Included in the traffic through the quadrangle on this occasion was the headteacher, picking up litter as he went on his way.

After some preliminary chit-chat, we picked up the track of the previous week's conversation. We talked about:

(i) Relationships with school  
(ii) Curriculum development  
(iii) Sporting ethos  
(iv) Status of physical education

(i) Relationships with school

As a result of my experience at Riverside, I was interested to follow up with Bob the relationship between physical education, games and rowing. Bob's response to my question about this was:

I think that one of the difficult things, and it was something that obviously when I started teaching I was thinking about a lot was, whenever you're at college you get this kind of picture of the perfect curriculum and the perfect situation which are always something you aim for at any school you come into and it's going to present a different situation which'll obviously be different from that perfect picture in one or many ways.

One of the things that I found a little bit difficult to come to terms with at first was the great difference between sport and PE when I came here, having been brought up as it were combining the two and that one is really an integral part of the other, whilst obviously being aware that there are differences and necessary differences.

First of all, there was a vastly disproportionate amount of energy and time, effort, money and emphasis being put into
sport rather than physical education in the wider sense [...].

Obviously, because as far as a school like this is concerned, particularly at this kind of school, it can bring prestige and have lots of other spin-offs which aren't necessarily to do with physical education.

So that really was my first aim when I came here, to try and change that emphasis a little bit and try to emphasise the need for physical education for classrooms of boys, to try and get away from this feeling of PE for half a dozen or PE for two or three and forgetting about [...] and using PE lessons to actually train teams or whatever.

I think that that was probably one of the definite things that I would consider to be a personal success in the first two years here, particularly with the introduction of the health-related fitness course. Now it gives me a great kick. It gives me as much pleasure to see one of my pupils out running as seeing the first fifteen doing well.

Keith: What I found very exciting, from the very first day was the sheer enthusiasm and involvement of pupils ...

Bob: It would be very easy to underestimate the amount of genuine willing effort and time that is put in by members of staff on Saturday mornings etcetera. I like to go out and see all the pitches full on a Saturday morning and I think that's tremendous and the number of kids involved is growing.

But I think that there is the other thing that needs to be taken care of as well: that there is PE for boys who don't take part on a Saturday morning and that everybody has to be catered for.

What does annoy me is that sometimes I think that because one is easily measurable in terms of results and progress and improvement, that we tend to put too much emphasis on that, at the expense of things that aren't that easily measurable which might be success that one fat boy can have in a first year PE lesson which no one sees and which I see and he will experience but which you cannot measure. And it therefore pales into insignificance, compared to the fact that the rowing eight won four medals or four cups last year.

Keith: ... with this relativistic notion of success, how would you persuade pupils within a culture of a school which emphasises success and the publication of results?

Bob: It's funny because I think that in a way it's helped the success of the health-related fitness course here [...] because there is no doubt that in the school I went to, boys who weren't actually part of the clique, or part of the success story, certainly felt very left out of things and I was very aware of that with the first fifth-year group of boys I took
who were very disillusioned, not disruptive, not badly behaved but were just slightly rebellious towards me because I was seen as a figure of continuing the never-ending circuits and punishments or whatever.

When I actually took the steps to try and actually get a course going, it was at a very skeleton stage in the first year, the response was marvellous. And I think if you've got that kind of environment, where you're offering something as it were not out of desperation, that you're trying to get to the kids with this because they aren't appealing to anything else, but you're offering it to them because: one, it's of general benefit even to the sportsman; and two, it is seen as a genuine attempt to involve everybody in activity. The response has been very, very good. Plus the fact that because, generally speaking, the boys are very intelligent here, one can offer the thing at quite an advanced and complex level which makes it more exciting for me on an intellectual level and I think it provokes them more ...

(ii) Curriculum development

Keith: Given this change of emphasis, what control do you have over curriculum direction within the department?

Bob: When I came here, the head of department was a great believer in whatever the teacher was strong at, he should be able to do ... So he said to me "whatever you want to do, do it". I think he knew I was a 'good' teacher and he really gave me a free rein. I took it upon myself to go and do these things and when the shake up took place in the department, I was still told that the PE department would actually use my curriculum ...

Keith: Was that a written record?

Bob: No. When Tony arrived and John became head of games, we wrote down what we would try and do in the first few years. That kind of thing was a lot more loosely structured and obviously we wanted to introduce the kids to as many activities and wanted to make sure we tested fitness regularly and generally just make them enjoy it.

Then in the fourth and fifth year fitness testing would be continued but obviously the course would be more designed towards why we were actually doing it as opposed to just doing it. We'd actually talk about the ins and outs of personal fitness, of health-related fitness as opposed to skill-related and the whys and wherefors.

Keith: How was that negotiated between yourself and John and between yourself and the headteacher?
Bob: Well when I first came here, the head was very anti any kind of health course ... I now know, having been here for four years, that it's very difficult to bring about any kind of change here. I'm pleased that in the end I managed to persuade him to 'see the light' as it were, to let me go forward with my plans.

There were one or two other changes, like I had to get four or five of the staff through a preliminary weight-training course so that they could supervise weight-training; buying some new fitness-testing equipment and just generally getting things centred around that in the senior school PE and that actually happened.

... Very little has actually been done with active support. They've often thanked and encouraged and said they were very pleased with things when they'd happened but they were very slow with encouragement of the right kind in the early stages.

Keith: Is your work reported to parents?

Bob: Yes. [...] I haven't actually been considered important enough to be invited to parents' evenings for PE ... but I have had one or two parents come up to me and spoken on Saturday mornings or other occasions ... who've said how pleased they were...

(iii) Sporting ethos

Keith: ... the atmosphere in the staff room seems to be very much based upon sporting ethos and sporting activity ... do you have a different kind of relationship with the staff than you might in other schools? ...

Bob: There was a lot of ill-feeling towards the hierarchy when it was decided that a new library would be built at the expense of a sports hall. They actually asked the staff to vote on it and when two-thirds voted in favour of the sports hall and yet they went ahead and built the library anyway, there was a hell of a lot of ill-feeling.

A lot of staff take part in sport. A lot of them help with school sport, taking teams... it is very much a sporting school.
(iv) Status of physical education

Keith: ... Have you felt any kind of status problems yourself within the staffroom?

Bob: I think that because of the sort of bloke I am, any that there has been has been water off a duck's back. ... But then that's because I've got an academic degree myself and I am confident that I can hold my own intellectually with any of the staff... If there had been someone who came along who was a bit lacking in confidence, it would be very easy for him to be overawed in an atmosphere like this, which is somewhat overpoweringly academic.

Keith: ... has PE got a future as a non-exam subject?

Bob: I think it has for several years. First of all, because now I think with developments taking place in PE anyway and with particular reference to the way we've developed here, I think the hierarchy would be really very frightened of broaching the subject of either cutting down on PE periods or cutting them out altogether. I think, if I was perfectly honest, that we've got one of the best PE departments that I've ever experienced as far as approach and attitudes and opportunities are concerned. I think they know it would be silly to try and nip that in the bud now ...

Our conversation ended with Bob's summary of the status of PE at Riverside. The next taped conversation we had was almost thirteen months later when I returned to Riverside for an update on events.

4.3.5.3 10 July 1987

Good weather makes it possible for Bob and myself to talk outside again. As it is lunchtime, the favoured bench is swamped by pupils and so Bob suggests we go out onto the playing fields. Pupils are playing a variety of playground games. On one of the cricket squares, preparations are being made for an inter-form cricket game. Two teams are carrying out kit bags, setting up wickets and placing boundary flags. The pupil umpires both wear white coats. Before Bob: and I start our conversation, the cricket game is underway under the control of the two umpires. No member of staff, other
than Bob:, in sight. Over the fence at Bridgetown, playground football and tennis are being played.

We find a shady spot under a tree and sit down with the tape recorder between us. We look out across the playing fields and towards Bridgetown School. I show Bob the list of topics I would like to discuss. (In all we chatted out on the field for an hour and then went indoors for lunch.)

We talk about:

(i) Evaluation
(ii) Pupils
(iii) Teaching physical education

(i) Evaluation

Keith: Have you evaluated your teaching in the last year?

Bob: I was talking to Steve Smith the other day, he helps me with third year rugby and is actually in charge of third year rugby [...] but obviously I take the game sessions when we're out there [...] He said that he'd noticed that I'd mellowed very much with the junior boys because I used to be, he thought, far too hard with them and that used to be counter-productive ... it turned the boys off from doing rugby sometimes, because they thought they could get an easier option somewhere else.

So I still insist on standards of behaviour and cutting out language and making sure that they are on time but generally, as far as the content of the rugby lessons, I'm far happier for it to be more fun than perhaps I would have liked before rather than necessarily making progress technically or whatever ...

Keith: How much of teacher development is subconscious and how much is feedback do you think?

Bob: I don't know. I think mostly it's subconscious because when I watch boys coming in on teaching practice [...] We had another one this year who was relatively poor [...] and it just makes you realise when you see these people how much you know and how much you take for granted in your own teaching.
... when you get a student come in and see the kind of problems he has with organisation, with discipline, with content, with progressions in techniques or skills learning or whatever, you realise how much you do subconsciously.

I tend to go by 'feel'. I get the feel of a class and I know, for instance, if I'm doing things at too high a level, if I'm spending too much time in a health-related fitness course ... You just get a feel for it.

So the nice thing is, if I know I've been quite strict with them, I can then get to the point where I can say to them "are you bored with this?", "do you feel we ought to move on?" and they will not abuse that. They will actually be quite honest and tell me.

Keith: Are you now involved in fine-tuning rather than major shifts?

Bob: Certainly. I find there are little things that I get interested in, rather than worrying, for instance, about whether a certain group of boys can triple jump properly. I'll be thinking more about getting to a boy who may have a particular personality problem or a weakness with regard to motivation or self-image problems.

It takes very little time now for classes to be organised because if boys in the first and second years are regimented enough and things are instilled in them, as far as looking after equipment, how to put it out and set it up properly [...]

It'll just be a question of one command at the start of a lesson ...

Another thing is that I'm moving much more away from worrying too much about boys being better, or performing much better at certain physical tasks than I am about their actual personal development ...
(ii) Pupils

Keith: In what sense does a teacher like yourself get to know individual pupils? When would you get to meet them ...? Is it a deliberate thing that you do?

Bob: Not necessarily. Sometimes I worry that perhaps I show favouritism to boys. I certainly do sympathise and have a soft spot for boys who either are not particularly able or have particular problems or who are not particularly good but who work hard. ... Until they get into the senior school, the only boys I'll have any social contact with are the rugby players because there is a genuine possibility, a realistic possibility, of sharing a different relationship with them ...

Keith: So how much that you do formally with the pupils establishes the contract with which you can then say "well done" and not leave the ones who are very good and excelling and having a hang up about being good?

Bob: ... It depends very much on your own attitude and how you get your attitude across to the boys. I think that nearly every first year class that I have, in the first two or three weeks, there will be an example of a boy who, having been put with a boy who maybe is obese or ugly for instance, or a poor performer, will turn his nose up at being put with this boy and that always angers me and I'll make a big thing of that. Just to let them know straight away that it doesn't matter to me if a boy is obese, a performer or whatever, but everybody's got a right to be in the group and have the same amount of attention and the same opportunities to achieve.

Then it's development from then. Even boys who are poor performers must know they can't be too casual or expect to be praised for next to nothing all the time. They must be given genuine praise all the time and criticised if it's warranted otherwise the praise becomes empty. Alternatively, the boys who are very good, mustn't just be pulled up for being lazy or arrogant, they've also got to be praised when they do something very well and do try very hard. The more that you can reinforce what they do in that way, as a group and individually, they will then begin to respect what you say but almost for the fact that you've said it. That's important.
(iii) Teaching physical education

Keith: ... the impression I had last year was that you and Tony complement each other and that John is linked to that process. I wonder ... in what ways in the last year has working together grown or been diminished in some way?

Bob: We do quite a lot of various kinds of what might be called team teaching ... We'll often take a large group together, Tony and I, a rugby group, an athletics group or something in the gym on a wet day, for instance ... But generally speaking, I find it very difficult not to want to dominate in those sorts of situations [...] just because I feel I'm being lazy if I don't.

Keith: Do the boys enjoy the team teaching do you think?

Bob: I think they enjoy it, but occasionally, and this is certainly true in rugby, where they will sometimes be confused because not only of the different [...] First of all, there is a different technical ability for instance in rugby between Tony and myself and the ability to get points across [...] because of the different standards expected by both of us and thirdly by a different attitude expressed by the two of us. And I can see confusion in the boys sometimes and it's very difficult, especially when you're teaching together and you're in the same school and you spend a lot of time together, to learn how to combat that.

Keith: Would you ever tell each other?

Bob: No, I don't think we would really. One, because I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings; and two, I might not always be right ...

Keith: So would there ever be any circumstance where one of you would give feedback to another about, say, how a practice would work better, or whether there's a technique point?

Bob: Oh yes, that happens. There is a certain amount of feedback in that way. It would be untrue to say that there isn't any sort of ideas being exchanged or that there aren't any differences of opinions or whatever. We do talk about it but I'm not sure how much of it is actually put into practice. I think in the end it isn't. The important thing is not a question of a different idea or skill. I think there's something far more important. It's an attitude of mind.

Keith: ... whenever I come here, children are working.
Bob: The nice thing here is [...] the boys can often [...] I'm sure if you wanted to, you could actually get through a whole week without teaching any PE and there would not be any real problems. The boys would come out and they would teach themselves. And that's not entirely a bad thing to be able to say.

Keith: ... do they need any kind of knowledge that you've given them or have they got images from outside school?

Bob: I think the two are important. ... But I think the discipline and the ability to be independent and sensible and civilised, which will come in the early years here, is important for boys to be able to perform on their own. But then having said that, I think a lot of it is natural anyway because kids have always played on their own.

Keith: ... are you ever aware that the boys in teaching each other are using the frameworks that you set up for them in terms of giving knowledge?

Bob: Definitely. Particularly with the senior boys who I would teach rugby. ... I've actually heard a boy say things that I would say ... That's inevitable I think and that's a reflection maybe of the respect they hold you in or how they regard what you're teaching them.
Bob supplied the following information in response to my request.

**Year of birth:** 1959

**Marital status:** Married (one daughter)

**Present post (scale/grade):** Scale 2

**Previous employment in education:** Taught PE at my old school

**Secondary school attended:** 11-18 secondary school

**Higher education (dates, qualifications gained):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Institution/Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977-1980</td>
<td>University, BA(Hons) Russian Studies, (IIi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1982</td>
<td>PGCE, distinction in teaching practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other qualifications (professional, coaching etc):**

Coaching awards in: Rugby, basketball, cricket, soccer, swimming, weight training/lifting, sports injuries diagnosis and treatment

**Sporting achievements/interests:**

**Rugby:** school, university, college and club 1stXV  
   county schoolboy teams U15, U19

**Cricket:** school, college 1stXI  
**Basketball:** school, college first team  
**Volleyball:** school, district and region  
**Soccer:** junior school district, various clubs

**Interests:** most sports, fitness

**In-service/special courses/seminars/conferences attended:**

**I.S.P.E.C.** 1984

**In your present post, what extra-curricular activities have you engaged in (school teams, clubs, outings/field trips)?**

Various teams, matches, meetings. Mainly rugby, health and fitness club

**What non PE responsibilities do you have in your present post?**

Teacher of English, Health Education (non-PE!). Form Master 4/5 Year. Teacher of General Studies
Have you been involved in any curriculum development initiatives/projects in the school? (If yes please give details)

Wrote PE curriculum for whole school. Initiated courses in health in PE
Responsible for own English curriculum

What do you regard as areas of particular strength in your teaching?

In terms of content: 1. Rugby 2. Health
In terms of approach: 1. Technical ability/knowledge
2. Sensitivity/sympathy to individuals' needs and requirements

What aspects of your work would you like to develop?

All of them. Given the right circumstances. In particular the pastoral side of teaching

What could be done on an institutional basis to facilitate your work?

More timetable time. Better choice of staff.

Do you have any informal/formal procedures to make these feelings known?

Very few (that have any effect)

Could you summarise what you think the status of physical education is in your school at the present time?

I am led to believe that PE in all its aspects is considered very important at this school but on a practical level, it is seen and regarded as very unimportant when compared to things academic. A typical example is that all academic classes are covered in the case of staff absence whereas games staff absences are never covered thereby implying that nothing is learnt in the 'C' group football class in fourth year games.

Finally... I would like to know what you think the role of 'research' might be in developing teaching. Perhaps you could say something about your own experiences with me - your feelings etc. You might also like to say something about your own 'research' which goes on every day!

The longer I am in teaching the more I am convinced that the most important element and possibly the only really important element in teaching is the quality of staff. More research should be done on the psychology of education - pupils and teachers, rather than physical aspects of education.
4.4 Tony

4.4.1 Introduction

My experience of research at Bridgetown and Riverside convinced me that textbook accounts of qualitative research had not considered the particular difficulties to be encountered in physical education. As I puffed and panted after Tony on a hot August morning in 1987 on a 'gentle' three mile run, I knew I was right!

Our extra-curricular meeting occurred at the Loughborough Summer School. Tony was there to follow a health related fitness course and I was attending a video seminar. We had met in the college bar late the previous evening and I had been invited to join Tony for his early morning run.

Throughout the time I have known Tony, he has consistently described runs as 'easy', 'gentle' and 'nothing too serious'. I am not making a big deal of our run that morning, it was a very pleasant coincidence we both happened to be in the same place at the same time. But it did emphasise for me how field relations can be quite different. To be where the action is in lessons requires some degree of personal fitness. In Tony's case, slightly more was needed!

When I reminded him of the run on one of my visits to Riverside in 1989, he casually mentioned that at the time he was running faster and training harder than at any time in his international athletics career. At the Summer School in 1987, a couple of days after our 'run', he went off the scale in a pilot test of the Multi-Stage Fitness Test (level 17+).

My account of Tony is less documented than that of Bob, not because I consistently failed to catch up with him in the field work, but because that is the way my research notes and conversations with him have taken me.
4.4.2 In and Around Tony's Lessons

I met Tony on my first visit to Riverside on 10 December 1985. My note of that occasion reminds me that "I met Tony briefly at break time. He was smartly dressed in a tracksuit and white tennis shoes. He was clean-cut, polite and interested. I gave him a brief explanation of my research interest."

My arrangement with Tony was to sit in on his lessons one and three on Tuesdays. I saw 2H first lesson and 3A third lesson. Tony's 'home' base during the Spring Term was the North Gym at the school.

During the Spring Term 1986, I made notes on the following lessons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 January</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>Cold, wet, windy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>25 (0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 January</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>Cold, wet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>24 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 January</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>27 (0)</td>
<td>Overcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>23 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 February</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>Cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>26 (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 February</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Unihock</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>Snow on ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Unihock</td>
<td>24 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 February</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>24 (1)</td>
<td>Cold (freezing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>23 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 March</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>27 (1)</td>
<td>Raining, cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 March</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Padder Tennis</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>Sunny, warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 March</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Padder Tennis</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>Overcast, warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Padder Tennis</td>
<td>25 (-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 March</td>
<td>2H</td>
<td>Unihock</td>
<td>26 (0)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>24 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to these lessons, I went along to Tony's lunchtime swimming club on one occasion and also drove some of his pupils to a cross country meeting.

Throughout the term, I was consistently invited by Tony to join in with lesson activities. Some of my notes, as a result, are extremely brief and cryptic. The sense of his lessons I have retained up to the point of writing is one of comfortableness. Tony's approach to teaching was focussed on involvement and enjoyment. My role was often participatory.

It was relatively late in the term that I started to try to make some detailed notes of Tony's teaching. The following account is from early March:

(i) Basketball

Arrived at 9am. Raining, wet and cold. Met Tony and chatted about cross country. He said there would be no first run because of the weather. I wondered what would happen if a teacher was less sensitive and the implications for response of pupils, head and parents. We discussed NPs and Tony noted there were some regular NPs. I asked what he did about this and he said that for PE if the pupils grinned at the time of offering apologies for absence of kit, he made them do it in their underpants. I helped get the basketballs out for lesson one.

Lesson 1: Year 2 Basketball 27P 1NP

9.30 Boys arrive
9.35 Balls are already in the gym and boys warm up with them
9.37 Tony, "Balls to the side. When you have done that a gentle jog around the outside." The boys circle round Tony who is in centre of gym. Tony uses one ball and passes ball to them.
9.40 "Stop." Whole group do sit-ups.
9.42 Tony organises class into teams by letter: 3x7 & 1x6 (Note that I note different size group: perhaps explain this and significance for flow of lesson?) There follows a basketball skills relay. Tony uses pupils to demonstrate skills.
9.43 A noisy and excited start.


9.46 "Go."

9.47 Crescendo of noise. At end Tony says "Team 4 demonstrated their superiority after a slow start. Dominic even did two squat thrusts!"

9.48 Tony changes skills again and asks each team to change order. This basket-scoring game leads to baskets greeted with cheers and misses with groans. At this stage all members of all the teams are standing. I count one pupil's attempt to score. Whilst I was watching he had twenty attempts. His group encourage him and give a wild cheer when he scores. During the course of the race the teams organise themselves and by the end of the relay are seated.

9.50 One pupil is left to finish scoring in full glare of class attention. The whole class cheer and the boy blushes visibly.

Tony concludes races with "The only team not to win a game were team one, in that case they will be the first on."

9.51 First game 1 v 2, 'shirts' v 'skins'. Teams 3 and 4 on wallbars, some go to the cupboard. Tony leans on wallbars at half way. Minimum interference with game. Just as Tony whistles to end game (0-0) a pupil scores an excellent basket! The court is invaded for next game

9.56 Teams 3 v 4. 'Shirts' v 'skins'. Momentary amusement when ball lands between a spectator's legs. Tony laughs with class. Tony makes no comment about the boys in the cupboard.

9.59 Next game a repeat of 1 v 2 "...for a minute and a half then the other two teams." Note that team 2 are quite happy to remain as 'skins'. Tony provides no feedback about the skills or content of the game. At the end of the time he says "One and Two, you lads can get changed."
10.01 3v4 same side as 'skins'.
10.03 Tony ends game.
10.07 Boys return changed (minus shoes). "Can we play until the bell?" This gives them an extra five minutes of basketball.

I help Tony repair basketball net.

(ii) Measurement

Lesson 3: Year Three  Measurement  22P

11.12 Some boys in gym playing with tennis ball.
11.15 5 boys in the gym
11.17 Tony stops tennis football and makes 4 boys do 20 squat thrusts. (no note here from me but another example of background role: boys not see me as authority figure?)
11.18 Boys still arriving. Mixed kit.
11.19 "Right stop. What we will do...We still have the twelve minute run..."

Class: "Today?" Audible gasps of relief when Tony says no!

11.20 Pupils check resting pulse rate. "Whilst you are checking...see what effect ..."
11.22 Pulse taken in complete silence. "Now take your partner's pulse [...] Ready?"
11.23 "Shush, if you talk it's difficult to find it." "Stop" (to signal end of time for taking pulse). Immediate babble of conversation.

11.24 Boys jog around gym to warm up. Then upper body warm-up. Tony demonstrates and takes part. "Get your legs shoulder width apart, it gives you a better base." A waist stretch brings out groans of pain from some boys. Tony directs stretch and gives demo. Then wall bar stretch, Tony talks through this first. Hamstring stretch: "No whingeing"

11.28 "Paul [...]", Tony draws attention to one pupil not stretching.
11.29 Tony prepares to hand out measurement sheets. He floats the sheets and each pupil catches his own in turn, before it hits the ground.

11.31 Finishes handing out sheets. Tony collects boys around % body fat norms on wall. A pupil asks about the measurement: "Do you add up all three?" Tony "No, just chest and arm." Boys fill in % body fat.

11.33 "One person working at a time. We will have sit ups first. Bent knees... Right, hush..."

"If you are working hard there should not be a lot of noise...Ian, if you keep talking we stop and come back after school. I am not going to compete."

11.34 Group 1 starts sit-ups. Tony walks down the middle of the gym. Calls out time and gives feedback. Encourages a hard-working pupil "That's good". At end of 1 min his voice raised "Stop"

11.35 "Anyone beat 40? [...] 50?" One pupil says "Fifty-eight" and Tony replies "That's good going, a massive total." Audible to all.

11.36 Group 2 start sit-ups. Tony stands away from group and shouts time. "Stop. [...] Fifty?" There is general noise. "Write it down."

11.37 "Paul, have you finished?"
"Yes"
"Well why not shut up and let me get on with it?"
Tony demonstrates press-up


"Listen (claps hands) [...] Whilst obviously you want to shout, you should be saving your energy [...] for squat thrusts at the end. We get groups over 50 and 60."

11.40 Group 2 ready to do press-ups "50 to beat". To one pupil he says "Good press-ups, lovely stuff." Tony wanders through group and stands at end of gym. "Stop". There is some noise and Tony raises voice: "More than 40?"
"Right, squat thrusts. Shush, [...] listen. No sliding ... there's a chance that in the summer we will be on concrete..." Tony demonstrates squat thrust.

"Sixty is your target, no talking." Tony picks up weak technique in one pupil. (One pupil cheats and his partner does not make objection.)

"Stop" "How many? 60? " Tony gets scores and says to group 2, "66 to beat. Let's have someone over 70".

Tony moves around to motivate group 2. "Stop"
"Write it down and come over here. Hurry up... Anyone do 60? Add up your totals this time and compare with last time." There is a general noise as boys add up scores and discuss them.

"Shush. How many have increased? [...] gone down? " "Where were the problems?" Tony discusses with one pupil. Tony gives overview of performance: press ups a weak point. Homework suggested: 15 press ups per night. "You can train yourself to improve specific strengths."

Tony gives autobiographical account of his own difficulty with weak stomach muscles and back ache. Discussed height and weight norms. "Muscle bulk..." General discussion

"Anyone noticing their flexibility getting better? Why should this be?" The group not focussing on Tony.

"Hand in your sheets. You have three minutes to change."

Boys out to change

Tony talks through the % body fat tables with two boys.

At the end of the lesson, I ask Tony if he would mind if we sat down at some future date to record a conversation about teaching.
4.4.3 Different Audience, Same Script?

One of the advantages of seeing Tony teach twice within a short space of time was that I could see how he related to two different classes with similar lesson content. As Tony had his own gym, he was able to set the equipment up for lessons before the start of school. This was particularly helpful if his day was broken up by classroom lessons.

On occasions, my notes on 2H and 3A compared how the same script worked.

14 January

Lesson 1: 2H North Gym 9.30 - 10.10am.

Delightful. 26P. Boys came in and had a ball each. Free play, practice, then a game of 7 v 7 or 6 v 6. Minimum intervention and basic rules. Very good atmosphere, enthusiastic pupils.

(Note: there is a leisurely start and end to lessons. Teachers arrive after the bell. Boys change where they wish with no supervision.)

Lesson 3: 3A North Gym

Basketball 25P. Similar framework to lesson 1. A different atmosphere, a much louder group. Tony introduced and re-emphasised basic rules. 7 v 7 and 6 v 6 games. Group dressed in a variety of kit.

The circle/clap/catch practice worked well again. Focussed attention well and nice time! Some behaviour differences off the court in comparison to lesson 1.

21 January

Lesson 1: 2H North Gym 9.30 - 10.10

The lesson started at 9.45 am, boys came into the gym and as numbers increased moved from shooting to a game. A breakaway group started a second, smaller game of football.

Tony arrived and sent the boys into the changing room. Thereafter lesson followed previous week's format. Ball per
two for warm up. (I joined in) then teams (4 mins per game). Teams were selected by numbers.

Pleasant atmosphere and work rate. Lesson ended abruptly after the second game. I chatted with Tony about the lesson and athletics.

I noted the atmosphere; Tony's language ('magnificent', 'brilliant'); starting and ending strategies.

Lesson 3: 3A Basketball North Gym 11.10 - 11.50 24P 2NP

A noticeably different atmosphere. Same scheme as 2H. Work not as enthusiastic and much more behaviour at fringes. Tony was aware of the atmosphere and this became a topic of conversation afterwards. We discussed: temporal/seasonal location of PE in the timetable; how to adapt to the mood of a group; how to encourage an interactive game.

I pondered what methods teachers and pupils use at such times.

4 February

A dark, cold morning. Arrived at school 9.20 am. Tony looked tired.

Lesson 1: Second Year Volleyball

26P ONP. Boys were wearing black jumpers this morning. Group warmed up whilst awaiting arrivals. Groups were organised by numbers. Played pig-in-middle. TFs given for pass. Two games of volleyball. I refereed one game.

This lesson was directly organised by Tony using Q/A. Games had little development, rules or structure ...yet considerable enjoyment and excitement. A 'no noise' game proved very effective.

Lesson 3: Third Year Volleyball

26P 1NP. Tony used same format, changed warm up slightly but it did not work as well. I refereed one game.

I pondered on what an individual teacher knows of any individual pupil. I also wondered how pupils come to learn expectations and rules.
The fluidity of my time at Riverside gradually enabled Tony and me to find space to talk about the two lessons I saw each Tuesday. In terms of my own thinking about teaching, I was taken back to my experience of teaching in a comprehensive school. Because there was not time to step back and draw breath on some days, lesson content often carried over and carried me through.

The sight of two different year groups doing similar things in Tony's lessons focussed my thoughts on age sensitivity. I ought also to point out here that at Riverside, second year groups get two 40 minute physical education lessons per week, third years get one.

Throughout the term participation levels were high in both lessons. Even though the atmosphere was different between groups, my sense of Tony's lessons was that he facilitated pupil development in a different way to Bob. In cryptic notes about lessons, it is extremely easy to take-for-granted the experiences I had of Tony's lessons. Amongst other 'dynamic tensions' in his lessons, as the term wore on I started to consider: Tony's own immaculate appearance and the scope given to pupils to negotiate uniform; Tony's own achievement through discipline and his classes' room to manoeuvre. Going to and from Tony's and Bob's lessons also added another comparative dimension to my Riverside day.

4.4.4 Talking About Teaching

The atmosphere at Riverside was particularly conducive to talking. In addition to the natural breaks at the beginning and end of lessons, the proximity of the two gyms to the staff room and the canteen meant that conversations could be carried on over a short distance without being forced. There was also a sense in which talking about sport or being
active in sport was part of the school staff culture for a significant number of staff.

Talking with Tony often extended into his free lesson second lesson on Tuesday or into the space I had cleared in lesson four for my note making. As the term progressed, I sensed our conversations became more comfortable. Informally we often talked about sport and injury but gradually focussed on our experiences of our lessons.

The self-directedness of the pupils, and the provision of space for them so to be at Riverside, meant in effect that in some lessons, notably padder tennis, it was possible to talk for almost a whole lesson. Initially this made me self-conscious about distracting Tony from his teaching but over the extended contact with him, I became more comfortable about it. I think initially, I was concerned that Tony thought he ought to talk and that my own volubility was a distraction.

In the Summer Term 1986, we sat down to record a conversation about 'Talking About Teaching'. I had tried to arrange a time that most suited Tony. In the event, his was the last one to be recorded towards the end of June. Regrettably, the interview was cut short by Tony's teaching commitment that day. We made arrangements to resume at some future date.

By a freak set of circumstances, Tony's tape and my notes of our encounter went missing before we could resume. The only subsequent recorded conversation we managed was in July 1988. It was one of a series of update conversations I had with staff at Bridgetown and Riverside.

We talked about a number of topics.
(i) Curriculum Development

Keith: ...it was nice to see you at Loughborough last year and I wondered whether anything came of that at all.

Tony: Well I think in many ways that course transformed the sort of teaching I was doing, quite dramatically. The only problem is of course that [...] I would like to carry on doing some more. That's why I find that at the moment there's so much to do and I'm being held back in many of those areas by say, personal bits and pieces ... there isn't time to do all that I would like to do.

... Bob started it off and every member of staff here is very much into the sort of health-related fitness side... but ... if you are turning out teams to the extent that we are and it is annoying that you should waste as many free lessons as you do, chasing up people to put on matches and you wonder why the hell.

... we offer so much to the kids though at the same time there is always more to offer them. The kids want to do more but they will say "when are we going to have a junior basketball match? ... a junior badminton match?" And you think to yourself, "well, who's going to run them?" You just run out of time.

... there must come a stage when you turn round and say "Well hang on a minute. I'd like to put on all these fixtures for all these people but I'm just wearing myself out totally". And the general standard of everything is going to start to fall.

... Keith: So, say you were looking at this health-related PE or whatever. What kind of space would you need to be able to develop that?

Tony: I need to do more [...] I need to have time and that's one of the advantages of not being [...] I do have more time to sort things out. I think you need a couple of years of just trying out certain ways of doing things and saying "well that worked well and that worked well and that was good. And I'll do that differently next time."

Keith: So is it to do with method or to do with resources or [...]?

Tony: Hopefully. I mean resources-wise. We are very fortunate with this sports hall now which has radically affected the type of teaching and from which the kids are benefitting
massively. The majority of our lessons do revolve around trying to get maximum activity out of the kids so we're helped there.

The only thing is, there are times when one could do with resources spent in other areas, lesser areas. ... we could do with a classroom which is set up for health education purposes... where kids could go and read and everything else...

... If you think about the curriculum over the last few years, is it changing in any way within the timetable day, is there a changing emphasis or is it just your experience and obviously your confidence allowing you to do what you want to do?

It's trying to change. John was pushing for it. The headmaster has been keen to have more of a health education programme and it is trying to change. The only trouble is that we came to an impasse where we were trying to move some of the stuff lower down and deal with diet with the first years and a similar idea with hygiene and the rest. The only trouble is that, once you start bringing it into, certainly the second and third years, they only get one PE lesson with games afterwards.

So what we're trying to do is have an extra lesson a week during which health education could have been moved in

...But that hasn't happened...

So at the moment then the [...] 

The only way the curriculum has changed is the extra emphasis, as teachers opt to do it. We have got a curriculum which is all nicely put out [...] 

... 

And have you informed that change now that you're the 'expert'? Have you fed that back to the others, information or other ideas?

That's one of the problem areas I think. There's still [...] I think we actually need to sit down and have a form of departmental meeting at times. It's never been done yet. I'd like us one day to actually sit down and have time to actually [...] for everybody to get all the resources that
they've got and bring them in ... we ought to know what each other is teaching more than just arguing [...] But there just doesn't seem to be time.

Keith: I have suggested to Bridgetown that we have an INSET day... would that be any help for your curriculum development here? One title could be 'Introducing a health focus into the curriculum where resource debates never happen'.

Tony: The first day of term we actually have a departmental meeting. The only trouble is, that'll end up being used for other bits and pieces rather than for what it should be.

...The school ought to be interested in doing it. They can only try.

(ii) Personal Development

Tony: ... I wish there were more courses we could go on for physical education. One day courses and that sort of thing.

Keith: What kind of things?

Tony: I had initially pictured myself this year [...] I know that I could do with a badminton course, a basketball course or rugby course ... the only problem is having the time to do them. There's holiday time [...] but this summer I can't lose any time. I'm hoping to sneak away for two days to go to Loughborough, for two days of the course, if I'm given permission. But that I find incredibly frustrating: you want to go and do these courses. We've got a sports hall. We ought to know the basics of teaching volleyball for example. You learn so much from going to them ... there must be courses somewhere.

Keith: Is there any way you can get [...]?

Tony: The school will let us do it [...] if anyone could find out about these courses. I assume that the school would not mind us doing it during school time. It's got to be for the benefit of the school, the better we are to teach them.

Keith: Is that information that you should be serviced with or information that you should be seeking for yourself?

Tony: Well I don't know if it does come in. I think we must be in a slightly different situation than most state schools ...
(iii) Curriculum balance

Keith: ... Do you think as you're getting more and more experience as a teacher, you're getting more and more feelings now about the balance that ought to be achieved in the curriculum between [...]

Tony: At a place like this, I feel you need to be offering competition... What I would like to see is far more liaison between the school and the clubs ... I think that most of the kids realise that while the emphasis is on getting good teams out, there is still a place for them if they're not. ...

Keith: ... Do you think the games model and the PE lesson is an appropriate one?

... The thing that interests me is how as a PE teacher you hand over children to other members of staff who are either enthusiastic amateurs or insightful experts [...] and how you feel about whether there is any sense that you could have a coherent structure for any child's learning through the PE programme at Riverside?

Tony: I think in some ways ours does survive quite well. A lot of the staff taking the sports are very knowledgeable. We have a funny mix at times. There are kids who've gone through the system and I think by the end of the second year they do know quite a lot of what is going on, quite a lot of skills and if they want to improve them, then they can go further.

But also there are some games afternoons where, I think one would agree, that the kids are learning absolutely nothing but if they're having a great time, they do have the facility to opt for what they want to do and on a fourth years' games afternoon, there's generally a third game of football who would far rather be given the ball, allowed to pick their own teams [...] but they always want to play on a full-sized pitch. They always want to do it and they have a great time.

If they're thoroughly enjoying their sport, as long as they're getting some input then why on earth shouldn't they go out and enjoy themselves? They're not getting any skill training but they're actually learning much more about the sport and they're getting fitness.

When I first came here, I took the absolute dossers for a football game and I thought if I can't get this lot to improve and enjoy it, then there's no hope. They just didn't want to know about skills. Their abilities weren't that good but they thoroughly enjoyed using what they'd got and you
started thinking, "Well, I'm ruining their game for them". They know they're never going to be that good at sport they'd like to play it at a sort of proper level and that's what they're going to do.

If we can keep them interested, then at least they'll do that when they leave school, rather than being put off the sport because they know, "Oh, here we go [...] thirty minutes of the school practice and we can't do that [...] and I can't head and I don't like heading [...] and I never head anyway so" [...] 

... the rowers definitely put something into the kids because some of them, when they drop out are far more reliable at times...

I find it's terrible the fact that you can't have a casual row.

Keith: You can't?

Tony: Oh no. Unless you want to train, you're not wanted in the rowing club. You either go down there and make an eight, or row your little socks off or get lost!

... I think, at times, it's a great shame that the kids who opt for rowing basically disappear from all the other sports. It's four years of their life, which is, to be honest, great because they're achieving. I don't think they'd do it if there weren't Great Britain vests at the end of it and a guaranteed Great Britain vest for anybody who made the first eight.
If you could guarantee that in rugby, I’m sure we’d have a great rugby side [...] or football side etc. That’s the peculiarity of the sport I suppose.

(v) A Range of enjoyable experience?

Keith: How about the curriculum as a way of inducting children into a whole range of sports? ... Is that part of a model you have in a curriculum? What the PE curriculum is going to be like? To get a range of experiences which are enjoyable?

Tony: Yes. I think what we try and do is [...] introduce them to as many as we possibly can so that they will find some kind of sport that they will enjoy and which they will want to carry on with after school but use to keep fit... That is the success of any PE programme, that absolutely hopeless people should enjoy their games.

Keith: Is the agenda set by you or would the students/pupils have some say in what might be offered? ...

Tony: It does change to a certain extent...

...One tends to listen to the kids ... when we offered the first years tennis or cricket, forty opted for tennis. You only want to give twenty places so you then have to start saying "Well, we’ll have to allow more people to play tennis" because more of them want to play the sport.

... Basically we allow people to do it no matter how good they might be in something else...But if you've only got six courts ? ...they play once every two weeks for half an hour, and they never have any coaching. Now that to me is absolutely pointless! ...

(vi) Skill Development

Keith: We’ve talked before about skill development and how one could see that as a model for a PE curriculum ...

Tony: There are certain sports that have got to have skills. And there are certain sports [...] say badminton, you can quite happily allow kids to go in there and do just very basic play but then tennis is not the same as badminton to my mind...
Keith: ... I wonder if there is some sort of hierarchy where you say introduction is the important thing and enjoyment obviously and whether there is a question mark about skill or whether skill is that important?

Tony: It does if you want to improve, I think. I think we give them the skills in the first few lessons but after that, I think it's a case of getting them playing and wandering round lots and suggesting different techniques as opposed to stopping the whole [...] ...

(vii) The 'ideal' situation

Tony: ... I think in many ways we're as close to getting what we could ever hope to get because of the number of staff we have. You'd need more time in the lessons. ... I think we need at least one more lesson a week.

Keith: Any sign of that?

Tony: The academic side is too important. When people are going for eleven GCSEs and five 'A' levels [...] there's no time.

(viii) An Intermission: the captive audience

(Two weeks prior to our conversation, Tony: has had surgery on his achilles tendon and is sitting in the Sports Hall office with his plaster cast on a chair)

Keith: You're looking very tired. Shall we stop or do you want to carry on for a while?

Tony: Let's give it another ten minutes.

(ix) Choice of lesson content

Keith: ... how do you choose to teach a particular subject content to a particular group?

Tony: That can only come from experience can't it, and knowing certain characters in your group... if you don't know the people you're dealing with, if they are a very mixed ability group and you don't know personalities, then you're struggling...
Keith: Are your notes mental? Do you build up a picture of an particular pupil?

Tony: Yes it's all mental. I think we're bad at writing things down.

Keith: And how much mental preparation goes into thinking about particular [...] is it to do with the atmosphere on the day and everything as you get there and you choose from a stock of knowledge or do you try and get through a pre-planned [...] 

Tony: There are times when you do pre-plan but there are also very often times, take the weather for example. There's no point in you pre-planning it and carrying it through if the weather is [...] The more experience I'm sure you get, the more plans you've got and all the different ways you're likely to use, depending on what the mood of the class is like when they come in, what mood you're in.

Keith: Do you find that happens when you're doing it, you recognise some [...] You see something or you get a signal from the children or you get a signal from yourself about something?

Tony: Well, it comes automatically doesn't it? When sometimes you can see that the kids want to spend more time on something and you can have your little lesson plan worked out but [...] There are times when you just forget it and I think we all try and put too much into it.

(x) Profiling learners

Keith: Are you aware of structuring content and your methods for individuals ... ?

Tony: ... Most of the lessons you tend to gauge to somebody just below the middle and certainly when you're starting off. Because then at least 90% of the people can do it in some way or other. ...

... 

Keith: ... do you consciously look throughout the lesson at pupils and their performance or do you focus on particular groups, or the skill itself ? ... are you aware of patrolling a particular beat or trying to see all the children or picking out the problem ones and focussing on them or helping the excellent ?

Tony: I think it very much depends on your mood on the day and sometimes I've consciously said "Right, I'll have to ignore that bloke", despite the fact that I'd like to help him and
he needs more help than anyone else does because it would be unfair to the others. But you do try to get round to as many people as possible.

It must depend on your particular knowledge of that sport as well. If you don't have a great deal of knowledge in that particular sport, then it's probably just as well to leave the best people there anyway. But that doesn't mean you have to ignore the sport, just because you don't know much about it. A little bit of your nothing is better than [...] 

... 

Keith: ... do you keep any notes of pupil development? Have you ever kept records or notes?

Tony: I keep a few but not too many ... Those that are interested, I could tell you how good they are at most things...

Keith: Some schools have remedial sessions...

Tony: Does it help them or does it stigmatise them ... ?

...

Keith: ... with all your years of athletics experience, does that give you a framework and a picture of understanding what your first year athlete will be like when he reaches the second year sixth? So that you can place your lesson or your year's work in a much wider context of the activity itself ...

Tony: ... I can see what is required for schoolboy success in athletics and I don't see why anybody should be doing it. ... if by the age of eighteen you take a kid who you've been training seriously since eleven, someone of the same ability at sixteen will catch him up within a year and a half if they get good coaching. Do you actually need to ... risk turning them off ... I mean how hard should you coach them. I still don't know.

Our conversation transcript ends with Tony: asking me questions about rowing. Just before the tape ends, I explain why I did not get involved in the rowing during the research:

I have no experience of rowing. I couldn't even enter [...] I felt they'd feel the same about me going to talk to them as they did about "enjoyment rowers".

Although Tony's questions only lasted for two pages of the forty-six pages of the transcript, it was an extremely effective reminder for me about the power of the questioner.
CHAPTER FIVE: Noises Off

5.1 Re Frayn and Refrain

It occurred to me that if I wanted to encourage opportunities for many voices (multivocality) in this thesis, I ought to find a space for those not in the leading parts. Michael Frayn's play Noises Off provides a stimulating motif in this respect.

During my links with Bridgetown and Riverside schools, I saw similar teaching scenes being rehearsed and acted. My role, sometimes as participant, sometimes as observer, offered opportunities to see the drama from a variety of vantage points. A constructivist approach to teaching and learning seems entirely suited to understanding any lesson from a range of frameworks.

In Noises Off, the cast perform a scene from a play 'Nothing On'. Throughout Noises Off the scene is the same but the perspective changes. Act One is set as if being seen by an audience. Act Two is set backstage. Act Three is set in the same way as in Act One. As the play progresses, the rehearsed and measured performance starts to disintegrate until Act Three is virtually anarchic! Michael Frayn says of Noises Off:

The actors have fixed the world by learning roles and rehearsing their responses. The fear that haunts them is that the unlearned and the unrehearsed - the great dark chaos behind the set, inside the heart and brain - will seep back on to the stage. The prepared words will vanish. The planned responses will be inappropriate. Their performances will break down, and they will be left in front of us naked and ashamed. (1985:xiii)

Now this may sound a little ominous! But my purpose in introducing some of Michael Frayn's ideas is to explore the craft of teaching. I am not trying to work through an Erving Goffman dramaturgy here, but I am keen to explore Michael Frayn's suggestion that:
The dilemma is this: the world plainly exists independently of us - and yet it equally plainly exists only through our consciousness of it. We are circumstantial specks, insignificant local anomalies, amidst the vast structured fabric of the objective universe. And yet that universe has vastness only in relation to ourselves and the things around us - has structure only in so far as we give it expression in our perception and language - has objective form only in so far as we conceive it from our single standpoint in space and time. We are everything and nothing. We are responsible for everything, and responsible for nothing. (1985:xiv)

Qualitative research in physical education can build upon such argument and further move from the persuasive rhetoric of science identified by Joseph Gusfield (1984) in order to challenge conventional wisdom. He suggests that "the debunking, unmasking criticism of the sociologist is crucial to the unleashing of imagination."

In my fieldwork, 'teaching physical education' is a preoccupation. But the mobility that qualitative research methods celebrates, enabled me to view such teaching from a variety of perspectives.

5.2 Bridgetown Voices

In the Spring Term 1986, I tried to spend as much time as possible with Alan, Ed and Mark. But being in their lessons often meant that I had access to a small group of pupils that I referred to in my shorthand as NPs, non-participants. They were known at Bridgetown as "no-kitters".

For part of my research, I became fascinated by these pupils. I was intrigued that they could not take part in formal lessons and yet have an extremely creative and playful response to non-participation. Yo-yos, wrestling and penny-up-the-wall were regular activities. I tried to balance my pre-occupation with these pupils by following through some of the participating pupils.
In addition to transcribing details of the pupils, I also tried to collect some additional material. At the end of the Spring Term, I thought I might try a questionnaire with the pupils. It was not a critical part of my research and although I discussed the format and the length of it with my supervisor, I did not want to get involved in the rigour of a fully-fledged questionnaire with pilots and the attendant issues. I thought it might be an interesting field experience. At best it might throw up some additional information, at worst I was adding to a litter problem. Once I had a draft framework, I sought the school's permission to use it with the pupils. This was granted and so I tried out the questionnaire with Mark's 3B2 and Ed's 2A2.

When I returned to Bridgetown in June 1986, to conduct some taped conversations with teachers, I managed to record talks with two pairs of pupils. By returning to school on a Wednesday, I was able to renew acquaintance with some characters from the previous term.

That type of pupil material was limited to two terms in 1986 whereas a second set of 'voices' have continued with me throughout the three years of contact. At various times during the research, I was able to talk with the senior management at Bridgetown. On two occasions I had extended opportunities to talk with the headteacher, Mr Mitchell. At no stage did I tape record conversations with the management but I did make notes of our meetings.

A third voice part will remain silent. I had a number of brief conversations with Sarah, the head of physical education, but I did not make any notes of our exchanges. Her voice added some background to events but because of the vagueness of my recollection I do not introduce the content here. I did on one occasion leave a blank audio tape for her and indicated that I would be interested to hear about developments at Bridgetown. But nothing came of that. I tried to explain that I did not want to 'use' the tape in any other form than the kind of tape you might send to someone living a long way away who is not on the phone.
5.2.1 The Pupils

5.2.1.1 Filling Me In

The questionnaire I used to collect information from the pupils is included in Appendix 5. When Mark was away one day in March 1986, I thought I would seize the opportunity to 'do' the questionnaire. There was a kind of grey area problem about being with the class when Mark was away because technically I was 'covering' for him in breach of NUT guidelines during the industrial action. I thought I would risk it for a number of reasons, the questionnaire being one of them.

My retrospective notes remind me that:

I asked the cover teacher to leave me alone with 3B2. From that moment the myth of my rapport with the group is shattered! They wanted me to take them for PE on what was one of the best weather days of the whole term. They were most upset when I suggested they might like to write instead!

I made the completion of the questionnaire optional and many chose not to take part. "It's boring" was the common response.

After a short time behaviour is a 'problem'. I try feebly to do something about it. Very soon, an exercise I thought would be absorbing was turning into a survival matter. Out came yoyos, paper aeroplanes and some home-made darts. Some pupils involved in mock fights, Paul Trowels particularly. I collected what sheets had been completed at end of lesson. Why did I do it? Why didn't I change?

For our pains, 14 responses were attempted.

Responses included:

Section One: About Yourself
1. Ages 13 - 14
2. Distance travelled to school: some lived yards away and no one further than 3.5 miles.
3. Family active in sport: 10 yes 4 no.
4. Favourite activity: 12 mentioned. Fishing (3 mentions), Walking (2) Football (2)
5. Member of outside clubs: 10 yes 4 no: mentioned scouts, youth club,
orchestra, snooker

6. TV sport watched: 12 mentioned. Boxing (6), football (6), snooker (6), athletics (3)

7. Watch live sport: 10 yes 4 no

8. Use of Local facilities: swimming pools (12), sports hall (7)

9. Play sport with friends from school: 10 yes 4 no

10. Avoid boredom by? 13 activities mentioned including computers (3) swimming (3)

Section Two: PE at School

11. Games played at junior school:

Rounders (12), football (11), cricket (7), rugby (5), gym (4), athletics (3), swimming (3), stoolball (1), shinty (1), netball (1), volleyball (1)

12. Specialist teacher? 10 yes 4 no

13. Dance: 11 yes 3 no

14. Know anything about PE at Bridgetown pre-arrival? 2 yes 10 no

2 'not a lot'

15. How did you know? older friends (3)

16. -

17. Memories of first lesson? 2 yes 9 no

18. Most like about PE?

athletics (3), badminton (3), table tennis (2), rugby (2), "It's not boring" (2), one mention each for: football, circuit training, "not playing in the cold", tennis, cricket, indoor football, hockey, basketball, "learning about the game"

19. Make better: "if the teachers did not keep being away" (3), more of them (2), play more often (1)

20. Like least:

rugby (7), cold weather (4), football (3), indoor football (2), cricket (1), badminton (1), basketball (1)

21. What improvements? one mention each: smaller sides, more matches, less of them, wider range of sports, warmer weather, indoors.

22. Special moments? 4 yes 3 no

"good goal in football"; "scored penalty to take us to final"; "once in rugby I scored a lot of tries"; "getting 34 runs in 3 overs to beat another class".

23. -
24. Embarrassed? 2 yes 8 no

25. Describe? "Yes. When Mr T threw the basketball at me it hurt me in the stomach"

26. One improvement?

   better weather (2); being with a friend and all at the same level; wider range of sports; more hockey and rugby; "play them as planned"; "having a warmer and bigger and nearer sports hall and playing snooker and pool".

Section Three: How do you learn? (only half respondents turned over page)

27. Games played outside school taught in school: 2 yes 4 no

28. -

29. Easier learning? "warm conditions"; "relaxed pleasant atmosphere"

30. Help concentrate? interesting subject (2); enjoyable lesson; "not boring things"; sunny weather.

31. Boring: cricket; football; badminton; delivering papers

32. Weather effect? 4 a lot

33. 'Good' teacher?

   "A teacher who can keep you interested in a lesson"
   "One that doesn't teach badminton"

34. 'Good' lesson? interesting (2); not boring; rugby

35. What advice? "have discussions"; "let them discuss ideas" "be nicer"

36. How would you learn more? "less people"; "being more interested"

Section Four: In and around school

37. How much sport talk? ranged from 'none' to 'a lot'

38. What talked about?

   computers (3), TV and radio (2), anything, not much ! all sorts, interests/hobbies

39. Talk about PE? 2 yes 4 no

40. Importance of school teams? Not important (7)
41. Time spent on sport? 2 hours (1) lesson time (3)
42. Sport at lunchtime/break? 1 yes 6 no
43. Talk about fights? 5 yes 2 no
44. Ever involved in fight? 4 yes 3 no
45. Where to smoke? 5 yes 2 no (bikesheds (2))
46. Pupils smoke on way to school? 6 yes 1 no
47. Good day at school? "no homework, fire drill, nice weather, options, counselling"
48. Routine? 7 yes
49. Improvements? swimming pool; have some activities
50. What kind of clubs? chess

Consent: "I'm prepared to let the PE staff know what's thought about PE that came out of the answers."

In addition to these returns from some of 3B2, I also asked the eight non-participants in Ed's final lesson of the term to complete the questionnaire. One of the pupils in 2A2 showed an extraordinary zeal for cricket and was obviously looking forward to the season at his local club. The questionnaires included the following responses:

Section One: About Yourself
1. Ages 12 - 13
2. Distance travelled to school: between 1.5 and 2.5 miles
3. Family active in sport: 6 yes 2 no.
4. Favourite activity: 10 mentioned.
   one mention each: guitar, "messing about with cricket bat and ball", yes, football, rugby, tennis, canoeing, scouts, baseball and rounders, javelin and discuss
5. Member of outside clubs: 6 yes 2 no
6. TV sport watched: 9 mentioned:
   athletics (3), football (2), one mention each: cricket, American football, most, snooker, boxing, horse racing, greyhounds
7. Watch live sport: 6 yes 2 no
8. Use of local facilities: swimming pools (7), sports hall (3)
9. Play sport with friends from school: 4 yes 4 no
10. Avoid boredom by? 13 activities mentioned including computers (3)
    football (2), cricket, skateboarding, rounders, fighting games.

Section Two: PE at School
11. Games played at junior school:
   Rounders (4), football (3), cricket (3), rugby (2),
   athletics (1), swimming (1), hockey (1)

12. Specialist teacher? 8 yes

13. Dance: 3 yes 5 no

14. Know anything about PE at Bridgetown pre-arrival? "nothing" (3)
   "It was strict and series"

15. How did you know? friends (2); headmaster; just talking

16. Memories of first lesson? 4 yes 3 no:
   "we got told about sets"; "we mucked about"; "yes we
talked"; "went in gym"

17. Most like about PE?
   one mention each: cricket, "we muck about", the lessons!;
different teachers; exercise; exciting

18. Make better:
   "we should not have to do it"; "by choosing what you want to
do"; "more of it"; "do the games pupils are best at"

19. Like least:
   cold (4); rugby (1); "your told what you have to do"; "the
way the teachers bore you"

20. What improvements? "do what you want" (2); sports hall (2);
   "more interesting lessons and games"; tracksuits.

21. Special moments? 4 yes 1 no

22. Embarrassed? 3 yes 3 no

23. Describe? "missed a catch"; swimming trunks fell down;
   "when you've muffed something"

24. One improvement?
   tennis (2); "choose your own sport"; cricket; grass ski
Section Three: How do you learn? (only half respondents turned over page)

27. Games played outside school taught in school: 3 yes

28. Most influence: dad (2); friend (1); grandad (1)

29. Easier learning? -

30. Help concentrate? quiet; warmth; friends; no headache

31. Boring: rugby; watching other people; running; football

32. Weather effect? cold (3); "bores if cold" (1)

33. 'Good' teacher?
   "lets you do a lot of games"
   "understands pupils"
   "personality"

34. 'Good' lesson? warm; enjoyment; good games

35. What advice? "explain it to the pupils that don't understand it"

36. How would you learn more? "go to a sports club"; "explain it"

Section Four: In and around school (only three respondents left)

37. How much sport talk? ranged from 'not much' to 'a lot'

38. What talked about? cricket; football; TV

39. Talk about PE? 2 yes 1 no

40. Importance of school teams? one mention each: very; quite; not

41. Time spent on sport? 1 hour (1) lesson time (1)

42. Sport at lunchtime/break? 1 yes 2 no

43. Talk about fights? 1 yes 2 no

44. Ever involved in fight? 2 yes 1 no

45. Where to smoke? 1 yes 2 no (bikesheds (2))

46. Pupils smoke on way to school? 2 yes 1 a few

47. Good day at school? "teachers being ill"; "good lessons"; "not a lot"

48. Routine? 2 yes 1 no

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49. **Improvements? clubs (2); longer time**

50. **What kind of clubs? computer; snooker; cricket**

I also have questionnaire returns from Mark's first year tutor group, 1S. I have not included their responses here.

Before moving on to other matters, I would like to emphasise that 'filling me in' was a hopeful trawl for material. I am aware that one of the favoured criticisms of qualitative research is its 'looseness' with regard to data collection protocols. My blip of questionnaire activity with no attempt to rigorously enforce secrecy hardly furthers the cause. But my intention was to draw out some elements of how pupils saw physical education.

### 5.2.1.2 Ritchie and Jason

During the course of the Spring Term 1986, I talked with and listened to pupils. Watching lessons with them, if they were non-participants (NPs), gave me an unaccustomed view of physical education. I was interested in teaching and we talked of their experiences with teachers. When I returned to Bridgetown in June, a few months later, there were two NPs in lesson one and two that Wednesday morning that I recognised.

I had my tape recorder with me, Ed was teaching and I thought I would make the most of my opportunity. I asked Ed if I might invite the two NPs to talk about physical education and then I asked the two NPs for their help. It seemed polite to consult Ed first as I did not want my talk with the boys to be distracting.

Whilst part of 2A played tennis, Ritchie, Jason and I sat down on a bench in the playground. Ritchie features in some of my accounts of Ed's lessons whilst Jason was part of a faceless crowd I was describing. I thought it best for a number of reasons to talk with them as a pair.
I asked them if we might talk about what makes physical education enjoyable and how it might be made even better. It was a beautiful, sunny day.

What makes PE enjoyable?

Ritchie: It's all the sports we do [...] like javelin. I like that because I think I'm pretty good at it [...] and running. I like doing that.

Jason: I like javelin but I'm not that good at just saying "alright, I'm going out for a run", you know. I'm alright at sprint but if I'm playing football I can run round a lot otherwise I can't really [...] and I like rugby. But I think PE is better if the teachers are a bit ... sort of nice, you know.

Ritchie: I like winter sports, like football. Mr M and Mr A are brilliant PE teachers; they join in with what we're doing and everything. They just don't boss you about. They tell you something.

Is there a difference between teachers in PE and classroom teachers?

Ritchie: Yes, they're more enjoyable. Yes. Sometimes the teachers help you more than when you're in a class you know.

What's the one thing you enjoy more than anything else in PE or games?

Ritchie: Javelin, discus and shot putt

Jason: Well I like football, softball, cricket and that sort of thing.

What would be the thing that made them enjoyable?

Ritchie: Well, we're so used to it because we do it a lot. And we just enjoy it.

Jason: And cricket because it's more of a team game, you know. You can join in with other people, whereas when you're in a class you can't very well talk to everyone else. But when you're doing a team game it's different.
What effect does the weather have on your enjoyment?

Ritchie: In the winter it does because it's cold and wet and everything. But in the summer if it just rains a bit it doesn't bother me because it makes you cool and I just carry on.

Jason: In the summer I don't really mind if it rains, just as long as it isn't too much. But I prefer it when the sun's out and it's hot, and like there's a small wind to cool you down.

What is the least enjoyable part of PE?

Ritchie: Tennis

Jason: I don't really like rounders that much any more.

Ritchie: I love rounders ... Well, it's just enjoyable. You've got the team and you're trying to beat the other team. It's just great.

What advice would you give to student teachers training to be PE teachers? How can they make PE enjoyable?

Jason: To join in and be friendly with the children

Ritchie: Yes, because if they can be friendly with the children, then the children can be friendly back. And then you can get on with your game or whatever you're doing.

How would you stop teachers taking over your games?

Jason: When we were playing cricket, Mr M went round all the groups checking everything was alright and he'd say "Is it alright if I take the next over?" and if we'd say "No", then it'd be alright and he'd go on to the next group.

How would teachers keep control in PE?

Ritchie: If we muck around too much then they'd say "Go and get changed". They warn us. We have about two warnings you know and then they'd say "Go and sit down" or they give us a demerit.

Are demerits a useful [...]?
Ritchie: I don't really think they make any difference ...because all it is is minus five merits but all you have to do is stay in on a Friday for forty-five minutes and I don't really think that's too bad myself. What I think is worse if they tell you to sit out and not take part.

How do you choose who to work with?

Ritchie: You just stand in a line and go "one,two, one,two". ... I'd rather choose friends because it's more enjoyable with them. But you muck about with them too much.

Jason: But I prefer picking just a couple of my friends and pick some people I know are good at the game.

Do you think PE helps you work together better than other subjects?

Ritchie: Yes, I think so.

Jason: Yes, it's better than other subjects to work in a group together.

Ritchie: PE gets you friends too, What they do is put you in partners, and if you don't know the other ones, you just get to know them.

What happens if you are put with someone you don't like?

Jason: We ask if we can change. If they say no then there's nothing we can do about it. But I still take part. I just don't talk to them if I don't like them. I just play the game like I normally do but it won't be so enjoyable.

What happens if someone in the group is a bit hopeless?

Ritchie: I think if someone isn't any good at anything, then they should play with someone good. But that person should be more friendly to them, you know.

What have you learned in PE in two years?

Ritchie: Nearly all the games
Jason: We've learnt quite a few things. I've learnt a lot.

How do you know how to get out of the PE lessons?

Ritchie: Just say you've lost your kit or you've hurt your leg. It depends on the teacher really and what they're like. But I have hurt my leg, I've got a great big lump on it.

How do you feel about having to have notes for PE?

Jason: I think that's fair because you could just be putting it on.

Do you think people bunk off a lot in PE?

Both Yes

Ritchie: If I didn't like it, I'd just go off somewhere else.

Do you ever have the chance to say to teachers if you're enjoying it, or if you'd like to be doing something else?

Jason: Yes we do. They understand you and then they sort something else out.

Ritchie: Mr E does. Sometimes you say to him "I've hurt my leg" or "I haven't got my kit" and he says "have you got a note?" and you say "no", he'll say "that's a demerit". Mr M and Mr A, they're alright like that because if you haven't got a kit and they know you haven't got the proper kit then they'll let you off. Or if they know you've got a bad leg, then that's alright.

Jason: Yes, but they might want a note on the next day or something mightn't they?

Ritchie: Then they'll say "well bring me in a note next week or tomorrow" or whenever you know.

On that exchange of notes, our conversation ended. I thanked them both for their help and played them back some of the taped conversation. I
explained that I wasn't a spy and their information would be treated in confidence.

Half an hour later, I walked down to the games field to see Mark with 3B2. By a marvellous coincidence, Danny and Adrian were not taking part in a cricket lesson.

5.2.1.3 Danny and Adrian

Danny and Adrian were members of the one class I had got to know 'reasonably' well. Both were small for their age. They were the best of friends and often inseparable in lessons. It was extremely rare that one of them should participate or not participate without the other. Dress and timing of haircuts was similar.

I followed the same line of enquiry as in Ed's lesson. All three (Danny, Adrian and Mark) agreed and so we went into one of the changing rooms in the pavilion. My talk with Ritchie and Jason had helped focus my thoughts.

My introductory question, after I had explained the purpose of recording our conversation, was:

What makes PE good?

Adrian: Well it's good because you keep fit, it's enjoyable. It's a lesson that you can enjoy, playing cricket or something like that.

What is the effect of the kind of weather we had last term?

Adrian: It's difficult because you're all cold and you stand around a lot.

How could a PE teacher make it better?

Adrian: By warming them up, running round a bit.
Danny: Yes, going for a run.

What could you do?

Both: Just run about a bit to keep warm.

How could PE teachers make it better for everyone in a class like yours?

Adrian: Give them a chance with the ball, something like that. Just give them a chance.

What about the less skilful ones?

Adrian: Well you'd just make them join in with the others.

What makes a 'good' PE teacher?

Danny: Plenty of skill, teaches well and you can understand it well. ... Some teachers they just tell you to get on with it and some teachers explain how you do it, where you go and things like that.

Adrian: I feel the same.

How do you feel about demonstrating things?

Danny: It's okay because if you don't do it they're going to think you're chicken or something but if you did it you've got the bottle and that.

How would the teacher keep control of the lesson?

Adrian: By watching everyone and if they're messing around then warn them or tell them off and if it happens again then send them off.

Danny: I suppose the same, but it's like bribery really isn't it.

What about those people who didn't take part in the Spring Term?

Adrian: They did have their kit but they didn't want to do it because it's too cold.
Is that when they bunk off?

Both: Yes

When do they decide to do it?

Adrian: When they get to the pitch. Sometimes in the morning they'd decide in the class and not take their kit.

Have you noticed any differences in the way the PE teachers teach?

Danny: Mr A is not that good. He just tells you what to do and you get on with it. Mr M and Mr E tell you the most about it, they explain.

Would you rather work with friends?

Adrian: Work with friends.

Danny: Sometimes it doesn't work, because you can't get on well when you're with your best friends because you muck about too much and things like that.

What if you were in a group with people you didn't get on with?

Adrian: You wouldn't get on with them, they'd keep annoying you.

How would you get over that?

Danny: You'd ask if you could go with a different group, if they'd let us.

Adrian: Or just ignore them.

What do you like most in PE?

Both: Football, cricket, tennis and basketball. Rugby is quite a good one. They're all really good.

What don't you like?

Danny: I don't like the shot putt that much.

Adrian: There isn't anything that I don't like.
If you were to give one piece of advice to a student teacher, what would it be?

Adrian: Be a bit harder

Danny: Don't let them get away with things ... When you first start teaching you should be quite soft because you don't know what they're like but once you get to know what they're like and their habits, you just correct them.

Our conversation ended on that piece of advice. I thanked them both for their help and played back some of the tape to them. As an extended thank you, I drove them back to school at the end of lesson four. They seemed very happy driving past the rest of 3B2.

These were the only recorded conversations I had with pupils during the field work. I did however benefit from an Adrian Mole type view from my next door neighbour Josh, who occasionally tossed over the garden fence the odd bit of news of life at Bridgetown.

5.2.2 Management Voices

Over an extended period of time, I had opportunities to talk with the senior management at Bridgetown. As I have indicated, when I arrived at the school in 1986, the head and deputy head were already known to me. I also knew one of the senior teachers. In 1988, he became a deputy head when that post became vacant.

All three senior managers were involved and interested in sport in 1986. The head played soccer and tennis, the deputy head, Mr Matthews, was involved in race-walking and cross-country, and Miss Gray had played hockey and was actively involved in the administration of a local hockey club.

I made a point of seeking them out during the Spring Term but they had considerably more important matters to deal with during the industrial
action. Most of our conversations were brief. I had lunch on one occasion with them during the term but this was a potentially hazardous arrangement as NUT members were not taking their lunch in the school dining room during the industrial action!

I always found our talks friendly and detected their interest in my work. From the outset I had tried to agree a contract which assured confidentiality and tact. I have had to think very carefully how to deal with some of the information shared with me.

At some stages, I felt rather like a lobby correspondent. I was hearing accounts of physical education from the bottom up and top down. At some stage, I would like to write about this experience as an empirical example of the micropolitics of schooling and as a contribution to a sense of history about the curriculum. I agree with Ivor Goodson (1985) that a view is needed of the complexity of curriculum action and negotiation over time.

Throughout my links with Bridgetown a number of issues have become significant:

1. staffing policy
2. facilities
3. curriculum development
4. management/physical education staff relationships
5. subject status

In Chapter Three, the transcript material presented for Alan, Mark and Ed touched upon these matters.

I would like to draw upon three sources to give an indication of Mr Mitchell's position. I have already presented extracts from school publicity material to indicate the 'official' view of physical education.
In March 1986, Mr Mitchell reported to his board of governors. Included in his report, which was pinned on the appropriate section of the staffroom noticeboard, were the following points:

1. The school has 1018 on roll.

2. Youth Club: "after a few teething problems last term, the youth club is running with great success on Monday and Wednesday evenings. The youth club complemented by Sports Hall youth activities begins to meet a priority need in the area for teenagers. Much credit for the success of this venture must go to Mr E who both leads the youth club and organises much of the youth community provision in the Sports Hall."

3. Industrial Action: three teachers were interviewed for a BBC radio programme, "but this excitement apart: the action is continuing to erode many aspects of school life and is now causing very considerable concern."
   (a) general discipline had improved over the past few years but is now deteriorating; less co-operative pupils; withdrawal of teachers' goodwill; general low morale. "Positive education is being replaced by a more negative containment of pupil behaviour"
   (b) homework setting deteriorated;
   (c) written reports and parental consultation in chaos
   (d) curriculum development stifled

"I am very concerned that the distance between scale 1 and scale 2 teachers and senior staff, myself in particular, is increasing." This despite regular departmental and staff meetings. A move to autocratic management and leaked information.

Yet curriculum initiatives are expected to flower!

The report was written at the end of the Spring Term. Apart from thanking Mr Mitchell for allowing me to be in the school and asking if I might return in subsequent terms. I had no formal opportunity to sit down and discuss matters. When I returned to the school in July 1987, I hoped to arrange a meeting with Mr Mitchell. Unfortunately a diary mix up meant a planned meeting could not go ahead and so I wrote him a letter asking some questions about physical education at Bridgetown. I received a reply within a fortnight with some answers to my questions about:
1. The place of physical education in the school

"P.E. is seen as an important part of the whole education of all pupils at this school. However, there has been a shift of emphasis away from team games towards trying to educate children for 'healthy living'. In this we have particularly changed our pastoral programme in Year 1 and have involved elements of H.E., Science and P.E. We also take themes of healthy living into and through Years 4 and 5 and have tried to extend experience into such areas as dance and swimming for all (something which Bridgetown has found particularly difficult to offer in the past). Within the last two years we have started to use some basic testing in physical skills in the lower part of the school."

2. Curriculum development

"Curriculum development is still rather patchy ... It is no secret that I would wish to see more mixed activities - equally one cannot impose on established teachers but rather encourage. To hopefully facilitate further development ... I have appointed an overall head of department this year - to their surprise, Sarah, in an acting capacity, for this year. This has been done because Sarah has I believe both the necessary vision within her own area and the determination to produce much of the needed change..."

3. Staff development

"... has also been patchy, particularly given the fact that the three male teachers hold other major responsibilities in school. For all this there has been quite a bit of work put in in GCSE - I think we are the only school in the area offering GCSE P.E. and Sarah is one of the Board's trainers and is an examiner - not bad after two years teaching!

4. Effect of Industrial Action on subsequent extra-curricular activity

"...I suspect that whilst most school teams have flourished there is not the depth of enthusiasm for these games that existed a few years ago. It may also be significant that we have been very successful this year ... I would add that we are seriously looking at a three session day with the third session giving far more opportunity for extension activities to pupils. Within this I would envisage offering a number of short contracts for specialist instructors in the area of P.E. and it may be that there will be total overlap between Bridgetown football teams and the local football side. In many respects this will be a good thing since it will ensure
During a hectic, two-day visit to Bridgetown in March 1988, Mr Mitchell was a "sitting target". He had ruptured his achilles tendon playing tennis and was confined to his office. On arrival at the school and discovering a potentially captive audience, I arranged a meeting. As usual, Mr Mitchell was generous with his time, and with his permission I made some brief notes during our conversation (which I subsequently sent to him to check).

I used the opportunity both to update myself on the school front and to specifically raise the state of the changing rooms both at the Sports Hall and the games field. We talked about: perceived status; objective view of facilities; support staff; career development. I found our exchange "full and frank". We talked about how the arrival of Mr Mitchell's son in the first year had eased relationships with the male physical education teachers. His son was enjoying physical education and Mr Mitchell could attend school matches as a parent and take pride in his son's achievement.

Mr Mitchell also gave me news of a £1,000,000 scheme to build a sports hall and all weather pitch on-site at Bridgetown, on the strip of land between the school and Riverside. I offered to do any background research that he or the department might need for this purpose.

Our conversation ended with a discussion of how my research at the school might facilitate staff and curriculum development. Mr Mitchell wanted to be able to discuss matters openly with the boys' physical education department.

Following on from this discussion, I started to think about a way of encouraging some kind of meeting between the senior management and the department. It occurred to me that I might be able to use some of the research material to open up a dialogue between the two parties. On my next visit to the school in July 1988 this was discussed with the deputy
head (my former colleague), Mr Lindsay, and Sarah. Mr Lindsay thought an INSET day would help focus everyone's attention and Sarah added that "It's great having an outside agency. It gives a ray of hope."

In my meetings with Mr Mitchell, Miss Gray and Mr Lindsay, I was aware of my privileged access. In my account of their voices, I have been conscious of the onus of discretion on my part.

In June 1989, when I returned to the school to discuss the confidentiality and anonymity of my write up, I had to arrange to meet Miss Gray and Mr Lindsay at 8.00am. It was the only time they could see me during the whole week as they were heavily involved in writing up the school development plan for the IMS initiative. Mr Mitchell had moved to a new post in the South West and both Miss Gray and Mr Lindsay were holding the fort until the new headteacher came into the school in September 1989.

5.3 Riverside Voices

Field relations at Riverside were different to those at Bridgetown. The other voices I heard at the school were those of John, head of games, Mr Wells briefly in conversation, and pupils barely at all. There are a number of documents that speak about the school and I have drawn on these. I also include one brief exchange I overheard in a rowing training session.

5.3.1 A Voice from the Past

In the booklet published to celebrate twenty-five years of the Riverside Boat Club, a former headmaster wrote about the games curriculum at the school.
... by the time I left, Riverside was probably known more widely throughout the land for the achievements of its Boat Club than for any other of its many activities.

The establishment of the Boat Club had another, if indirect, influence on the development of the School. Shortly after I arrived in 1950, it was possible, with numbers expanding, to add Rugby to Association Football for boys who preferred to play under that code; and in addition to these two winter games there was a flourishing Boxing Club...when the present building was erected in 1939 special provision was made in the Assembly Hall to accommodate the ring. Although it had such a high place in general esteem, I was becoming increasingly concerned about the physical consequences of boxing ... We agreed that ... rowing should take the place of boxing ... and rowing in the School owes not a little to the goodwill of those who would have preferred boxing but who nevertheless allowed rowing to take pride of place.

5.3.2 A Voice of the Present: John, Head of Games

The first person I was introduced to at Riverside was John, head of games. In the tradition of the school, his role was distinguished from that of the teachers of physical education. Over a period of three years I had numerous conversations with John about physical education and games.

John acted as the link between the school management and the department and represented the department at committee meetings. When I first visited the school in December 1985 I made a note that John and the headmaster seemed to have a good working relationship. John joined the staff at Riverside in 1978 and was appointed head of games in 1984.

My interest at Riverside was with physical education. This meant that most of my time was spent with Bob and Tony but in order to understand their work, I needed to grasp the significance of the link between physical education and games. I asked John if he would mind recording a talk with me about his work and the curriculum at Riverside. The opportunity to do so arose in March 1988. We sat in the Sports Hall office, talked for an hour and a half and then had lunch together. The transcript of our conversation runs to fifty-seven pages.
Our conversation started with:

(i) The Sports Hall

Keith: I understood that you were responsible for the planning. Is that right?

John: ...I was responsible for, I suppose, giving architects what we needed in terms of some changing facilities, office facilities, storage facilities and a rough idea of what I thought the place would be like... But the architects took over... Suddenly it was taken out of my hands... there are problems, little problems that needn't have been there, if only I'd been involved in consultations all the way along the line instead of only in just the initial stages...

Keith: ... is that some kind of statement about the way PE and games are viewed?

John: No I don't think so. I think on most of the buildings that we've had here, you've had similar complaints... we've had problems with the people who are fitting the place out ...

Keith: ...you seem to have done a lot of research ...

John: Yes, we saw ten sports halls in two years...

Keith: Did the idea for a sports hall come from you?...

John: No, it was an idea before I came ... A few years ago, there was a big conflict over the next new building to be built [...] it was going to be a sports hall or a library ... the headmaster chose a library when most of the staff thought a sports hall would be better for the school...

(ii) 1986-1988 Update

John: ...last year we were waiting for the Sports Hall to go up. This year the Sports Hall has made things so much better as far as PE is concerned.

Another thing I think has helped. Tony has been involved in health-related fitness courses a lot more, as from last summer really and I think that clearly it's given him a great deal of impetus in his teaching. He went to the Loughborough Summer School ... it's kept the department up to date with what is going on and, to be honest, I've been very much able to leave all that to him... Whereas in the past, when the health-related thing started, Bob really did it... bravely carried it on his shoulders...
Keith: Have you produced any resources for the health course?

John: I was working on it but it ground to a halt. It was a guide to exercise programmes for the staff... all those who do games...

One of the things I'm really trying to work on at the moment is this health programme in the fourth year... What we're trying to do is to integrate the health-related fitness work we do in PE with the moral responsibilities, different cultures, different people, the work we do in RS with something we're going to call PDS, Personal Development Studies. So that the three will work together...

(iii) A Written Syllabus?

Keith: Is there a written syllabus for the department?

John: No there isn't and this is again something I've got to work on, probably for the new man. It's an area which I've found difficult because having not been a specialist [...] I know what is taught and where and when it is taught... Tony did write one down. I've always felt that I didn't want to interfere with Tony and Bob who were both very much professionals and sort of lay down what I want...

(iv) Status

Keith: I wondered what you felt about the status, either in curricular or extra-curricular terms of the subject and how your experience is changing what that might be?

John: ... should we manage to get this programme off the ground that will help it [...] the status has improved immensely with the advent of health-related fitness work. The Sports Hall itself has also improved the status of it...

...I think it's natural the way that PE is going to be low down on the list... When it comes to timetabling for practical reasons, it actually comes fairly early...

(v) Physical Education and Games

Keith: ... if different staff deal with the same children, do the children themselves construe a difference between PE and games?

John: Yes, I think they do. I think PE is a subject in its own right ...I would honestly like to work towards us doing some of the GCSE PE and I think that would help to enhance its academic status as well.
Keith: What about the 'A' level?

John: Well certainly, yes. I've got no objections. It's a question of staffing...

... I didn't come to this school having PE in mind at all. I came to teach religion and philosophy and it would have been silly for them not to use my cricket.

Keith: Do the games staff have a brief about skill development, tactical appreciation, or is it very much up to them to decide and define what it is they do?

John: No. It's more or less left to them and almost always has been at this kind of school. What I have done this year, which I didn't do in the past [...] I gave them stuff on the exercises, flexibility work and warming-up and cooling-down ...

... As far as running their own teams are concerned and their own games are concerned, that's very much left up to the individuals but the individual is, in all the sports that we do, very much guided by the person who runs the top team or who is in charge. Like cricket, I will be around whenever cricket is taught more or less. I'll be there generally to follow the etiquette I want out of cricket...

(vi) Rowing

Keith: Is rowing larger than life in terms of the school's commitment to sport?

John: No. I don't think so. It is an important part of the school. They are very, very successful... There's certainly antagonism towards rowing... in that it does receive publicity and they are able to win trophies and things which perhaps we're not able to do in what we would regard as 'more proper' sports...I have my doubts about the whole physiological, muscle-building process that they do ... they've got it in writing that it's not doing them any harm but I personally have my doubts. But I've done all I can to clear the books.

... the rowing club is very much a unit on its own.

I will make complaints if I think they are misusing weights or the gym ... But really the rowing does look after itself by people who are experts. It's like a separate club. It raises its own money through its own parents, although the school does give it a lot. The school does get a lot of publicity out of it.
(vii) Curriculum development

Keith: Do you sit down together and discuss and develop ideas?

John: We don't actually sit down and discuss things [...] very seldom [...] it's an area we're lacking. ... It's hard because you've got two very competent people working and they work in their own particular way and they communicate with themselves reasonably well between one another... I've tended to work much more on feeling and individual comments and we have had of course the odd meetings, especially with the setting up of this place...

... I'm not so much in favour of actually having meetings ...
The times when we actually have meetings are only really at the very beginning of term...It's just impossible for us to find the time when we can all sit down, unless it is actually a part of an INSET day...

(viii) Evaluation

John: I'm open to ideas of how to evaluate. The way that I try to do it is through anonymous surveys... and informal discussions... That is my own way of informal evaluation...

One thing I do find with regard to PE is that they do like the health and fitness approach but they don't like it interrupting the possibility for exercise.

(ix) Staff development

John: It's one thing that is good here, that you can go on courses ...

You choose the course you want... if you find a course that you feel will be useful, the money is generally available...

(x) Where we are now

John: ... we are much more open now to the outside and we're not just in a little closet, certainly in terms of the PE it's improved an awful lot ...
Shortly after John's summary our conversation ended and we went for lunch. Whenever we met subsequently, John shared ideas about the topics we had discussed. After three years we had managed to move from formal introductions to quite personal chats about our young families and job prospects. I was also aware that the public voice of the head of games had also, in the early days of the research, smoothed my access to the school. With his interest in cricket, I suppose I could refer to him not so much as a gatekeeper, more a wicketkeeper. On my last visit to Riverside in June 1989, I discovered that John had been appointed to a senior master's post in the Home Counties.

The new voice of games had been appointed by the new headmaster. Tradition has been maintained at Riverside and the new head of games was neither Bob nor Tony.

5.4 Mr Wells

Towards the end of the intensive fieldwork phase of the research, I wrote to Mr Wells to ask if he and I might talk about physical education and games at Riverside. We did not manage to coincide for long enough to have the kind of meeting I was able to have with Mr Mitchell. Since Mr Wells's retirement, I have been able to have two conversations with the new headmaster.

Mr Wells was supportive of physical education and games whenever we chatted. If he spotted me in the dining room or in the canteen at the end of the school day, he usually enquired how things were progressing. He replied to all my letters and was generous in his support of the research.

The nearest I could get to a statement about his views on physical education and games was his letter to prospective parents and an interview in the Riverside Magazine 1988 to mark his retirement.
In the Magazine, the interviewer asked Mr Wells "How important do you consider sport and games in the curriculum?" His reply was:

I always loathed games at school. Later on I quite enjoyed playing tennis and squash and I used to like simple rock climbing, until I fell off a mountain in North Wales and wrecked my ankle ...

But I know games give much pleasure and fulfilment to lots of people, and I'm full of admiration for those who play football and rugby with such skill, or even those who get up before dawn to row. I don't envy them, but I do get pleasure from their success. Games can give people confidence and satisfaction. I'm not sure whether they're necessarily good for the character, just as I'm not sure that music purifies it.

In the same edition, the new headmaster was asked a few questions. Here is how the article was headed:

Soundings

As term began, Garry Newman bowled some tricky balls to the new Headmaster who kept a prudently straight bat

One question related to school sport: should the school encourage a less competitive sports policy?

No I don't think so. There has been a lot of talk about participation as against competitiveness in sport, but they are not mutually exclusive. I think if you enter a game you enter to win - otherwise you devalue any victory your opponents may have.

I have a very competitive attitude to sport personally, although I would always hope to be able to lose with good grace and humour. I hope that we at Riverside, whether as individuals or as a team, will always play within the rules and general ethos of the game.

It was reported that the new headmaster played hockey and was also a playing member of the MCC.
5.5 Filling Me In

There were few, if any, pupils who did not participate in physical education at Riverside and I had very little opportunity to talk with pupils at the school. This was mainly because I spent so much time talking with Bob and Tony. The sense of perspective of lessons there was correspondingly different to that at Bridgetown.

I did, however, try out the questionnaire with some of the pupils. I cleared the questionnaire with John, the head of games, who then took a copy to Mr Wells. Mr Wells suggested that I should sign the questionnaire so that parents would know its source. I think this request came about because of questions I had included about smoking and fighting.

Pupils in Tony's and Bob's classes took the questionnaires away to complete in their own time. Response rates varied and the only set of questionnaires returned in any number was Tony's 2H.

2H's responses to the questionnaire were:

1. Ages 12 - 13
2. Distance travelled to school: < 1 mile to 25 miles
3. Family active in sport: 11 yes 3 no.
4. Favourite activity: 10 mentioned: Tennis (6), yes (4), cricket (3), football (2)
5. Member of outside clubs: 8 yes 4 no: cricket, tennis, badminton, football
6. TV sport watched: 14 mentioned. football (6), tennis (5), basketball (5), rugby (4), athletics (4), American football (4)
7. Watch live sport: 8 yes 6 no
8. Use of local facilities: swimming pools (12), sports hall (8), tennis (3)
9. Play sport with friends from school: 6 yes 8 no
10. Avoid boredom by? 9 activities mentioned including computers (4), tennis (4)

Section Two: PE at School

11. Games played at junior school:
    football (11), cricket (4), basketball (1), rugby (1), athletics (2), rounders (1)
12. **Specialist teacher?** 8 yes 6 no
13. **Dance:** 9 yes 5 no
14. **Know anything about PE at Riverside pre-arrival?** 1 yes 13 no
   "I had heard it was very good"
15. **How did you know?** older friends; brothers; "bitter experience"
16.  
17. **Memories of first lesson?** 3 yes 11 no
18. **Most like about PE?**
   Hockey (6), basketball (4), paddler tennis (4), football (3)
   volleyball (2), tennis (2), cricket, all, PE
19. **Make better:** more of them (8), not too much gym (1)
   "The teacher should listen to our points of view as well"
20. **Like least:**
   gymnastics (6), fitness tests (3), rugby (2)
21. **What improvements?** more time; less time; no fitness tests.
22. **Special moments?** 7 yes 7 no
   scored basket (3); won long jump
23.  
24. **Embarrassed?** 5 yes 8 no
25. **Describe?** "Mr T makes us do it without shorts"; "couldn't climb a rope"
26. **One improvement?**
   "forget my kit on purpose"; stronger arms; more PE (5); Mr T
   more friendly; bigger gym; more volleyball

Section Three: How do you learn? (only half respondents turned over page)
27. **Games played outside school taught in school?** tennis (4), football (4),
   table tennis (2), yes (2), cricket (2), basketball (1), no (1)
28. **Influence:** Teachers (7), dad (2), mum (1) friend (1)
29. **Easier learning?** 5 yes 9 no; "relaxed pleasant atmosphere"
30. **Help concentrate?** good teacher (2); interesting subject (1);
   silence (1); happy atmosphere (1)
31. Boring: this questionnaire!; running around field; warm ups; tedious lessons

32. Weather effect? 7 yes 3 no

33. 'Good' teacher?
   humour (4); interesting (2); control (2); no gym; character; Mr T; "seeing both sides of the argument"; ability; helps.

34. 'Good' lesson? interesting (4); enjoyment (2); laughs; indoors

35. What advice? explain things;
   "When talking to us, make everything clear and if necessary tell us things in parts instead of all at once"

36. How would you learn more? understand; interest; listen; concentrate; longer lessons

Section Four: In and around school

37. How much sport talk? ranged from 'not much' to '50%'

38. What talked about?
   sport (7), sex (3) clothes (2), girls, computers, TV

39. Talk about PE? 7 yes 7 no

40. Importance of school teams? very (4); quite (4); not (6)

41. Time spent on sport? ranged from just lessons to 8 hours+

42. Sport at lunchtime/break? 11 yes 3 no

43. Talk about fights? 3 yes 11 no

44. Ever involved in fight? 11 yes 3 no

45. Where to smoke? 10 yes 4 no (fives courts (4))

46. Pupils smoke on way to school? 9 yes 5 no

47. Good day at school?: fire drills (4); interesting lessons (2)

48. Routine? 6 yes 8 no

49. Improvements? longer break (4); shorter lunchtime; advertise clubs

50. What kind of clubs? 13 clubs mentioned
Consent: 9 pupils explicitly gave consent, including: "I would like some teachers to be told about the answers except 38"

One pupil took the questionnaire away and returned with a word processor print out of his answers.

5.6 Ergometer, Ergo Sun

In the second week of fieldwork at Riverside, I went along with Bob to his lunchtime weights club/fitness session. I recorded the following whilst 'observing' all the activity going on in what was a fairly small gym.

Lunch Time: South Gym Weight Training and Rowing:
21 January 1986

60 pupils crammed into the gym. Bob was working with mainly 4th yrs on weights and rowers were also training. 3 ergometers were in use.

The master in charge of rowing was loud, assertive and dominant. He bellowed instructions and exhorted effort. Gave the impression of pupils as machines. At one point a pupil on completing his session on the ergometer failed to stop it correctly. As he climbed out of ergometer he lay on the floor, breathless. I recorded the following comments from the master-in-charge:

"Who was that?"

"Next time you do that I'll put you through the window!"

"Wait until you do some real work, then see how you feel!"

It seemed that the pupil, not the same somatotype as others in the group (he was podgier although wore rowing shorts and I later saw him in the 4th yr 8) was at the fringe of the group. The senior rowers worked to exhaustion on the ergometer.
PART III
CHAPTER SIX: Constructively Approaching a Sociological Analysis of the Teaching of Boys' Physical Education in the Secondary School.

6.1 Introduction

I wanted you to meet Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob, Tony and other members of the cast before I attempted any discussion of the relationship between the research context and the 'literature'. It was important to me that you knew something about people and places, albeit through my observation, before I attempted an explicit sociological analysis of the teaching of boys' physical education. In Chapter One, I indicated that I wanted to celebrate the voices of those with whom I researched. Part II of the thesis has been my attempt to deliver on that contract.

Throughout my field work at Bridgetown and Riverside, I was interested in how physical education teachers constructed their lessons. Three sets of questions helped direct my research:

(i) Teachers

What salient biographical factors influence the way physical education is taught?

How do teachers deliver and evaluate lesson content?

Are teachers active curriculum researchers?

(ii) Contexts

What significance is attached to physical education by the school hierarchy?

What cultural expectations impinge upon the construction of the physical education curriculum?
(iii) Pupils

What factors influence a child's involvement in physical education?

How significant is physical education in a child's experience of formal and extra-curricular education?

In Part II my aim was to provide accounts that enabled you as reader to gain a sense of teachers, contexts and pupils. In this chapter I want to develop a sociological analysis by drawing on constructive alternativism as a means of coming to know about personal and inter-subjective meaning-making.

Maureen Pope (1981) has noted the invitational mood central to George Kelly's epistemology. She characterises this as "the presentation of ideas as if they might be a useful way of looking at things" (1981:1, original emphasis). Constructivism's range of convenience has enabled me to consider the importance of coming to an understanding of the view of the world held by those involved in physical education.

John Novak (1985), amongst others, has sought to link Kelly's personal focus with social, political and historical dimensions. He has suggested that "educative events are not self-enclosed entities unaffected by events in the world at large" (1985:15). Maureen Pope and John Novak have suggested that an educational constructivist pays attention to the insight that:

...we are continually in the process of constructing the social world which is continually affecting our social and personal constructions. (1985:4)

It is Robert Neimeyer's (1985) view that until the significance of this social dimension is fully grasped the invitational mood of personal construct psychology will be unduly restricted.
Constructivism has encouraged me to recognise that teachers' and pupils' personal constructs have important epistemological value and high educational status. It has enabled me to 'make' the problem of teaching and learning in physical education. Don Bannister has suggested that:

...education should be about personal meaning and it is through the personal meaning which we give to our education and the personal way in which we live it out that we give back to our society that which we have created. (1979:3)

Some researchers have used insights gained from phenomenological sociology to orientate their approach to the teaching of physical education (see, for example, David Kirk 1986a). My preference has been for the kindred spirit of constructivism. It has enabled me to recognise that many views of what education is and can be do co-exist. Part II of the thesis is my attempt to relate some of this diversity within the social world of physical education.

6.2 Themes from the Field

The range of field research detail I have presented in Part II is intended to convey the diversity of voices available to me in just two schools. The accounts I constructed were crafted on the basis of guiding perspectives outlined in the Preface. Although the accounts are in themselves sociologically informed, I want to ground an explicit sociological analysis of the teaching of physical education in themes that have emerged for me during the process of research at Bridgetown and Riverside. I have chosen two overarching themes to act as vehicles for the analysis. These are:

6.2.1 The Story Behind the Story: The Cardio-Vascular Researcher and the Occasionally Captive Audience

6.2.2 Teaching Physical Education
In Part II, I wanted to tell a tale from the field that captured the immediacy and disjointedness of everyday experience of schooling. Walter Doyle (1979), amongst others, has pointed to the multidimensional, simultaneous, immediate and unpredicatable quality of classrooms. My view of this process was enabled by my commitment to an ethnographic approach to research. Being an ethnographer is akin to both watching a performance of *Noises Off* and acting in it.

Harry Wolcott (1984) has suggested that:

> Most of us who do ethnography in educational settings have occupied other educators roles; all of us have spent untold numbers of years in schools. We 'know' what school is like and what we like in schools. We know the school setting so well that, unknowingly, we become our own best informants. We forget to ask others how they make sense of what goes on because we already know what to make of it ourselves. (1984:179)

Most of 'us', it seems to me, refers to those who have researched in classroom contexts quite distinct from physical education. During my research I became aware of some of the particular difficulties facing me in 'open' classrooms. Stephen Cook (1985) and Andrew Pollard (1988) have drawn attention to the characteristics of those settings where teaching and learning take place in physical education.

In my case it was not so much whether I understood the difference between emic and etic perspectives or idiographic or nomothetic explanations, it was whether I could keep warm in substantial wind chill in outdoor lessons or run fast enough to keep up. There is not much advice in research textbooks about Damart clothing or cardio-vascular endurance. Both seem essential for survival in the field!

In Part II, I was able to construct accounts from field notes made in different contexts. Whilst I reserve comments about my research role until 6.4, I want to discuss here some of the technical aspects of field methods. I do so because I am aware of the criticisms made of the potential indiscipline of field work. Many critics of ethnography seek to invalidate (sic) field accounts on technical points of order. I am
keenly aware that the assumptions a researcher makes about the relationship between theory and methods have overdetermining effects on what is to count as evidence.

Throughout the research I regarded myself as an ethnographer and was keen to be involved in the trinity of observation, conversation and document collection. I much prefer the description of the ethnographic researcher as 'being around' (Paul Willis, 1980) to 'participant observer'. I would, at a future date, be intrigued to follow up the notion of ethnographers 'doing nothing' in the Smash Street Kid sense of the term (Paul Corrigan, 1979).

(i) 'Being Around'

I was conscious in Part II of trying to share with you the process of mapping I undertook at Bridgetown and Riverside. I was nervous at the first meetings. Mark's lesson with the first year swimming group did have a first-date quality to it. For the first few weeks everything was new and yet familiar. I found it extremely helpful living near the schools. My experiences of teaching in a comprehensive school and of supervising students on teaching practice enabled me to make the strange familiar but I also tried to make the familiar strange as expected of an ethnographer.

In the first half of the Spring Term 1986, I got to know my way around and established rhythms for the days. Within a relatively short time not only did I know where to be on Riverside Tuesdays and Bridgetown Wednesdays, but I also started to get a sense of where to go to find people or not to find them as the case may be. I gradually found space to catch up with the writing up of notes generated by being around. At Riverside, lesson four at the end of morning school became my 'free' lesson whilst at Bridgetown the cafe near the Sports Hall became a retreat after lesson four, prior to Alan's lessons five and six.
Throughout my stay I was very concerned about not intruding into those places and personal spaces that were not mine or to which no obvious invitation was made. I made no attempt to gain access to any official documents about staff or pupils and relied solely on those papers in the public domain. In this sense I never lost sight of my guest status in both schools. The vicissitudes of the industrial action at Bridgetown made me acutely aware of my privileged access and I tried to do everything I could not to overstay or overstep my welcome. My main strategy was to try to act as a 'dog's body' and to be a kind of technical support staff.

On some occasions I was incorporated into lessons as umpire, referee, and player/spare partner in geometrically imperfect classes. On others I withdrew literally into the distance as groups disappeared to the far end of playing fields. There were cardio-vascular demands when I tried to warm-up with groups whilst on other occasions I was able to have extended conversations with captive audiences. Bored non-participant pupils provided a rich seam of talk and news. During the course of the research both Mr Mitchell and Tony had achilles tendon operations and were relatively immobile for a time - with their legs in plaster they could not even hobble away from me!

'Being around' enabled me to make a variety of field notes. In the next section I discuss these notes.

(ii) Field Notes

The accounts of lessons presented in Part II rely on varying amounts of field notes. I indicated, for example, that the notes I made in Alan's and Tony's lessons were limited. Both teachers engaged me in conversation and/or involved me in their lessons. I also found it extremely difficult to make notes on some occasions either because of the weather or the nature of the lesson itself.
I was aware of a distinct change in the kind of notes I made in lessons after the half term break in 1986. I had used a time frame for some observations before half term but I found it increasingly helpful to make regular use of time references thereafter. I was not trying to develop the kind of systematic observation procedures favoured by those interested in time on task or academic learning time. The change in procedure was emergent and grounded. Perhaps the process of change in my note taking was akin to Howard Becker's suggestion that:

by making numerous observations we confront ourselves with the major features of the collective activity we study in a gross and repeated way such that it is unlikely that we will unconsciously avoid recording some important matters. (1970:57)

By the end of the Spring Term 1986 I felt I had acquired a routine of note taking, making and developing that suited me. The 'free' time slots in the days at Riverside and Bridgetown helped enormously. For one thing I could at least have some legible notes. They also provided an excellent opportunity to recall previously unrecorded comments.

I want to emphasise that although I did pay careful attention to my field notes the variability over time in quantity and quality surprised me. I am acutely aware, for example, that I made few notes after lunch in both schools. I want to be explicit about such shortcomings. It is not that I am endorsing sloppy methods nor am I suggesting that boredom had anything to do with it.

What I do want to propose, however, is that the crafting of an account of teaching must acknowledge the developmental aspect of coming to know about that teaching. Linear, selective accounts may be a strategic response to academic conventions but they can conceal the texture of the field experience. In my account in Part II, I wanted to develop a transparent style that enabled you to sense the variability of my field experience whilst not being too distracted from details of the teaching of physical education.
I wanted you to be with me where the action was or was not! One of the considerable anxieties of field work reported in confessional accounts of research (see, for example, Robert Burgess, 1984a) is being comfortable about being in the right place at the right time.

The story behind Part II is to do with my attempts to collect material with and through which to provide a textured account of the teaching of physical education. My reading of Alison Lurie's (1987) *Imaginary Friends* and William Foote Whyte's (1955) *Street Corner Society* encouraged me to believe that sociological analysis need not be limited in form of re-presentation. In Part II, I wanted to embed analysis in a range of accounts that were both self-consciously local and circumstantial and yet offered insights into the process of teaching physical education beyond Bridgetown and Riverside.

In the next section I want to make some explicit links between my accounts and this wider context. Before I do so, I will conclude this section with some comments about how I came to get a sense of Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony's work.

My characterisation of the teaching of physical education at Bridgetown and Riverside relies mainly on my notes made in and around lessons. Subsequent conversations about teaching were focussed by what I had seen of Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony as teachers. I made no attempt to conceal my note taking. I asked each teacher if they minded my taking notes. There was no objection to this but on no occasion did any teacher ask to see my notes nor did I offer to show my notebooks to them. I would have made available to them notes of their lessons had they requested them. My main means of making public my notes (which were almost illegible to me let alone another reader) was by a kind of stimulated recall with the teacher concerned. An example of this is my discussion with Mark of his use of demonstration in 3B2 Badminton lessons (see 3.4.3.4). I tried not to give the impression that my notes were some form of evaluation or a kind of teaching practice criticism.
I wanted to minimise my status as a college lecturer during the research. I was particularly keen to disabuse the teachers at Bridgetown of my 'expertise'. This was not false modesty on my part. I had not taught in a school for over eight years and was genuinely in their school to learn, not to pass judgement.

Observations of lessons gave me a sense of what teachers did. I also talked with them about their views of teaching over a period of two years. With their agreement I audio-taped our conversations and eventually transcribed them verbatim in August 1988.

It was not until June 1989 that I shared with the teachers the transcript material. In some cases, the transcripts related to conversations held three years previously. I was keen to use the transcripts and so I asked those teachers still in post and whom I could contact to check them for overall accuracy. I was only able to give material to Ed, Bob, Tony and John. My agreement with them was that I would not use any parts of their transcripts to which they objected. I apologised for the considerable delay in getting the material to them. It was not, I assured them, a devious ploy.

Some of the teachers did ask for some parts of their transcript not to be reproduced. All were agreed about the surprise on seeing their thoughts in print. As with other aspects of my research contract, I followed the wishes of the teachers. Alan and Mark did not see their interview transcripts and, as I indicated in Part II, this has encouraged me to be extremely circumspect with them. I made extensive use of such transcripts in Chapters Three and Four.

In my account of the story behind the story, I have been mindful that ethnographic reporting as a genre foregrounds the relationship of a researcher to the field. The openness of ethnographic research to scrutiny is particularly attractive to me.
6.2.2 Teaching Physical Education

One of the animating spirits of my research was my work with student teachers. I was becoming distanced from the lived reality of teaching and yet was offering a counselling service to students who had specific problems with their teaching.

Central to my concern about my role was the problem identified by Tony Edwards (1980). I wanted to know:

how far 'out' from the interaction can structural features be identified without losing sight of their connections with actual events? (1980:68)

My experience of research with the five teachers has provided me with case study material to share with student teachers. It has also enabled me to think creatively about the links between case study approaches and action research. Jon Nixon (1987) has articulated this link in a particularly helpful way for me. By highlighting distinctive and unique aspects of classrooms, research can, Jon Nixon suggests:

challenge the currently widespread assumption that there is a package of ready-made solutions to the problems of schooling and education. (1987:192)

In order to make connections between the private troubles of physical education teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside and the public issues facing the profession as a whole, I would like to develop an analysis based on three issues rooted in my account in Part II. These are:

(i) access to facilities
(ii) making the lesson happen
(iii) developing the curriculum
(i) Access to facilities

During my research, sports halls loomed large and symbolised the difference in access to facilities at Bridgetown and Riverside. Bridgetown's use of an off-site sports hall had assumed critical significance by 1988. Riverside opened its purpose-built £750,000 sports hall in December 1987 on land between the main school site and the chain link fence that separated the two schools.

I noted in Part II that Alan was keeping a record of temperatures in the Sports Hall during the Spring Term 1986 and as a form of protest about the absence of heating had taught there in a sheepskin coat (see 3.3.3.2). At that time all the windows in the building had either been smashed or boarded up. During the school day, the building was locked until a teacher arrived. Community use of the Sports Hall in the evening often caused problems with equipment the following day.

Time spent with Alan and Mark in the Spring Term gave me a sense of some of the difficulties 'dual use' presented. When I returned to Bridgetown in March 1988, Alan took me along to the Sports Hall to show me what had happened to the building. I also went with him to the pavilion at the games field. What I saw prompted me to write to Mr. Mitchell.

Here is part of my letter:

It is now two years since you and your staff welcomed me into the school and made my research into the teaching of physical education possible. My research contract with you and the p.e. department I hope has been explicit and honest. I have been in the privileged position of seeing the school functioning on a daily basis for a term in 1986 and made detailed field notes during this period. My brief return in March of this year helped me to renew my acquaintance with the school. I now believe I have a grasp of what it is I want to write about.

One aspect of my visit this time did disturb me considerably. From 1986 I gained some impression of the difficulties to be faced by staff and pupils in the use of off-site facilities. I thought both staff and pupils coped well with the problems. On my return this time I was staggered by the material degradation of the Sports Hall and the insanitary state of the toilets at
the sports field changing rooms. I make these comments to you because of our close working relationship and our mutual interest in staff and pupil development at Bridgetown. I can only guess at the impact these facilities are having on the morale of all involved.

I am not a structural engineer but there is something seriously wrong with the roofing of the Sports Hall. I have never witnessed such conditions in changing rooms. Water has penetrated the ceiling of the changing rooms and I can only imagine that it is impossible to change there even in dry weather. Graffiti, boarded windows and general neglect make the Sports Hall facility a daunting place and possibly is traumatising staff and pupils alike. It is not a place one could take parents to with pride. By comparison the heating problems of the Hall would appear to be small but I was able to witness once again the totally inadequate heating system in the Hall. There are now holes where heaters should be, these were covered by plywood but this has rendered the security of the hall even less adequate than previously. I am convinced (as in 1986) that staff and pupils are working in indoor temperatures substantially below mandatory minima.

As I indicated in our recent conversation, the state of the sports hall is every bit as bad as that to be found in the most deprived inner urban areas. I find this most incongruous! I would find it virtually impossible to use the Sports Hall as a teaching resource personally. Logistically and materially I believe the Sports Hall contributes little to the work of Bridgetown School.

With regard to the sports field changing rooms, I was once again surprised to witness the decay of facilities there. The pavilion itself is covered in graffiti and the general impression is one of neglect. Cold, dirty changing rooms greet teacher and pupil alike. These are hardly conducive to enthusiasm and motivation, particularly during the damp cold months of the winter games programme. It says a great deal for the state of the Sports Hall that the male staff would sooner face the sports field even on the coldest of days. What shocked me most of all was the stench (I use the term advisedly) from the toilets. I am in no position to comment on the frequency with which the toilets are cleaned but the smell of urine was evident. I am sure staff and pupils would be able to suggest if my experience was an exception. Once again I can hardly imagine an Open Day at the school making a feature of what pupils and staff endure there.

I must stress that I am making as objective observations as possible here. I am not a structural engineer nor a member of the Health and Safety Executive. My letter to you is based on a contrast between what I witnessed in 1986 and 1988. My purpose in writing to you, is threefold:
1. As the outcome of our March meeting.

2. That the contents might be used in any discussions about facilities in whatever way you think appropriate.

3. That the letter be a vehicle for management/p.e. staff discussions with regard to curriculum and personal professional development.

I would welcome the opportunity to develop the points made in the letter if necessary.

I am aware that financial constraints limit the role of schools and I am not suggesting any specific sums of expenditure. I think it is impractical to hope to turn around the vandalism at the Sports Hall by pouring money into the facility. There are obviously ambient cultural problems to be addressed in this context. I cannot find any educational argument for the Sports Hall in its present place at the present time. Paradoxically some children still gain from p.e. at the Sports Hall. If the Sports Hall has to be used then I would hope that those with conscience and financial resources would make changing and participating much more comfortable than some kind of medieval trial by ordeal.

I am concerned about the sanitary conditions at the pavilion. I hope these will be investigated.

I hope these comments are of use. My own research methods not only use observation but also entail qualitative data. Talking to staff and pupils opens up much important information. I think we all believe that off-site does not mean out-of-mind!

At the core of my concern were the feelings Alan, Mark and Ed had about off-site provision. I noted earlier in my account that the facilities used by staff and pupils formed a triangle of provision with a maximum walking time of ten minutes to any point. This triangle sometimes assumed Bermudan proportions. Not only were the off-site facilities in a poor state of repair but pupils also regularly seemed to get lost and confused on their way to these facilities.
The problem of off-site provision was compounded by a physical education timetable that was divided into half-term blocks with some change of staff. In my field notes of Ed's lessons, for example, I recorded three occasions when pupils arrived at the wrong lesson at the wrong time. There were a number of other difficulties associated with off-site provision that struck me as the field research went on: teachers and pupils arrived at different times; any teacher with pastoral responsibilities (for example, Ed in his role as a year tutor) was often delayed leaving school; Mark did not have his own transport and could not get to the off-site facilities in a hurry should the need arise; all buildings were locked until the teacher arrived; checks were needed to keep track of movement of children to and from the sites; unless otherwise directed, children had to walk/ride bikes in rain, ice, frost, snow; children had to cross a main road and two minor roads to get to the off-site facilities; Alan, Mark and Ed did not have a 'home' base during the school day.

The problems experienced by the three teachers in their everyday practice has enabled me to think carefully about the wider issues of facilities and their use. In one sense, of course, the reality of daily life for physical education teachers at Bridgetown was that facilities were off-site. It was also the case that, during the intensive field work, Bridgetown was in the midst of industrial action. But, over the whole time of my contact with the school, the problem of off-site facilities refused to go away.

Developments in the analysis of the 'framing' of the curriculum (see, for example, John Evans 1982) have helped me locate these difficulties of provision in a wider context. Holes in the roof and broken windows at Bridgetown Sports Hall raise questions about physical education within the school and the relationship of the school to the local community. Tracking the problem further involves posing as problematic educational provision within a particular historical conjuncture. In such a track, the daily problems of particular teachers are rooted in macro-structural problems. Making the problem of the link is exactly what sociological imagination and enterprise is about. It as a matter of coming to understand that:
There remain considerable numbers of teachers who struggle for change in isolated situations and probably many more who, in the light of the constraints imposed on them, can see no way in which it is possible to continue that struggle. (Geoff Whitty and Michael Young, 1976:4)

My sense of the difficulties at Bridgetown was that teachers and pupils were limited in what was possible. My more impressionistic accounts in Part II of Mark’s and Ed’s lessons, for example, were my attempt to deal with the issue. On some occasions at Bridgetown there seemed to be a siege mentality. At off-site facilities doors could not be left unlocked and there was no guarantee that equipment stored there would be there for the next visit. My field work also coincided with the poor weather of Spring 1986.

It would not have been surprising under the circumstances if Alan, Mark and Ed had abandoned any pretence of trying to teach off-site. I hope I have shown in Chapter Three how lessons did take place. Teachers and pupils creatively responded to the exigencies of nomadic existence. It seemed to me that both groups needed considerable support in making lessons possible. The difficulties associated with off-site provision noted above have enormous implications for the delivery of lesson content let alone the delivery of children.

My sense of the problems posed by off-site provision eventually prompted me to suggest to the senior management at Bridgetown that as part of my research link I should run an INSET day that addressed square on some of the difficulties. I hope the texture of accounts in Chapter Three from my observations and conversations indicate why this seemed appropriate.

Given the difficulties Alan, Mark and Ed faced it would have been easier for them not to have me around. They knew I was interested in teaching. I also brought news of Riverside. By late 1987 the Riverside Sports Hall was a tangible symbol for feelings of relative deprivation. I was intensely grateful that they gave me access to their lessons and thoughts.
At Riverside all facilities were on site. In 1986, Bob and Tony had their own small gym each, there was plenty of playground space and acres of sports pitches. Few, if any, changing rooms were locked. Pupils and staff had minimal distance to walk. By the end of 1987 there was a jewel in the crown: the new Sports Hall opened by an eminent sportsman. Bob did not have his own transport (other than his bicycle) but this caused no problems. The timetable ran for the whole term and pupils stayed with the same teacher for physical education. When the Sports Hall opened, Tony's gym was made into an art room whilst Bob's remained an additional indoor space for physical education and club activities.

If my descriptions of the schools are sufficiently "thick" then it makes sense not to labour the comparison any further. Given that my central research interest was how teachers construct contexts within which teaching and learning become possible, it was difficult not to notice how on-site/off-site provision set an agenda for such possibilities. It was not only that practical problems arose daily. The provision and resourcing of facilities became part of a wider debate about the status of physical education in the curriculum and the tensions inherent in 'dual use' of facilities. Concurrent with my research there emerged a debate at a national level about the dilemmas facing school sport.

From Alan, Mark and Ed's point of view, cultural expectations about sport in physical education had to be mediated against a backcloth of off-site provision. Once the industrial action had ended all three, in their different ways, returned to extra-curricular work with sports teams. At Riverside, Bob and Tony had uninterrupted links with sport during the course of the research. In both schools the everyday experience of physical education was linked by classroom practice and school policy to ambient cultural pressures and structures.
(ii) Making the lesson happen

In the 'intensive' part of my field work I spent one day a week in each school for a whole term. The five teachers were employed full-time and had been in the schools for a number of years. My account of their teaching is thus partial. I adopted an ethnographic approach to researching the teaching of physical education in order that I might get a whiff of the dynamic and ongoing complexity of teaching.

In the Preface I identified a number of guiding perspectives that encouraged me to consider personal construction of meaning. Even with the overdetermining structural problems for Alan, Mark and Bob, lessons happened at Bridgetown. Bob and Tony were not free of structural constraints either. In Part II, I have tried to offer some impressionistic accounts of lessons. 'Exit to the Sound of Gunfire', 'Do I have to do this if I have lost my voice' and 'Anush and Basketball Fever' are attempts to convey the immediacy of teaching.

I wrote these accounts of lessons both to confront issues of reportage and to use them with student teachers. Whilst I hope the accounts stand on their own terms I also think they can be developed by dialogue. I do not want to offer prescriptions for teaching physical education, I prefer to describe concrete settings in order to illuminate the dynamic and complex character of educational and curricular practice in physical education.

Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony had personally appropriate ways of teaching. Each one of them found practical ways to make lessons happen. During the course of their working day, the construction of their lesson contexts involved decisions about: arriving and starting; models of classroom "presence"; the selection of suitable knowledge/content; the engagement and mobilisation of pupil interest; the setting of tasks as the embodiment of standards and expectations; classroom management; the use of resources; and closing strategies.
'Strategies' are familiar currency in the sociology of education literature. It is interesting to note, for example, that the debate between Peter Woods and Martyn Hammersley about a move to 'phase two' ethnographic research has centred on the potency of teaching strategies to stimulate theoretical development. For my part, I had no desire to 'test' for strategies. My sense of lessons gained through 'being around' was given a structure by the elements I listed above. I was aware of the literature relating to the grounding of theory in field research but brought my own eclectic approach to the progressive focussing that such literature celebrates. By the end of the Spring Term 1986 I had a sense of teachers making lessons happen as a group and as individuals. Recent work by John Evans and Gill Clarke (1988) has indicated the critical purchase that the concept of 'privileging text' can have. Walter Doyle (1977, 1979, 1985, 1988) has also focussed on the classroom in a way that can illuminate practice.

As a result of my field work opportunities to observe and talk with a small group of teachers I gained a sense of how each teacher made his own work more or less possible. One of my orienting questions about teachers in the research was to do with the teacher's own background. In Part II, I attempt to provide detailed accounts of lessons and extensive transcript material so that you could relate more directly to the teacher concerned. The challenge is, I think, to move to personal practice of teaching that is sensitive to wider patterns of biography, recruitment, training, career development, and ideological legitimation. Leo Hendry and Nick Whitehead (1976), John Yates (1977), Joy Standeven (1985) and contributors to Teachers, Teaching and Control in Physical Education (John Evans 1988a) have, in different ways, addressed fundamental issues about conservative practices and professional legitimation.

I have taken the opportunity here to summarise some of my conversations with the teachers in a tabular form. The tables are organised by type of conversation (either 'Talking About Teaching' or 'Update') and by school. Blanks in columns indicate that the teacher and I did not talk about a particular topic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TALKING ABOUT TEACHING</th>
<th>ALAN (3.3.4.1)</th>
<th>MARK (3.4.4.1)</th>
<th>ED (3.5.3)</th>
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<td><strong>PERSONAL</strong></td>
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<td>Home</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>South West England</td>
<td>South West England</td>
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<td>Early influences</td>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>Parents supportive</td>
<td>Father &amp; family</td>
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<td>Manager, local team</td>
<td>Early soccer</td>
<td>Supportive teachers</td>
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<td>Games/PE experienced</td>
<td>Running, soccer, rugby</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Range &amp; local clubs</td>
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<td>Badminton, tennis, rugby, sail</td>
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<td>&quot;Limited&quot;</td>
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<td>Played in teams</td>
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<td><strong>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
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<td>When chose PE2</td>
<td>First choice history at University</td>
<td>Professional soccer until injured</td>
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<td>Chose local college</td>
<td>Accepted on 3yr Certificate</td>
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<td>No knowledge of course 3yr Certificate</td>
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<td>Perceptions of college</td>
<td>&quot;Poor&quot;, &quot;high standard of lecturers&quot;</td>
<td>Difficulties over refusal to play for college</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model: abruptness of one of lecturers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING</td>
<td>ALAN (J.4.1)</td>
<td>MARK (J.4.4.1)</td>
<td>ED (J.5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TP experience</td>
<td>First TP influential.</td>
<td>Second TP &quot;hopeless&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early teaching</td>
<td>Influence of H-O-D when probationer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of style?</td>
<td>&quot;the 'old boy'&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty with mixed ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td>Depends on personalities</td>
<td>Importance of after school links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age sensitive?</td>
<td>All treated same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation techniques</td>
<td>Mainly negative</td>
<td></td>
<td>Skill as teacher; lesson content; involvement; compromise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with non-participation</td>
<td>Prepared to wait</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft of teaching:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) atmosphere</td>
<td>Intuition; tuned in; sixth sense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) when to intervene?</td>
<td>Hums in on one or two</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes ... but...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF CONVERSATIONS WITH ALAN, MARK, AND ED: Talking About Teaching (Continued)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TALKING ABOUT TEACHING</th>
<th>ALAN (3.3.4.1)</th>
<th>MARK (3.4.4.1)</th>
<th>ED (3.5.1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(c) critical incidents</td>
<td>First IP &amp; role of humour; effective management; reflective thought; conscience</td>
<td>Try to avoid confrontations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) lesson content</td>
<td></td>
<td>Changed lesson content to avoid coaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Industrial Action</td>
<td>Return to extra-curric but role examined role of community</td>
<td>&quot;no way we'll return to normal&quot; less time spent now extra-curric still expected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you do to improve?</td>
<td>Reduce stress &amp; anxiety</td>
<td>Have on-site facility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you miss?</td>
<td>Extra-curric link with kids</td>
<td>&quot;not a lot&quot; &quot;time to go&quot; kids; some in department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 'good' lesson?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement, enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Don't make them and save time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work as department team</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, informally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of off-site demands &amp; timetable?</td>
<td></td>
<td>No thought given by non-E2 staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A chance to watch others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes but not taken up</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS</td>
<td>ALAN (3.4.1)</td>
<td>MARK (3.4.4.1)</td>
<td>ED (3.5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to listen outside school at youth club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to profile a pupil. Rely on whole person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have to adapt if pupils miss lessons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for pupils to have range/width of experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kit - such rather they took part</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation encouraged and lessons to appeal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF CONVERSATIONS WITH BOB AND TONY: Talking About Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSONAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early influences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father &amp; family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games/PE experienced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer in primary school, Rugby at secondary school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide curriculum, teachers were &quot;technicians&quot;, discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was able to teach younger boys as sixth former</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When chose PE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought about it in sixth form but encouraged to study Russian at University.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied for RCE Unsuccessful with applications until accepted at Modeley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice &quot;pot luck&quot; but fortuitous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of standards, dress, attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulated interest in health related focus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 2: Summary of Conversations with Bob and Tony**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience of Teaching</th>
<th>BB (4.5.1 &amp; 4.5.2)</th>
<th>T&amp;N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TP experience</strong></td>
<td>Had models prior to TT. In TT witnessed traditional and innovative. H-O-O in TP school &quot;brilliant&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early teaching</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aware of style?</strong></td>
<td>Yes, &quot;one that suits me&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships with pupils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age sensitive?</strong></td>
<td>Yes. Set standards early and then change/develop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation techniques</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dealing with non-participation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craft of teaching</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) atmosphere</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) when to intervene?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) critical incidents</td>
<td>Reflect on &quot;bad temper moments&quot; +v+ly &amp; +v+ly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) lesson content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF CONVERSATIONS WITH BOB AND TONY: Talking About Teaching (Continued)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TALKING ABOUT TEACHING</td>
<td>BOB (4.3.5.1 &amp; 4.3.5.2)</td>
<td>TON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Industrial Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you do to improve?</td>
<td>Look at my &quot;bull in a china shop&quot; approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What would you miss?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A &quot;good&quot; lesson</td>
<td>Something sticks, display of behavioural standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work as department team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of off-site demands &amp; timetable?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A chance to watch others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate?</td>
<td>Some self-evaluation, feedback from some colleague.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupils also give feedback. Tepans to evaluate can work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>when TP students at school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF CONVERSATIONS WITH BOB AND TONY: Talking About Teaching (Continued)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TALKING ABOUT TEACHING</td>
<td>BOB (4.3.2.1 &amp; 4.3.2.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TONY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH PUPILS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use humour, understanding and bad temper!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aware of potential of humour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIONSHIPS WITH SCHOOL</td>
<td>Aware of ideal/reality trade-off. Significance attached to distinction between PE and games/sport at Riverside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have tried to emphasise PE for “classrooms of boys”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Success of health focus at school across curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many of staff supportive of and involved in work of department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>Was given space by H.O.D. when I arrived.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health focus developed personally and as team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPORTING EHDS</td>
<td>A good deal of interest in sport at school. Physically active staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATUS OF PE</td>
<td>Able to hold my own academically.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PE has a future at Riverside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPDATE</td>
<td>ALAN (3.3.4.2)</td>
<td>MARK (3.4.4.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLOW OF EVENTS</td>
<td>Action had an effect. Less time, fewer teams/games</td>
<td>Boys RE has developed good working relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No report from borough RE curriculum group</td>
<td>Respect and complement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RE department hold lunchtime meetings</td>
<td>Action changed amount of time spent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observations on written curriculum: &quot;political tool&quot;; an &quot;insurance policy&quot;; need one side of A4 for policy</td>
<td>Development of written curriculum discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULUM MATTERS</td>
<td>Working on new first year course</td>
<td>Looking at skills, games-playing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation informal and ongoing re practice</td>
<td>Thinking about indoor needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action has focussed concerns re extra-curric. Some staff use directed time to help us</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPDATES</td>
<td>ALAN (3.4.2)</td>
<td>MARK (3.4.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OBSERVATIONS</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Cont'd)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-kitters</td>
<td>Take overall view. Send letters. Seasonal.</td>
<td>Threaten but try alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>First yr course given boost by IP student</td>
<td>Tensions re expectations. Real undervalued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>Pragmatic approach: immediate solutions to practical problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCE</td>
<td>Heavily involved, 4 hrs preparation. A &quot;buzz&quot; in lessons</td>
<td>School has Links thro' Sarah&lt;br&gt;Alan taking over my assit &amp; physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other innovations</td>
<td>Difficulties with fitness and measurement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXCITEMENT, IDEAS</strong>&lt;br&gt;TRENDS</td>
<td>Memories of past treatment</td>
<td>No advice about personal development, ageing &amp; need for qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODE FOR CE</td>
<td>ALAN (3.1.4.2)</td>
<td>MARK (3.1.4.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MODE FOR CE</strong></td>
<td>Use &quot;common sense&quot; and structured choice. Need to think about why?</td>
<td>Activity, enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCESS/PRODUCT</strong></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Work with pupils Significance of ability to demonstrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUPILS</strong></td>
<td>Classify kids as objects Aware of relationship with them Have a sense of each pupil's profile a child's performance registers</td>
<td>Use no names but recognise facially Little chance to talk with pupils PE helps relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;You know the signs&quot; The way you pick signs up is vital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I was aware of what I did with them over time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF CONVERSATIONS WITH BOB AND TONY: Details</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEB (4,5,6)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOL OF EVENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Maligned in approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Communication stimulated by TP student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interest in pupils' personal development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Science fiction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Problem as a team with different technical abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAREER PATHS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Impact of courses on health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transformed teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Need for a balance between competition and physical education, liaison to pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ROLE IN PE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Would like to attend more courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Would like one more lesson per group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To develop health focus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBJECT</td>
<td>HB (4.3.5.3)</td>
<td>TNY (4.4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUPILS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soft spot for those less able or with problems</td>
<td>Link content to ability of group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Everybody has a right to be in the group!&quot;</td>
<td>Make mental notes of pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have different kind of relation with senior Rugby boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline &amp; civilising of first year,</td>
<td>Lessons pre-planned but adjust automatically; pitch at level just below middle ability band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sixth formers reproduce some of my teaching methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ivor Goodson (1985), amongst others, has noted the benefits to be gained from developing a sense of teachers' lives and curriculum history. My access to a secondary school at the time of the industrial action in 1986 and contact with the teachers thereafter has provided me with opportunities to pose as problematic the teaching of physical education. Riverside's distinctive tradition and arrangements for physical education also enabled me to explore teaching in a different school system. The tables presented here are one attempt to get a sense of teachers' lives.

(iii) Developing the curriculum

Some time after my arrival at Bridgetown and Riverside I made tentative enquiries about the availability of a written syllabus. At that time none was available. My enquiries gave Alan the impression that I was interested in "rational curriculum planning" and that I equated delivery of teaching with a programmatic statement of aims and objectives. Nothing could have been further from my thoughts. I had wanted to get a map of the curriculum-in-action.

As more opportunities arose to talk with the teachers I became aware of a general interest in a health focus in the curriculum of both schools. At Riverside Bob had brought with him the conversive experiences of his postgraduate teacher training course. From the time of his arrival at the school he initiated a debate about health as a cross-curriculum issue. By 1989, Bob, Tony and John were at the fore of school attempts to develop a health focus. Mr Wells had endorsed the health message in his opening address at the Sports Hall in December 1987. Staff development issues were raised by this curriculum movement.

At Bridgetown attention had been focussed on health issues by the department's involvement with CSE over a number of years and more recently with GCSE. By 1989, Alan was experiencing a "buzz" in his lessons linked to his interest in health.

A growing number of researchers are critically examining practical and ideological aspects of this form of curriculum development. In my contact
with teachers at both schools I was guided by their interests. All five
teachers had been touched by issues associated with a health focus in the
curriculum and were developing their practice pro-actively. This gave me a
sense that renewal was evident in both schools. I saw this common interest
in curriculum content as a real opportunity for the two schools to co-
operate. One of my intentions beyond the thesis' has been to encourage
shared development at Bridgetown and Riverside by inviting the teachers to
write about their experiences of a health focus. It would be exciting if
the vitality of interest in both schools could be shared. Only at this
stage would I consider working with the teachers to de-construct the
ramifications of a curriculum making use of a health focus.

I have drawn attention to just three aspects of the teaching of physical
education here. I have chosen them as illustrative of a range of themes
that share with a number of researchers common substantive interest. I have
tried to be aware of the distinct differences between Bridgetown and
Riverside as schools in different parts of the secondary system. The
conjunctural problems associated with industrial action have been
problematic since Alan, Mark and Ed were having to construct meaning in
unusual circumstances at the time of my intensive field work. Yet
similarities between the teachers were evident. The occupational culture of
the physical education teacher linked Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony in ways
they had not shared across the chain link fence but which persisted as
'objective' relations in contexts beyond the lesson and classroom.

I would like my sociological analysis of the teaching of boys' physical
education to be a contribution to a community of interest that seeks
praxis. To do this, I suggest, requires the imaginative leap stimulated by
the attempt to link private troubles and public issues.

Before I locate my work within a more detailed literature re-view, I would
like to discuss briefly the other two categories of research questions
listed at the start of this chapter namely 'contexts' and 'pupils'.
6.2.3 Contexts

One of the persistent criticisms of interpretive classroom research is that it sits in 'splendid isolation'. In the Preface I indicated that both Marxist and cultural studies approaches had guided my interest in researching physical education. Making sense of the teaching of physical education requires sensitivity to different levels of cultural context as my analysis in 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 attempted to indicate.

I used two research questions to help me focus my interest in contexts beyond the physical education lesson. I wanted to know about:

(i) the significance attached to physical education by the school hierarchy, and

(ii) the cultural expectations that impinge upon the construction of the physical education curriculum.

I am not suggesting that the teachers were somehow hermetically immune to these two levels. Their everyday practice necessitated that they dealt with both levels. Teachers are bearers of culture themselves as I tried to indicate in accounts of our conversations.

Bridgetown and Riverside are in different educational sectors. I have provided details of both schools and their management. In Part II, I introduced Mr Mitchell and Mr Wells. Ultimately it was their responsibility to set the agenda for the teaching of physical education in their schools.
In 1986, Mr Mitchell had to deal with the growing impact of the industrial action in Bridgetown School. The kind of effect it was having can be gauged by his report to the school governors in March 1986 (see 5.2.2). During the course of my research, Mr Mitchell and his staff had to mediate considerable educational change culminating in the impact of the Education Reform Act.

I have tried to give Mr Mitchell a voice in the thesis so that he could not only be a talked about "boss" (Mark's label) but also so that he could be a talking "boss" as well. In my accounts of teaching physical education at Bridgetown I have not reported in full the micro-politics of curriculum planning but because of my research contract with Mr Mitchell and the teachers I was given considerable space to speak openly about matters when asked. Throughout the research I was struck by the management's support for physical education in the curriculum. At one stage I suggested that management and physical education staff might meet to receive a report of my research. The outcome in part was an INSET day that enabled the physical education staff to discuss the national curriculum. In future work I would like to develop some ideas I have about management style and the status of physical education at Bridgetown.

At Riverside there was no such industrial action or educational reform to deal with. I have indicated some of Mr Wells's views about physical education and competitive sport. There was no doubt that Riverside was a sporting school as well as an academic community. The most significant feature of the culture of the school for me at Riverside was the relationship of physical education to games and rowing. This is a theme I would also like to explore in future work. In many senses, the school put its money where its mouth was by providing the Sports Hall within two years of engaging architects to make preliminary drawings. This capital provision enabled development of physical education at Riverside.
Andrew Sparkes (1988) has suggested that:

...if we are to understand the limits and possibilities of educational change, then schools and departments should be regarded as 'arenas of struggle', contexts in which power is unevenly distributed amongst members and in which there are likely to be ideological differences and conflicts of interests. These conflicts provide the basis for the rich dynamic of school life in which the diverse interests of teachers can just as easily collide as they can coincide. (1988:157)

One of the dilemmas facing me as a researcher in both schools was how to treat micro-political issues. My interim solution has been to leave struggles implicit in my accounts in Part II.

Within and beyond Bridgetown and Riverside there were wider cultural debates. In addition to the Government's plans for education and the teachers' dispute, there was emerging a moral panic about competition in school sport. In 6.3.3 I note some of these issues. I was left with the impression during the research that the wider context impinged on Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony in so far as the social significance of teaching as a profession and the content of the physical education curriculum were matters for debate.

As bearers of culture the teachers mediated this debate in their everyday practice. Our informal conversations sometimes wandered onto issues of career development at quite a personal level. Four of the five teachers started families during the course of my research. All five lived in areas of high cost housing in South East England. My own change of lifestyle also raised some interesting questions about alternatives to teaching.

Our conversations about pupils often helped to focus wider cultural issues.
6.2.4 Pupils

At various points in Chapters three, four and five I have introduced pupils in my account. Although my emphasis was on the teaching of physical education I was keen to follow up pupils' experience for a number of reasons. Firstly, I had been alerted to the psycho-social aspects of school physical education by John Yates (1977). Secondly, Peter Woods's (1979) account of 'showing up' at Lowfield had for some time encouraged me to think about the meta-messages of the physical education curriculum - an interest further sharpened by David Hargreaves's (1982) view of physical education. Thirdly, I was interested in the long term effects of compulsory physical education in the school curriculum on participation patterns in later life.

My choice of Bridgetown and Riverside schools provided me with an opportunity to contrast pupil experience. At Bridgetown all extracurricular activity had stopped by Spring Term 1986. There were no after-school activities, no school teams and no fixtures. At Riverside extracurricular life blossomed. There were teams and fixtures galore. The school was awash with sporting activity.

During the course of my research I collected information about, with and from pupils by observation, interview and questionnaire. The material I present in this thesis is a limited contribution to an emerging literature about pupils in physical education (see, for example, Bernard Dickinson 1986, Bernard Dickenson and Andrew Sparkes,1988). As with a number of themes in the thesis, pupil participation in and experience of the school curriculum are topics I would like to develop in subsequent work.

Embedded in the material in Part II are a number of accounts that are suggestive of responses to my questions about factors influencing involvement in physical education and the significance of physical education in a child's experience of the curriculum.
At Bridgetown and Riverside I made a note of the number of participants and non-participants in the lessons I observed. The non-participants were those who for one reason or another sat on the sidelines during lessons. In the Spring Term 1986 the numbers of non-participants ranged from individual pupils to small groups. At Bridgetown the poor weather in the Spring Term exacted its toll of some pupils' health and intrinsic motivation. By providing a range of accounts in Part II, I wanted you as reader to get a sense of the variety of pupils' experiences with different teachers in different contexts.

As a result of the industrial action at Bridgetown, teachers and pupils alike had to recast their expectations of physical education. At Riverside there was a deluge of activity and both Bob and Tony were committed to a physical-education-for-all policy in the curriculum and a games-for-all approach to their extra-curricular work. In both schools I took the interest in a health focus to be indicative of a desire to engage all pupils.

From my experiences at the two schools it seemed that the prospect of engaging children's interest in a health-based physical education curriculum had the inherent playfulness of children on its side. During the Spring Term I started to observe some of the playful aspects of participation and non-participation.

Most of my lesson observations were based on the teachers working with second or third year pupils. My attention was particularly focussed by the pupils at Bridgetown. My account of one of Mark's badminton lessons with 3B2 from the point of view of pupil activity was a conscious effort to record the ebb and flow of a lesson (see 3.4.3.5). Similarly, at Riverside, given 2J's interest in basketball, I recorded how one lesson managed to maximise their playing of the game (see 4.3.4.3).

Now that I have children of my own I am fascinated by play. I am not so much interested in the significance of non-participation in lessons as a counter-cultural activity, it is more that I am intrigued about the
creative ways children play. At Bridgetown, just being around the off-site facilities inducted me into the world of yo-yos, splits, tree-climbing, wrestling and penny-up-the-wall. At Riverside I became interested in the pupils' subtle playfulness in lessons.

My interest in pupils at both schools was intended to be a foray into the construction of meaning by them within the ambit of the physical education departments of the schools. For the time being I hope that your brief encounter with pupils like John Adams, Paul Fisher, Anush and the boy with audible laryngitis; the transcripts of conversations with four Bridgetown pupils; and the responses to a pupil questionnaire will be suggestive of my attempts to respond to the questions I posed about pupils during the research.

6.3 Teaching Physical Education: A Re-View of the Literature

The framing of this thesis owes little to immaculate conception. Although I have limited references to the literature, my sense of what it is to research and my understanding of the teaching of physical education are products of 'documentary reality' (Celia Lury, 1981). I now want to locate my own work within this reality.

I have no intention of undertaking an ab initio review of literature. In the Preface I make it clear that an act of epistemological faith on my part is that social scientific enquiry is possible in physical education. In the time since I started my research a visible community of researchers has emerged intent on exploring teaching and learning in physical education in naturalistic settings over extended periods of time. The bibliographical references I list at the end of the thesis are a statement about my own route through this emerging literature.

I do want to discuss some of the literature in the following categories:
6.3.1 Researching the Teacher's World

In a review of developments in classroom research, Martyn Hammersley has suggested that there has been "increased advocacy of naturalistic study of everyday settings employing relatively unstructured, qualitative methods" (1986:14). In the 1980s, increased importance has been attached to the status of teachers in the research process. Peter Woods and Andrew Pollard have proposed that:

the sociological research of school life needs the inputs and critical commentaries of teachers if it too, is to fulfil its potential (1988:13)

Constructivists have taken this view for some time (Maureen Pope and Terence Keen 1981). In the Preface I identified how constructivism has addressed teacher and pupil epistemologies.

In a discussion of researching teacher thinking, Maureen Pope has suggested that there has been a move towards:

trying to understand and interpret the ways in which teachers make sense of and adjust to and create the educational environment within their schools and classrooms. (1989:6)

Her paper indicates the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches available to those "sharing a focus and an ideological commitment to viewing teachers as active agents in the development of
educative events" (1989:6). I had been exploring some of these approaches and had read about action researchers, teachers-as-researchers, classroom enquirers, and reflective practitioners. I became aware of growing interest in teacher thinking and the move to enquiry-based course in teacher training.


From this reading I gained a sense of a variety of approaches to the collection of qualitative data and modes of reporting. At the time of their critiques, Sara Delamont (1981) and Martyn Hammersley (1981) argued that not to theorise about education was an outcome of failure both to pose the familiar as strange and to read more widely. Sara Delamont's view was that "the sociological study of classrooms cannot hope to have an impact... until it is more rigorously comparative and self-consciously cumulative". Martyn Hammersley suggested that:

...pursuit of macro relevance must not be at the expense of ethnography's characteristic concern with grounding theory in fine-grained description of interactional processes and participant perspectives (1981:67)

This background reading focussed my interest in ethnography as a particularly appropriate way to research and report classroom settings. I was aware of the intellectual roots of ethnographic accounts of schooling in this country and the United States and gradually developed my own map of some of the dilemmas facing ethnographic enquiry. David Fetterman (1984), Judith Goetz and Margaret LeCompte (1984), and Yvonna Lincoln and Egon Guba (1985) gave me a feel for debates about ethnographic evaluation from a different perspective to that in the Open University, University of Warwick and University College, Cardiff axis.


Throughout the process of my reading, the guiding perspectives I identified in the Preface acted as a filter. In undertaking my research I had no theory-testing or theory-building projects. My interest in researching the teaching of physical education was in description and not 'phase two' type work. My intention was to bring praxis to bear on my own professional development.
The sum effect of my reading was to further encourage me, in Harry Wolcott's words:

to focus on classrooms and other educational settings as cultural scenes and on how the individuals directly or indirectly involved in those scenes make sense of and give meaning to what is going on. (1984:179)

Growing interest in the teacher's world is evident in developments in constructivism (John Novak 1985, Maureen Pope 1989), critical theory (Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis 1986), teacher thinking (Rob Halkes and John Olson 1984, Miriam Ben-Peretz et al 1986), action research (Jon Nixon, 1987) and reflective teaching (Andrew Pollard and Sarah Tann 1987). Of particular significance for me has been the way researchers of the teaching of physical education have keyed into such developments. I would like to discuss this work in the next section.

6.3.2 Researching the Physical Education Teacher's World

In the Preface, I signalled some of the emerging critiques of theorising physical education and sport. By the time I came to write up this thesis I had available a number of examples of ethnographic/ qualitative/naturalistic research in physical education. Two collections of readings in particular have facilitated my own development (Evans 1986, 1988a).

Such has been the development in research that I propose to identify key contributors to the literature rather than rehearse well-worked arguments. In this country John Evans (1986, 1988a, 1988b) and Andrew Sparkes (1986a, 1986b, 1987, 1989a) have established an agenda for the discussion of qualitative/naturalistic research. In North America, Lawrence Locke (1988), Neal Earls (1986), Paul Schempp (1987, 1988) and Thomas Templin (1988) amongst others have raised important questions about what is to count as research in the teaching of physical education. At the University of Queensland, David Kirk (1988a, 1988b) has continued to research the teacher's world along lines started in his days at Loughborough University (1986a, 1986b).
During this period the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* has emerged and provided a forum for debate and 'exorcism'. In 1989 the Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport staged a tutorial (Lawrence Locke 1989) and debate about "qualitative research as a form of scientific inquiry" (Linda Bain 1989, Robert Schutz 1989, Daryl Siedentop 1989).

Contributors to the discussion of qualitative research are also in positions to oversee postgraduate research. I have availed myself of the growing number of unpublished theses in the area to further my understanding of researching the physical education teacher's world. I was able to look at: Michael Mawer's (1981) analysis of the teaching of physical education in the primary school; Malcolm Eaves's (1983) look at teaching style and pupils' attitudes to physical education in the secondary school; Martin Underwood's (1984) analysis of teaching styles; Joy Standeven's (1985) study of student teachers in physical education; Eric Ward's (1985) exploration of the processes involved in an examination-linked, teacher-based innovation; Stephen Cook's (1985) study of teaching and learning in physical education; David Kirk's (1986a) case study of teacher-initiated innovation; C. Hill's (1986) analysis of the 11-14 physical education curriculum in a local education authority; Christopher Brandford's (1987) analysis of the 11-16 physical education curriculum in one local authority; and Sean McGourty's study of the boys' physical education curriculum in secondary schools in Northern Ireland. I was unable to gain access to Andrew Sparkes's thesis because of the restrictions placed on it.

I was also able to follow John Evans's work in his thesis on teacher strategies and pupil identities in mixed ability curriculum (1982). I thought it important also to read about John Hargreaves's (1984) analysis of hegemony and social class, and John Yates's (1982) investigation of the use of symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective for the sociological analysis of sport.

At the end of this process of thesis-reading I was determined to build on such work rather than to attempt to offer a detailed critique. This seems to me to be a logical, cumulative enterprise. I am aware that I am using
research based on British schooling but I do not think this is overly-restrictive.

Thus far I have privileged a particular variant of research in physical education. I do not mean to suggest that all the theses listed above are of the same geneology as this is patently not the case. Essays in hagiography and demonology require a starting point. Mine has been the qualitative/ethnographic/naturalistic end of the spectrum. Also on the spectrum are the array of approaches to the teaching of physical education that make use of systematic observation of one form or another. Ironically, although I have written about the use of video in teaching (1988) I have not sought to use systematic observation techniques in my research. Daryl Siedentop's (1989) response to Lawrence Locke and his reply (1987) to Paul Schempp have set a further agenda for debate rooted in a tradition that has refined the process of systematic observation.

Andrew Sparkes (1989a) has attempted an overview of the paradigmatic confusions and the evasion of critical issues in naturalistic research in physical education. He notes that interpretive approaches pose the problem of relativism and suggests that:

At the end of the day the researcher's interpretation remains just one among many that are possible, and this provides a central dilemma for those operating within the naturalistic paradigm: on what basis can choices be made between differing interpretations? (1989a:144)

I take the force of his argument to be that the communication of such interpretations provides the test of what is to count as 'truth'. The dilemma for naturalistic researchers is how to deal with the essentially anti-foundational assumptions of the epistemology underpinning such an approach.

My thinking about the research process has nudged me along the second-order lines identified by Andrew Sparkes. Relativism is a challenge to qualitative/ethnographic/naturalistic research. It is here that constructivism is an insightful heuristic.
In Part II, I tried to develop a way of relating stories of teaching that challenged conventional, foundational assumptions. My reading has enabled me to see this as possible and the basis for dialogue with interested colleagues.

In 6.4 I want to discuss the significance of the preposition with in research. I do not want to leave my re-view of researching the teacher's world literature without mentioning action research. Len Almond (1983a, 1988) has indicated the potential of a research approach that enables teachers to reflect on their own practice. It is evident that future research strategies will need to privilege teachers' views and demystify research.

6.3.3 Physical Education in the School Curriculum

I indicated in 2.8 why I had chosen to research the teaching of boys' physical education. I do not want the 'invisibility' of girls and women in the thesis to be taken as an unthinking commitment to patriarchy on my part. I did not address in the Preface specifically feminist contributions to neo-Marxism and cultural studies.


I have offered an extensive list here to indicate the scope of the debate about gender. It would be naive of me not to consider the implications of such literature for my own understanding of physical education. My experience at Bridgetown did raise issues about gender and at some stage I
would like to develop some material not included in this thesis about relationships in the physical education department mediated by the emergence of Sarah as head of department.

The growth of research in gender issues in schooling is one dimension of a debate about what is to constitute physical education. In the Preface I identified some of the literature that formed part of my induction into physical education.

Thirteen years on from John Kane's (1974) Schools Council survey, the Physical Education Association (1987) published a report of a commission of enquiry into "the present state and status of physical education (both primary and secondary) in England and Wales". The commission chose to employ a "detailed computer analysis of a questionnaire sent to a sizeable random sample of secondary schools" (1987:7). From the range of evidence available to it, the commission concluded that:

physical education teachers are attempting to teach an over­extended curriculum far beyond the normal timetable and involving a greatly expanded range of topics and activities. More particularly, we are concerned that young teachers are unclear about the necessity for balance and progression in the curriculum, the educational as distinct from the utilitarian or lifestyle purposes of the curriculum and the relative importance of providing a broad-based programme for all, as well as an alternative programme for the highly talented. (1987:52)

The commission made nine recommendations including the need to prepare and disseminate widely a clearly articulated philosophy of physical education, and the issuing of a "clear directive" to emphasise:

the central importance in the teaching role of a tightly planned, balanced, progressive and well monitored school based curriculum for all pupils. (1987:53, original emphasis)

The report arrived at troubled times. The teachers' action had brought to the fore the debate about school sport and competition, national groups were vying for position to make authoritative statements about physical
education, and educational reform was looming on the horizon. Shortly after the publication of the report, Elizabeth Murdoch's (1987) desk study on sport in schools was circulated. Of the post-industrial action situation, she observed:

The evidence would suggest that schools are now in a different era for school sports and that the time is now right for substantial change. (1987:41)

When the School Sport Forum (1988) published its findings, it noted that disquiet expressed by some governing bodies of sport and by the media about the state of sport and physical education had prompted the establishment of the forum in 1987. The report observed that:

The importance of school physical education is that it provides the one opportunity to ensure a progressive programme of physical activity for all children. (1988:1)

As with the PEA report, the 'text' of Sport and Young People provides an illuminating insight into ideological statements about physical education. I will not attempt an analysis of these texts here but note that as part of my links with Bridgetown and Riverside I brought them to the teachers' attention. In 1988, the physical education profession had to address the requirements of the Education Reform Act. In 1989 HMI published Physical Education from 5 - 16 which has emphasised curriculum balance and "worthwhileness" as important concerns.

The 1980s have also witnessed the emergence of curriculum initiatives and innovations in health related fitness and teaching for understanding. The publication of a collection of readings on the place of physical education in schools (Almond 1989) is the culmination of a decade of research and curriculum development initiated by members of the physical education department at the University of Loughborough. At Bridgetown and Riverside schools, the physical education teachers were actively engaged in developing a health focus to their curriculum and were part of the changing curriculum scene.

Health-related fitness has had a much more prolific shelf life in the Journal. The first rumblings appeared in Len Almond's suggestion that "the way in which teachers think about the potential and richness of physical education is beginning to change" (1982:131). A further article by him (1983b) on health-related fitness appeared in the March/April edition in 1983. From that time to the writing of this thesis somewhere in the region of fifty articles with direct reference to health-related fitness appeared in the Journal. Over a period of six years and a number of special editions of the Journal, something akin to 'normal science' has broken out. In that time, discussion had moved from Len Almond's suggestion that the real challenge for the physical education profession is "fostering an attitude and creating a climate that motivates young people to believe sincerely that health related fitness is important" (1983b:37), to a series of commissioned articles from Charles Corbin and Ken Fox (1985), to the announcement of the launch of the HEA and PEA Health and PE Project (September 1985), to the publication of a regular newsletter, to the announcement of workshops for teachers, to the publication of Stuart Biddle's (1986) Foundations in the Teaching of Health-related Fitness with contributions from a core group of writers, to two subsequent books (Bill Tancred 1987, Neil Armstrong 1988). In the meantime, Len Almond (1987) had suggested that consideration be given to the term 'health-based physical education' rather than health-based fitness as one aspect of physical
education. By 1988 there appeared to be sufficient orthodoxy to inspire a critique of the ideological character of health-related fitness (Mike McNamee 1988, David Kirk 1988b, Andrew Sparkes 1989b, Derek Colquhoun 1989).

In 6.4 I will discuss how in my research with the teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside I raised some of the issues evident in a variety of sources of literature. The purpose of this review has been to indicate the framework within which I researched the teaching of physical education. Decisions I made about my research approach were focussed by a range of alternative methods. The availability of accounts of research by Gordon Underwood (1983, 1988) and knowledge of the scale of the PEA (1987) survey helped me consider the personal dimension of my research. My sentiments are similar to those expressed by Thomas Templin about his work with two teachers:

The impetus for this study stems from a desire to learn more about the uniqueness of the occupation of teaching from the teacher's point of view. (1988:58)

In the next section I explain how I tried to do exactly this whilst acutely aware of making private lives public.

6.4 Intrusion, Co-operation, Intervention

In his account of farm workers in East Anglia, Howard Newby (1977) observes that:

At most points of contact with the consciousness of the urban Englishman the agricultural worker is even denied his own identity: it is the farmer - not the farm worker - who produces Britain's food and to whom we owe our gratitude for British agriculture's startling productivity record ... The agricultural worker, on the other hand, retains his social
invisibility, alternately ignored and caricatured in the public consciousness. (1977:11)

Howard Newby conceptualises the structural relationship between farmer and worker as deferential. By emphasising structure, he suggests that:

the relative powerlessness of the agricultural worker has meant that this structure has not, in general, been one which he has fashioned according to his own needs and values, but rather that he has been acted upon by others who have to a greater or lesser degree controlled this social structure and attempted to run it in their own interests. (1977:417)

On re-reading Howard Newby's account shortly after my intensive fieldwork at Bridgetown and Riverside, I was struck by the parallel between farm workers and physical education teachers. I do not want to extend the metaphor too far but it did seem to me that if the case study approach was to smallholding what survey methods were to factory farming I was in danger of perpetuating a structural relationship of research that privileged my status at the expense of the physical education teacher.

This thesis has been a self-conscious attempt to deal with the power of educational researchers located outside the school. In characterising my relationships with Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony as intrusive, co-operative and interventionist I have tried to summarise my perceptions of my choreography of engagement with them over a period of three years. I hope it has been a journey from research on teaching to research with teachers. I would like to draw out some markers of this journey here.

In 2.4 I provided details of my research arrangements with Bridgetown and Riverside schools. The impetus for the research came from me and I approached the two schools. This I regard as the intrusive phase of my research which continued, I think, throughout the intensive field work in the Spring Term 1986. I was much more self-conscious of this intrusion at Bridgetown than at Riverside. Reminders of this were some of the implications of industrial action at the school and some of my informal conversations with Alan and Mark in particular.
Let me give one example of my sense of intrusion. It comes from a talk with Mark about teaching recorded in June 1986. In a flow of conversation, reported in 3.4.4.1, I asked Mark about my presence in his lessons. He had this to say:

I found it[...] That term you were in, I felt [...] and I was struggling to keep my head above water anyway [...] With your presence, although I would like to have been seen to be doing some reasonable teaching, I wasn't physically or mentally able to sit down and prepare anything special. But, what it did do [...] it made me very conscious of the fact that I'm not doing the job as well as I ought to be. I've been aware of that for a long time but I got to the stage where they were putting all those extra demands on me, so they must expect something to fall away from the teaching.

When you were around, I became aware of the fact that I'm not doing as well as I'm capable of [...] that I should be doing. And yet I thought that, well, why am I not? I've been considering for a long time to say, well, I'm not actually interested in the responsibility. I'd just like to go back to Scale 1 and do the job properly. That's really what I'd like to do but from a career point of view it'd be a bad move but [...] at the end of the day, I'm not going to have a career worth going on with.

My experience of this talk and my occasional intrusion on private 'grief' during the Spring Term helped to put my work in perspective. It also furthered my resolve to treat as problematic the hard edge to terms such as 'data', 'evidence' and 'interview'. In my work at Bridgetown I experienced the kind of ethical dilemmas faced by Ann Oakley (1981) with regard to researcher presence at vulnerable times. I tried to deal with these dilemmas by attempting to be as helpful and supportive as possible.

I did not have the same sense of intrusion at Riverside. Mr Wells's advice not to "cut across the fields" at our first meeting reminded me of anecdotal advice given to anthropologists to avoid women and local beer. There appeared to be no perceived threat in my presence and in retrospect this seems to relate to the time available to me at Riverside to talk with and listen to Bob and Tony.
There were opportunities at Bridgetown in the Spring Term to move to a more co-operative relationship with Alan, Mark and Tony. I had tried to adopt an underlabourer role both in terms of my learning about their teaching and in acting as a 'dog's body'. Whenever possible I helped put out and collect cones and bibs, pump up, hand out and collect balls and generally just be around. I also saw participation in lessons in whatever role Alan, Mark or Ed wanted as part of this process. I hoped also that my willingness to 'substitute' for absent teachers helped to reduce pressure. However, the significance of the industrial action left me wondering whether co-operation in this sense was counter-productive. I also tried to co-operate with the teachers in producing curriculum resources.

During the Spring Term, as I became aware of both schools' interest in a health focus, I compiled a resource pack of articles, references and contacts for Ed and Bob to share with their colleagues. At Bridgetown I also volunteered secretarial help for drafts of curriculum documents.

Whether what I took to be co-operative endeavour from my point of view was construed in the same way by the teachers is not clear. Although at various points over three years I did ask obliquely and directly about the research relationship, no teacher responded. I was left to ponder on their view of our relationships. There were occasional hints, though, as in a conversation I had with Alan about how I might help him with his interest in GCSE anatomy and physiology. When I asked if there was anything I could do to support him, he responded:

...teachers don't tend to use other people's material ... And you could give me material and I wouldn't use it. The reason I wouldn't use it is because I probably lack a little bit of confidence in that area. I'm not an expert in anatomy and physiology ... if you start giving me a book and I give it out to the children, I lose the controllable knowledge type of situation which I can't really afford to do...

There were moments when I thought there was some sense of agreement about co-operation. One of the more open expressions was made by Sarah. Of my interest in work underway at Bridgetown she said "It's great having an
outside agency. It gives a ray of hope". Another was Mark's retrospect, in July 1987, that:

> We were apprehensive initially but it was good having you at school - we felt someone took an interest in us ... We could understand how pupils felt when we made positive remarks.

My sense of relief about these kinds of comments was tempered by my knowledge that Sarah had not had me observing her lessons and Mark had left the school some seven months earlier.

As part of my co-operative mood I tried to maintain the professional standards of the teachers. In front of pupils I always used the title Mr to refer to the teacher concerned and at no time gave the impression that I had any authority whatsoever over decisions about who might or might not participate in lessons or what lesson content should be. At Bridgetown and Riverside occasions arose when I was on-site before the teachers and met pupils. I also respected the confidentiality of conversations and tried not to give any evaluative comments about any teacher or school. If I was asked directly for my advice I gave it. I do not mean to suggest that my role was entirely aseptic. I was not an oracle or a paragon of virtue - just someone trying to learn about teaching with teachers.

In her work with dance teachers in secondary schools, my wife, Sue Lyons (1985) had explored the concept of interventionist research. My experience of her work at first hand encouraged me to consider my own links with teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside. Christopher Day (1984) has indicated how he adopted a research role which provided "the necessary moral, intellectual and resource support for teachers engaged in a process of self-examination" (1984:77).

As I got to know more about the five teachers and two schools some aspects of my work took on an interventionist tone. Two examples spring immediately to mind from my links with Bridgetown. The first I have already alluded to in 6.2.3 and relates to my concern about the facilities available to Alan, Mark and Ed off-site. Alan gave me a tour of these facilities in March 1988...
and the outcome was, with Alan and Mr Mitchell's agreement, the letter detailed in 6.2.3.

A second example was my proposal for an INSET day to discuss my research and to discuss curriculum development. The idea for this emerged at Bridgetown during informal discussions with staff and management in 1988. Both schools were interested in an INSET proposal but only Bridgetown made arrangements. Early proposals for the programme centred on a report on my research as a form of feedback and discussion. In the event, the agenda agreed by the staff was to do with the national curriculum and implications for physical education at Bridgetown.

I include two views of the day here as indications of the experience of INSET. One is my notes of the day, the other is an agreed draft statement to the management made at the end of the day as a collaborative exercise.

8 November 1988

The Inset Day

Just a few notes about the day itself collected from fragmented comments during the day. First of all the 'cover' for the day turned out to be for all staff throughout the day. Tomorrow, there is a borough wide day of INSET. Len Almond will speak to PE group.

All teachers dressed smartly and enjoyed wearing civilian clothes! Some mutterings in staff room about cover and the inability to do anything. Interesting paradox raised here. PE encouraged to cover absence of own staff but when PE staff to be covered collective anxiety. All lessons cancelled for the day. (Note the day was supported by pupils and staff)

No room was available immediately and so we sat and chatted in the Staff Room. I tried to clarify with Sarah what agenda she wanted to set. (Note management had agreed agenda: national then Bridgetown was opposite to Sarah & department's request! This was disclosed pm!!) We then tried to go to allocated room but teacher there had not read the appropriate staff notice so we waited then moved to Library Resources Area. This area to be opened to public today so painting etc to go on. We then moved back to original room. Cold room but stayed for rest of the day. I had set up Amstrad for report. Throughout the morning fire alarms sounded intermittently until eventually fire drill called. John Davies burst into our room to say "The decision is
yours, this is a fire drill". We decided to stay since we had already lost a good deal of time and there was no guarantee of how long the drill would take.

Carol Clark, INSET co-ordinator, serviced the day. Water, glasses, sandwiches, coffee. Good working atmosphere. No clearly defined role for me but co-chair with Sarah.

Gossip:

1. Sarah told on return to school in September that Sports Hall closed.

2. Sports Hall meeting called to discuss developments (later Mr Mitchell showed me model of plan and outlined trust possibilities). I will write brief paper if required in context of Young People and Sport.

3. Alan is off to Australia on one year teacher exchange. Incoming teacher a maths teacher with no PE background but has been asked by school to pick up Alan's timetable.

At the end of the day, we agreed that it would be helpful to report back on the day to the management. This is the draft of the report:

BRIDGETOWN SCHOOL

Physical Education INSET Day

Tuesday, 8 November 1988

1. National Developments and the National Curriculum

In the first part of the day we discussed national developments in physical education and explored some of the implications of the national curriculum for the teaching of physical education at Bridgetown.

We NOTED that three important documents relating to physical education have been published since March 1987. We further NOTED that under the provision of the Education Reform Act 1988, physical education has been designated 'foundation' subject status. We welcome the opportunities provided by the designation of this status to physical education and recognise the creative impetus this gives to our work at Bridgetown.
Whilst noting the significance of the Education Reform Act for the subject of physical education we are keen to emphasise the school-based significance of curriculum development. We AGREED that as a department we wish to be actively engaged in developments at the school level. We NOTED that clear line-management structures need to be in place to link all levels of the staff. It was AGREED that energy and effort in curriculum development should be focussed at management level. We gave unequivocal support to curriculum development and innovation and welcomed the opportunity to clarify core elements of physical education.

As a foundation subject physical education has been prescribed for fourth and fifth year level in terms of a 5% time allocation on the curriculum. The first to third year time allocation of a notional 10% is welcomed as a positive aspect by the department.

As a positive response to the National Curriculum we are pleased to note that as a foundation subject physical education is not going to be 'assessment-led' by prescribed attainment targets.

However, we would emphasise that assessment particularly in the formative sense has a valid place in the physical education curriculum.

The theme of integrated activities was explored and a good deal of educating around traditionally held beliefs was considered necessary. It is important to look to the work going on in the Primary sector, to establish links and to co-develop an integrated approach to the subject.

Models of profiling were considered and again these needed to demonstrate an extension of an awareness of physical attributes and abilities that might first be instilled in the 5-11 yr. age group.

2. Physical Education at Bridgetown School

The afternoon session was devoted (sic) to a discussion of physical education at Bridgetown. The first item discussed was that of profiling. It was NOTED that formative approaches required the department to recognise the range of activities covered in the course of a year. There followed a discussion of the kind of formats required for each age cohort and the categories used as a basis for such profiles.

Issues related to the closure of the Sports Hall were then discussed. The department endorsed the management's decision to close the Sports Hall and is committed to a strategy to minimise the loss of the indoor space. In this sense, the department wishes to make clear its pro-active response as a
planned initiative. It was NOTED that lead time for decisions about physical space should be as extensive as possible. The department expressed their concern about the need to change the curriculum with minimum consultation in September 1988 and urges the management to give careful thought to the timing of decisions about the availability of space.

It was AGREED that physical education faces particular problems in terms of the weather and that support was needed to manage the timetable in the Spring Term 1989. Without the Sports Hall, contingency plans will be made to cover eventualities should there be periods of inclement weather. We are convinced that the management will agree with us that considerable attention must be paid to the welfare of the children entrusted to our care and that decisions will have to be made about whether the planned curriculum can proceed. We AGREED that physical education's distinctive contribution to the education of young children should not be suspended during inclement weather. We take the view that teaching must continue. To this end we are planning a number of packages that can be used during bad weather. We wish to point out that at such times we will make what we regard as legitimate demands on physical spaces and resources in order to continue our teaching. We would ask that the management give careful consideration to our needs at such times and recognise that we need support during the uncertainties created by the unavailability of the sports hall.

The department is allocating responsibility for the creation of packages for use during the Spring Term in the event of bad weather. We have AGREED on an equitable approach to the use of the gymnasium. We envisage making use of the Hall, Dining Room and video facilities and we hope that our special case for the use of these will be understood on a specific, as need, basis.

This discussion enabled us to consider in some depth the core elements of our programme and we were able to reflect on our roles in the delivery of physical education.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the management for making the INSET day possible and it was agreed that this sort of occasion made an important contribution to the personal, ongoing professional development of each member of the department.
Shortly after the INSET day, I wrote to the management, INSET co-ordinator, and physical education staff to thank them for inviting me to the day. I felt that the day had been positive and marked for me a change in relationship to Bridgetown School. Christopher Day (1984) described his research, supportive of teachers' self-examination, as:

client-centred, where the researcher intervened in the teacher's life in order to seek questions which are perceived by the client as relevant to his needs, to investigate answers to these questions collaboratively and to place the onus of action on the client himself. (1984:77)

In this context I equate intervention with a process of facilitation and enablement. I do not mean to suggest that as a researcher I had any special knowledge that privileged my view of the world. My sense of humble fallibility was forged by my growing sense of the constraints upon teachers to effect change and by the gap between some educational research reports and everyday teaching in schools. Ed summed it up nicely in one of our conversations:

I think that people are always critical of research if it is not done by them.

Small-scale, local research using qualitative methods offers, I believe, a chance to move to research with teachers. I am convinced that sensitive researchers can try to minimise invasion and threat. It relies, of course, on re-working notions of deference if praxis rather than rhetoric is to be the outcome.
Throughout the thesis I have attempted to construct an account of the teaching of physical education that is multivocal and rich in meaning (polysemic). I have been keen for you to share my account without the overlay of pre-emptive analysis. I did alert you to some of my guiding perspectives in the Preface. The family resemblance I draw from interpretive approaches; neo-Marxism; and cultural studies is a concern with the social construction of everyday life.

My particular interest is the empirical specification of this social construction in the context of a relatively ignored part of schooling. I have noted how in the 1980s a growing number of researchers have expressed a similar interest. Like many of these people I am interested in the link between the milieu of the personal and the structure of the public as expressed in the seminal work of C. Wright Mills (1967).

My conscious intention in this thesis has been to adopt a different kind of approach in order to add to the stock of knowledge about physical education. In Chapter Seven I will have some points to make about why I have chosen a particular approach to re-presentation of field work as text. I believe I share a common project with those who seek to explore both the form and content of educational practice. In part I have assumed that:

a sociologically informed reader, reading a sociological account, should be aware of not only what the text is saying, but how it is saying it, should perform not only reading, but also reading analysis. (Celia Lury, 1981:94)

As I have already suggested, Part II was an essay in thick description and story-telling. Whilst preparing this conclusion to Chapter Six, I came across my copy of William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society* in which he suggests:
It was a long time before I realized that I could explain Cornerville better through telling stories of those individuals and groups than I could in any other way.

Instead of studying the general characteristics of classes of people, I was looking at Doc, Chick, Tony, Cataldo, George, Ravello and others. Instead of getting a cross-sectional picture of the community at a particular point in time, I was dealing with a time sequence of interpersonal events. (1955:357)

It has been my good fortune to write up my thesis in 1989. The advantage of backwardness has been that I can offer a contribution to a community of researchers who have been in the vanguard in making the problem of physical education and schooling. I believe that the enrichment of the community will come through a variety of approaches rather than an orthodoxy.

The common ground seems to be the desire to employ small-scale research sensitive to the articulation of classroom, school and social structure in order to reveal the complexity of reality. Awareness of these levels has meant that a serious effort is being made to recognise the temporality of research. What is more, researchers from outside the school setting are not only moderating nomothetic urges to get closer to idiographic teachers (Richard Tinning, 1987), they are also radically questioning their power as researchers. This brings me back to Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony!

One of the reasons for delaying the content of Chapter Six was to enable reading of teachers' experience not the summary of my reading experience. I believe the invitational role of the kind of sociology of physical education contained in John Evans's (1986, 1988a) collections of readings is to be enhanced by enabling teachers to locate their own practice in others' experiences. A story-telling sociology of physical education is commensurate with this.

Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony constructed contexts in which teaching and learning were possible. It is at this level that an interpretive approach to classroom events is powerful and evocative. There is some measure of agreement that such an approach is limited by its commitment to agency alone. David Kirk (1986a), for example, has suggested that the relationship
between structure and agency is the "central problematic" in curriculum development. John Evans (1982, and with Gill Clarke, 1988) has pointed to the potential of the concept of 'frame' to locate classroom practice in wider contexts.

Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Mark also taught in conditions not of their making. Their experience of the politics of knowledge, career patterns, and curriculum development had 'real' consequences. My interest in interventionist research was political in this sense. I hoped that by working with the teachers and identifying strengths, problems and constraints, physical education at both schools would be better rather than worse off. More than that though, I wanted to support the teachers themselves in their own development in a profession configured in a specific kind of social formation at a particular point in time.
CHAPTER SEVEN: From Here to Post-Modernity?

7.1 Documentary Reality

It has taken a long time for me to come to terms with the presentation of this thesis. Its bound, paginated form indicates that I have accepted a framework for the thesis as artifact. My dilemma has been to write in a way that tries to address directly the relationship between researcher, researched, text and audience.

I have tried to find a way for a document to mediate my experience of research without denying the existence of those with whom I researched. Writing is a human process and a means of communicating experiences to others who would not otherwise know of such experiences. In education, as in other forms of activity, we are largely dependent on 'documentary reality'. Celia Lury, in an admirably short masters thesis, has argued that:

Only a small proportion of my knowledge as a sociologist has arisen directly as a result of my own immediate experience (1981:1).

My strategy in the thesis has been to try to limit the amount of 'documentary reality' I draw upon. By delaying until Part III a substantial amount of literature review, I have consciously tried to privilege voices of teachers and others in my research. I wanted to draw on their authority and their authorial voice. It is one way that I have tried to put into practice some of the democratic claims for qualitative research.

Ironically, my interest in the thesis as text emerged because of my exposure to 'documentary reality' of a particular kind.
7.2 Representation and Text

During one of Mark's lessons in the Sports Hall at Bridgetown School, a third year boy, John Wilds, came up to me and asked, "Are you writing about all them naughty people?" Even now, some three years on, his question has evoked the scene in the Sports Hall on that day for me. I remember where I was sitting, how cold I was and what John looked like. I also remember wondering what kind of writing John thought I would be doing.

I have used observations of that particular lesson in my account of Mark's teaching. It would be interesting to know if you noticed John's question in the transcript material. It is a very small example from a lot of data but it raises, in a very tangible way for me, the difficulties inherent in representing field experiences in a textual form.

Let me clarify my understanding of the term 'text'. Like Tim O'Sullivan and his co-writers, I use it to denote "a message that has a physical existence of its own, independent of its sender or receiver and thus composed of representational codes" (1983:238). They also point out that these codes work at a number of levels, and a text:

is thus capable of producing a variety of meanings according to the socio-cultural experience of the reader. (1983:238)

In an attempt to follow up some of the issues related to representation, I found myself immersed in a range of literature that spanned literary theory, anthropology, personal construct psychology and sociology of education. The original impetus for my reading was Paul Atkinson's paper given at an ESRC conference for supervisors of higher degrees involving qualitative methodology. In it, he suggests that:

The 'writing up' of the qualitative study is not merely a major and lengthy task, it is intrinsic to the 'analysis', the 'theory' and the 'findings'. The success or failure of the entire project can depend on the felicity of the writing. To a considerable extent, therefore, the craft of
qualitative research implies craft skill in organizing the product of that research into satisfying and plausible products. (1987:4, original emphasis)

Later in the paper he refers to 'the textual character of our productions', 'the text ... must persuade', 'the constructed character of texts' and then suggests that:

It must become part of our reflexive self-awareness that we recognise the rhetorical and stylistic conventions with which we deal: not in order that textual analysis should substitute for fieldwork, but in order to bring it within our explicit methodological and epistemological understanding. Gone are the days when writing could be regarded as neutral. (1987:11, original emphasis)

In his concluding remarks, Paul Atkinson suggests that critical reflection be cultivated with regard to the form as well as the content of ethnographic writing and that:

we may need to be more open to masters and doctoral theses in which textual experimentation and exploration is a major raison d'etre; we cannot treat them as less important than any other methodological concerns. (1987:12)

I shared this paper with some colleagues at Dartington College of Arts and under their guidance I launched into one of my most intensive bouts of reading ever. In addition to literary theory texts, I was able to enjoy the work of the American poets Charles Olson and William Carlos Williams. I spent longer over Edward Dorn and Leroy Lucas's The Shoshoneans (1966) than many 'academic' sources and learned a great deal about an experimental educational community, Black Mountain College, from Martin Duberman's (1974) account.

Not only did the experience help me to consider more carefully some of Paul Atkinson's arguments, it also drew me closer to the work of Eliot Eisner. The latter suggests that:

there needs to be a place for metaphor, poetic statement, the nonoperational comment or insight, the descriptive assertion that one cannot measure. Why should we limit ourselves to one mode of discourse? Where is it inscribed that scientific propositions and logical analysis are the
only legitimate ways to express what educators have experienced? (1979:xi)

Educational criticism as a way of rendering "the complexity and ambiguity and richness of what happens in schools and classrooms" (Eliot Eisner 1979:184) original emphasis) now struck me as an appropriate approach to sharing fieldwork experiences with an audience. Early in 1989, I tried to write up some of my accounts in the form of educational criticism and presented an example at a graduate seminar at the University of Surrey. Some months later, I tried out a similar paper at a staff seminar at the University of Exeter.

Concurrent with this kind of work, I was also trying to make some basic headway with literary theory, read more about the 'post-modern' debate in anthropology and follow up some leads in story-telling in personal construct psychology.

The outcome has been that I have made textualisation and representation a problem. If a text has the potential to operate or privilege a particular reading and a reader's interpretive practices are operators of a text then writing up fieldwork assumes a new kind of significance. In addition to the democratic rhetoric of the process of qualitative research there is also the form of the text to consider.

Before I develop this account with reference to some of the literature, I want to use two examples from my reading to indicate how text has worked on me and how I have worked on text. I am aware, of course, that I am choosing two examples to make a point. I am constructing an argument in my text that privileges a reading of the examples I have chosen!

The first example is a doctoral thesis published in 1983. It is an ethnography of initial encounters in a comprehensive school and runs to over seven hundred pages. Apart from its size, I have two memories of the text. The first is the amount of underlining. On some pages a large
number of sentences are underlined. I took the underlining to be significant and focussed my attention on those parts of the text.

A second memory of the thesis is the pseudonyms given to the teachers by the researcher. In a very detailed appendix, the researcher provides an account of the research process and field experiences. Part of this refers to 'reflexivity and field tensions' and the reader is told that "data is the product of the researcher's reflexive relationship with the field and, for that reason, the relationship needs to be documented". I looked for documentation of how and why the researcher allocated pseudonyms. Teachers were referred to as Mr, Mrs or Miss and seemed to be allocated names that to me seemed to imply the researcher's summary of their characters. It was not that Mr Megaphone happened to be the physical education teacher, it was more that a name like that and others seemed to me to be insensitive. The headteacher was called Mr Changeable. One female teacher was called Miss Calm whilst another was called Miss Mantis.

The use of pseudonyms by the researcher prompted me to think very clearly about my own use of names. At the end of the thesis I was left wondering whether the teachers themselves consented to the pseudonyms. The researcher concerned has subsequently published papers which retain the pseudonyms.

Now I am very prepared to admit that I did not find the appropriate parts of the text that might have explained the use of names and the process of getting some kind of agreement from the teachers. In addition, I did bring to the text expectations about relationships between researcher and researched in ethnography. In a position paper, written shortly after reading the thesis, I had this to say:

During the course of my fieldwork, I considered how to deal with the issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Apart from the rhetoric of ethnographic practices and the practical contract negotiated with the schools and staff on these matters, I was encouraged to think about names by my observations of one teacher in particular. I noticed and noted that the teacher concerned seemed to use the
exhortation 'Action' a good deal. The word was used to start, restart and enthuse activity. It was so frequent that I started to refer to the teacher concerned as 'The Director' in my thinking.

For some time, this title amused me and I seriously considered using the title in the write up of the research. However, I became increasingly concerned by this label for two specific reasons:

(a) there was obvious potential for a sinister connotation
(b) the selection of this one name might logically impel me to choose titles for other teachers prefixed by the definite article.

The appropriateness of a pseudonym was highlighted for me by an experience recounted by a friend. She had been doing some work on early years' language and had found it impossible to think of a pseudonym for one of the children in her research. The child was a member of a travelling family and had become a central character in her research. He has always been called 'Boy' and both my colleague and Boy's mother had discussed the issues of anonymity and confidentiality at length. Both concluded that it was impossible to find another name that did justice to him. Boy himself could not imagine having another name.

As a student and probationer teacher, I had been particularly keen to get to know pupils' first names in order to personalise contact. I followed this practice throughout my teaching and lecturing career with varying amounts of accurate recall. I thought it important to make the effort to know and use first names.

I suppose that is why I have chosen a second example to discuss as text. It is drawn from the British Journal of Physical Education, Summer 1989, and takes the form of an exchange of views on 'health related fitness' between Andrew Sparkes and Stuart Biddle. Andrew Sparkes cites thirty-eight references in a three-page article. His bibliography takes up two of the ten columns of the article. 'Biddle' is referred to twice in the text and then, as an end note, we are told that Stuart Biddle and Andrew Sparkes share an office together. Stuart Biddle's reply is the shorter of the two articles and covers one and a half pages. In it, Stuart
Biddle refers to "Dr Sparkes" in his first mention of his name and thereafter (thirteen times) to "Sparkes".

Why do two friends talk to each other in a professional journal when they could have an on-going dialogue in the comfort of their own office? Why refer to each other so impersonally? Why do both Andrew and Stuart cite between them forty-five references? If there is a hidden agenda that necessitates a public debate, why not tell us? How would someone subscribing to the journal for the first time deal with Andrew's article?

I have used the device of rhetorical question to make my point about the exchange of views. As I happen to be acquainted with both protagonists, perhaps my reading was dealing with biography beyond the exchange. I do hope that this second example also indicates how I as a reader operated the text and received a particular kind of privileged account by the form and forum chosen by Andrew and Stuart.

I am very aware that I have chosen to identify issues of my reading to present to you. Text about text becomes a meta-commentary in this way. I must emphasise that the two examples chosen are indicative of a move to textual criticism in my reading. Although 'reading' and evaluating research reports have been part of my professional role as lecturer and research student, my recent reading has been transformed by my interest in text. Literary criticism and educational criticism thus become similar activities, as Eliot Eisner has indicated, and are focussed both in the form and content of the text. Wolfgang Iser suggests that readers of the novel are "forced to take an active part in the composition of the novel's meaning" (1974:xii). His account of this active participation is contained in his book The Implied Reader, and he points out that the term 'implied reader':

incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process. It refers to the active nature of this process - which will vary historically from one age to another (1974:xii)
In order to develop this text and reader relationship further I would like to return to the discussion that preceded the two examples of my reading of text. I suggested that writing up fieldwork assumes a new kind of significance once the process of writing is made problematic. There is a lively debate about this in anthropology at the present time.

John Van Maanen's monograph Tales of the Field is founded on the belief that:

the joining of fieldwork and culture in an ethnography entails far more than merely writing up the results culled from making friends, staying sane and healthy, worming one's way into back regions and taking good notes in the field. (1988:6)

He challenges the persistent conviction among social scientists that:

the problems of ethnography are merely those of access, intimacy, sharp ears and eyes, good habits of recording, and so forth (1988:6)

and argues that:

a culture or a cultural practice is as much created by the writing (i.e., it is intangible and can only be put into words) as it determines the writing itself. (1988:6)

In my account of the teaching of physical education, I am posing as problematic the documentary reality presented to the reader. My intention has been to develop an account of the writing process that will move on the debate about qualitative research in the study of physical education. Like John Van Maanen, I contend that not to pose ethnographic writing as problematic reduces ethnography to method (1988:6).

The significance of writing and the creative processes involved have been addressed by Peter Woods (1985) and Howard Becker (1986) amongst others. I take the promise of ethnography to be the multi-disciplinary
enrichment that it offers to accounts of everyday life. As evidenced in debates in anthropology and sociology, I believe that this enrichment will be extended by essays in literary criticism and discussions of the art of writing. In such an argument I am tempted to note that Anthony Giddens's (1976) duality of structure applies equally well to the literary text as to the social text. The development of a reflexive approach to the process of writing in ethnography, in addition to a reflexivity to method and data, will further the debate about how to account for everyday life.

Fundamental to this debate will be the distinction between authorship and reader receptivity. John Van Maanen has suggested that ethnography must "minimally explicitly consider":

1. the assumed relationship between culture and behaviour (the observed)
2. the experiences of the fieldworker (the observer)
3. the representational style selected to join the observer and observed (the tale)
4. the role of the reader engaged in the active reconstruction of the tale (the audience). (1988:xii)

In his monograph, John Van Maanen identifies three kinds of ethnographic tales: realist; confessional; and impressionistic. Each transforms unruly fieldwork experience into an authoritative written account. In exploring such narrative conventions he follows the lead of George Marcus and Dick Cushman (1982) and the subsequent work of James Clifford (1983, 1986).

A realist tale:

offers one reading and culls its facts carefully to support that reading. Little can be discovered in such texts that has not been put there by the fieldworker as a way of supporting a particular interpretation. (1988:53)
A confessional tale is a highly personalised and self-absorbed mandate. It rests on a personalised author(ity) giving the fieldworker's point of view. It has a naturalness "despite all the bothersome problems exposed in the confession". (1988:78)

Of the small number of ethnographers who write impressionist tales, John Van Maanen observes:

Their materials are words, metaphors, phrasings, imagery, and most critically, the expansive recall of fieldwork experience. These are put together and told in the first person as a tightly focussed, vibrant, exact, but necessarily imaginative rendering of fieldwork. (1988:102)

These different kind of tales are discussed in detail by him as vehicles to consider ethnography's role in representing culture. The issues he raises ought to be considered by those attempting ethnographic enquiry and research in physical education.

Stephen Tyler (1987), another anthropologist interested in text, is critical of ethnographic text that fails to recognise itself as a "mere monologue about a dialogue". He contends that:

The test of true dialogue is that when it is captured in text or recording it is almost incomprehensible, a thing of irruptions and interruptions, of fits and starts, thoughts strangled halfway to expression, dead ends, wild shifts, and sudden inexplicable returns to dead and discarded topics. (1987:66)

Stephen Tyler juxtaposes representation and textualisation in a timeless world of written form. The subtitle of his book is 'Discourse, Dialogue and Rhetoric in the Postmodern World', and in it he attempts to chart a path for ethnography in that world. For him, the evocative mission of post-modern sentiment in ethnography is:

only a preliminary move in the restoration and recuperation of the commonsense world incarnated for us not in language or representation but in speech and communication in the carnival of the mundane and the quotidian talk of everyday life. (1987:xii)
Post-modern ethnography celebrates "a return to the plurivocal world of a speaking subject" (1987:172). It will be quite different in kind to that produced by ethnographers who:

have tamed the savage, not with the pen, but with the tape recorder, reducing him to a 'straight man', as in the script of some obscure comic routine. (1987:205)

Stephen Tyler calls for evocative ethnography that casts off:

scientific rhetoric which entails 'objects', 'facts', 'descriptions', 'inductions', 'generalizations', 'verification', 'experiment', 'truth' and like concepts which, except as empty invocations, have no parallels either in the experience of ethnographic field work or in the writing of ethnographies. (1987:207)

Text has also been made a problem in some of the contributions to the personal construct psychology literature. Peter Sinclair (1985), for example, intends to stimulate reader production of text rather than reader consumption. He suggests that:

One way to liberate the reader, to give back the reader her power and responsibility, is to stop trying to produce the ultimate, inevitable ordered persuasion. (1985:212)

Removal of the author, he argues, frees us from authority. The authorless text is writable by the reader "as she identifies the plurality of its meanings" (1985:213). His own approach to making text is quite distinctive.

Miller Mair (1988) has suggested that we live through and by stories - stories as habitations that: liberate the telling; value the story as a whole; are a place of battle; and are composed of many voices. More recently he has added that:

Our tendency, I think, has been to relegate telling... to secondary place in relation to the importance we give to 'getting the facts'. (1989:8)
Constructivist approaches to teacher education have also started to develop stories as mirrors for professional development. Maureen Pope has reminded me that, whilst on a visit to Australia in 1989, she found a paper which contained the following observation about the use of story-telling:

The poetics of thinking yield open-ended and polysemic texts so that unified arguments are replaced by itineraries of topics.

Maureen Pope (1989) herself has attempted to draw together some of the links between personal construct psychology, teacher thinking and accounts of teaching. She suggests that:

an alternative to Kelly's root metaphor man-the-scientist, currently being explored by some Personal Constructivists, may be more fruitful within teacher thinking research and professional development practices which may evolve as a result. The metaphor is that of Person-as-Storyteller". (1989:26)

She envisions teacher thinking research making much more use of autobiographies "since they allow more ownership and authorship of the stories told by the teachers" (1989:27).

The availability of models of writing in anthropological, sociological, educational and constructivist research that counter conventional modes is mirrored by developments in literary theory with regard to the concept of post-modernism.
7.3 Five Teachers, Two Schools

In this thesis, I have tried to write in, not write out real people and social settings. I have been mindful of Jeanne Favret-Saada's suggestion that:

ethnography seems to be carried forward between a native confined for all time to the position of subject in the statement, and a scholar who assigns himself the role of stating subject, though an indefinite one. (1980:28)

The progressive focussing I experienced in my search for a process and form of writing was further enhanced by Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other* (1983). In his account of how anthropology makes its object, he notes the distancing of "those who are observed from the Time of the observer". The task for anthropology, Johannes Fabian argues, is to remedy this by creating coevalness or shared time. Without coevalness, he adds, anthropology is allochronic.

Although:

ethnographers ... have always acknowledged coevalness as a condition without which hardly anything could ever be learned about another culture... when it comes to producing anthropological discourse in the forms of description, analysis and theoretical conclusions, the same ethnographers will often forget or disavow their experiences of coevalness with the people they studied. Worse, they will talk their experiences away with ritualistic invocations of 'participant observation' and the 'ethnographic present' (1983:33).

They do so, he suggests, by a strategic use of time "for fear that their reports might otherwise be disqualified as poetry, fiction, or political propaganda" (1983:33). One such strategy is to combine the ethnographic present with the third person 'nonperson':

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The ethnographer does not address a you except, presumably, in the situation of fieldwork when he asks questions or otherwise participates in the life of his subjects. He need not explicitly address his ethnographic account to a you because, as discourse/commentary it is already sufficiently placed in a dialogic situation; ethnography addresses a reader. The dialogic Other (second person, the other anthropologist, the scientific community) is marked by the present tense; pronouns and verb forms in the third person mark an Other outside the dialogue. He (or she or it) is not spoken to but posited (predicated) as that which contrasts with the personness of the participants in the dialogue. (1983:85, original emphasis)

In such a strategy, personal experience of the field is translated into 'fact' and 'data'. Johannes Fabian contrasts the kind of distancing employed in such a strategy with a creative hermeneutic distancing from past events. It is through this latter kind of distancing that ethnographers can start to address the problems of time and otherness. Recognising that "hermeneutic distance is an act not a fact" (1983:90), leads to a distinction between reflexion as a subjective activity "carried out by and revealing the ethnographer" and reflection "as a sort of objective reflex (like the image in a mirror) which hides the observer by axiomatically eliminating subjectivity".

In case you are starting to think that the title of this section is referring to five teachers of anthropology and two schools of thought, I want to get us back to Alan, Ed, Mark, Bob, Tony at Bridgetown and Riverside schools.

I have made a number of statements about the significance I attached to the voices of those in our research. In the text, I have used personal and particular moments, episodes and experiences to speak about my engagement with five teachers, two schools and a cast of thousands. As such I have privileged the particular over the general.
I do not want to be involved in that kind of reporting that Peter Medawar (1964) refers to as 'fraudulent' which submerges the flux of daily life. I believe that a choice is open to me in writing. I want to contribute to a collective understanding through what I hope is a distinctive approach.

Writing about five teachers and two schools can only be partial. I have taken the view that if contact with such a small number of schools and teachers over a period of three years is fallible then at the very least I would want to explore what 'significance' could be attached to large-scale, random-sampled surveys. It is not the size or scale that troubles me, it is the authority claimed for and by such activity.

I find the down-to-earth approach of the teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside the touchstone of my account. In trying to make them and me into us, I hope I have drawn nearer recognising Dennis Tedlock's point that:

multivocality is not something waiting to be originated in the discourse of a new anthropology, dialogical or 'post-modern' or otherwise, but is already present in the discourse of the natives, even when they narrate. (1987:344)
7.4 Moving Practice On

The title of this chapter was inspired by the Frank Sinatra film From Here to Eternity. That time scale seemed too ambitious for what I hoped to propose: I thought 'post-modernity' might be a better staging post for development.

Now 'post-modernism' is a kind of jellyfish label for me. Whenever I try to grasp it I seem to get stung and it slips through my fingers. Ihab Hassan summarises "its various trends and counter-trends, its artistic, epistemic, and social character" schematically (1987:91):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modernism</th>
<th>Postmodernism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Romanticism/Symbolism</td>
<td>Pataphysics/Dadaism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form (conjunctive, closed)</td>
<td>Antiform (disjunctive, open)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Play</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design</td>
<td>Chance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy</td>
<td>Anarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mastery/Logos</td>
<td>Exhaustion/Silence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Object/Finished Work</td>
<td>Process/Performance/Happening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation/Totalization</td>
<td>Decreation/Deconstruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>Antithesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>Absence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centering</td>
<td>Dispersal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genre/Boundary</td>
<td>Text/Intertext</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semantics</td>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
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<td>Paradigm</td>
<td>Syntagm</td>
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<td>Hypotaxis</td>
<td>Parataxis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Metonymy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Combination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root/Depth</td>
<td>Rhizome/Surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation/Reading</td>
<td>Against reading/Misreading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signified</td>
<td>Signifier</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisible (Readerly)</td>
<td>Scriptible (Writerly)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Narrative/Grande Histoire</td>
<td>Anti-narrative/Petite Histoire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Code</td>
<td>Idolect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptom</td>
<td>Desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Mutant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genital/Phallic</td>
<td>Polymorphous/Androgynous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paranoia</td>
<td>Schizophrenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin/Cause</td>
<td>Difference-Difference/Trace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God the Father</td>
<td>The Holy Ghost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphysics</td>
<td>Irony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determinacy</td>
<td>Indeterminacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendence</td>
<td>Immanence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ihab Hassan recognises the insecurity of these dichotomies but suggests that the rubrics of the right column point to the indeterminacies of the postmodern tendency. He argues that:

Through all these signs moves a vast will to unmaking, affecting the body politic, the body cognitive, the erotic body, the individual psyche - the entire realm of discourse in the West. In literature alone our ideas of author, audience, reading, writing, book, genre, critical theory, and of literature itself have all suddenly become questionable. (1987:92)

Post-modernism challenges the duality of subject and object and the equating of subjectivity as opinion and objectivity as truth. As John Murphy (1988) has suggested, one of the theoretical tenets of postmodernism is that knowledge is not immaculately conceived.

The time seems opportune, therefore, for sociologists of physical education to rise to the post-modern challenge. Given the state of scholarship now evident, making textualisation of research reports problematic seems the logical next step. For example:

1. collaborative work with colleagues in other departments in higher education and school could energise development rather than duplicate experience.
2. research reports could be jointly written by researcher(s) and teacher(s)
3. we could persuade journals and their referees to consider alternative formats for publication.

By moving practice on I believe we will get to a kind of praxis. If praxis occurs at all, I believe it will be small-scale and local. My appeal is tinged with some realism, since, as Nigel Harris points out about change in the Third World:
One must keep a strict sense of proportion in appraising the new orthodoxies, for probably they do not go very deep, and even where they do go deeper, they are almost certainly reformulated in entirely traditional terms. Mao to an average Chinese peasant probably seems less like a champion of Marxist-Leninism, and more like an emperor-cum-prophet. (1971:201)

Whether teachers want to or ought to move practice on is quite another matter. What I am hoping for in my work with the teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside is that all of us put a question mark over some of our assumptions. The best I can hope for is that I facilitate change, not out of a sense of personal importance but as somebody who was around at a particular time.

I think I also need to be clear about the level of change possible. My 'academic' interest in political sociology has imbued me with a sense of politics as the occasional art of the possible infused with a good deal of personal desire. David Kirk (1986a) and Andrew Sparkes (1988), amongst others, have researched curriculum innovation and raise questions of the micro-politics of the school and the macro-politics of educational provision.

At Bridgetown and Riverside schools there was autonomy and control over the content of lessons which made changes in everyday teaching possible. But there seems to have been a limited range of convenience beyond that. The significance of case study material, for me, has been to indicate how the day-to-day teaching of physical education is more or less possible. Such possibilities then need to be located in wider frames of reference.

I would like to conclude this chapter with a summary of what 'From Here to Post-Modernity' implies. Qualitative research is becoming more acceptable in physical education. But it would not be unfair to say that qualitative sociology is not a dominant concern either for the profession as a whole or for those who control access to publication. To add a post-modern description to the work will probably reduce access
even further! Once textual criticism of dominant forms of representation is undertaken some raw nerves will be touched.

This need not be a reason to decline textual criticism. What it does indicate however is the craft and tact essential to move debate forward. I have argued that the quantitative/qualitative debate is not an either/or debate. I submit that the significance of any approach to the teaching of physical education is to be judged by what it delivers rather than what it promises. To pick up on Nigel Harris's comments about Mao, if any approach is equated with emperor-cum-prophet it ought to be fully clothed.

Maureen Pope and Pam Denicolo (1984) indicate the problems facing psychologists who wish to explore intuitive theories held by pupils, students and teachers. In a discipline dominated by a quantitative research methodology, they suggest that there are no easy tabulations, no simplifying formulae into which to plug the intuitive theories data.

The same problem faces qualitative researchers in physical education, as Andrew Sparkes has indicated (1989a). If we do resist the temptation to accept recognisable ordinariness then we will need to find ways of communicating 'alternative approaches' and engaging professional colleagues in debate. Perhaps we will have to agree with George Marcus and Dick Cushman that:

> ethnographies will only be fairly assessed when the development of what amounts to a critical sense for the forms as well as the manifest content of ethnographic discourse becomes part of a routine of professional practice. (1982:65)
PART IV
CHAPTER EIGHT: Hit and Run or Knock for Knock?

8.1 A Personal View of the Process

One of Dylan Thomas's poems starts with the verse:

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

This thesis has provided me with a vehicle for metaphorical rage.

Throughout the thesis I have not tried to disguise my role as author. My 'old age' relates to my experience of teaching and lecturing in physical education. The thesis has been an attempt to resolve a number of contradictions in my lived experience of physical education.

In my planning of the thesis, I have anticipated two different kinds of audience. I am mindful of the University regulations regarding the presentation of the thesis and the implied audience for it. I have also been keen to provide a text for teachers and student teachers to use. My sense of both audiences has been mediated by my views of knowledge and my assumptions about what it is to be a person.

Changes in my own thinking about teaching and learning have been accelerated by changes in my own career as well as by my experience of research. Fortuitous engagement with George Kelly's personal construct psychology and involvement with 'progressive' education have enabled me to consider the enormous implications of the small preposition 'with'. Daily contact with Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony in the Spring Term 1986 and subsequent links since then have encouraged me to rethink my understanding of the teaching of physical education. In particular, I have become aware of the importance of a secure environment for children. In my own teaching I now try to enable and facilitate children's learning by providing space
to learn. Some of my accounts in Part II indicate how this happened for some classes with some teachers. I am also looking carefully in my teaching at the tasks I set and the manner of their setting.

To my surprise, and relief, I have found accounts from a variety of perspectives that are supportive of the issues I have raised during the thesis. I held back on discussing these until Part III. My view throughout the thesis has been that I wanted to facilitate engaged reading and to acknowledge an available literature. As far as possible I have tried to keep my account as close to my work as possible. My dilemma has been that noted by J A Banks (1979) in his discussion of evidence in sociology:

...sociological research seems to face the dilemma that the more precise it is made, the less objective it is likely to become; the more objective it becomes, the less precise it is likely to be. (1979:569)

I want to say something about 'objectivity' in 8.2 but for the moment I note that what J A Banks refers to as "contact at three removes" with research evidence, that is, "what intellectuals write about what people have done" (1979:568), has been difficult for me. In the Preface, I gave a preliminary account of guiding perspectives in my work and my analysis in Chapter Six was informed and shaped by those perspectives. My approach to sociological analysis has been that key elements of interpretive approaches, neo-Marxism, cultural studies helped me to make sense of and give meaning to my experience of field work at Bridgetown and Riverside. My deference to the teachers with whom I worked and to an emerging community of researchers in the sociology of physical education has encouraged me to present the thesis as a personal account which maps my research journey.

In the Frontispiece, I used two quotations from sources that helped me to structure my account. I have not wanted to prescribe what teaching of physical education might be, I have much preferred to illustrate the practice of teaching by drawing on field research with five teachers. My re-presentation of that experience has used a variety of material. My belief is that a sociological analysis can be implicit and explicit in such accounting and that varying levels of meaning can be revealed by a reader.
I now see the thesis as a starting point for developing work with the teachers in the research and as a contribution to liberational notions of educational research that celebrate vocality and collaborative control of research. Peter Holly (1989) suggests that collaborative enquiry has the potential to at last transform hitherto "unscathed classrooms". Richard Winter (1988) has indicated the role of "storying" in collaborative research and how a fictional-critical procedure can be true to practitioner research's spirit of developing practice.

Those sensitive to the significance of constructive alternativism have sought to privilege the personal dimensions of research. However, as Maureen Pope and Pam Denicolo (1984) have suggested, constructivist accounts have to be presented as credible and creditable and the solution to this may rely on lengthy transcripts and context descriptions alongside interpretations. They note difficulties associated with this strategy:

However, even with a very small sample or an individual case study, this could result in a voluminous document. This is a major problem whichever of the professional hats one wears. As a PhD student, it involves the production of a bulky, unwieldy thesis. As a teacher, although interested in research authentic to the classroom, there is a time constraint imposed on the reading of lengthy prose. Authenticity must be tempered with utility. As a scholar/researcher wishing to publish the result of one's labours, one finds that the dominant current demand is for short, concise papers preferably with tabulations of results. (1984:5)

This leaves an uncomfortable conundrum for researchers which is embodied in Miller Mair's observation that:

(You) feel alarm at the situation you are involved in and the distance you have travelled from easy public justification of what you are doing. This is where it is easy to abandon, betray and deny the special trust developing between you. The temptation can be great to rush back to public safety and recognisable ordinariness. (quoted in Maureen Pope and Pam Denicolo, 1984:10)
At the end of a process of research extending over six years, I have tried not to retreat and renege either on my emerging interests in vocality and authorial control or on the contracts I established with senior management and staff at Bridgetown and Riverside. If anything, a growing interest in the teacher-as-person and researcher-as-person has added to my resolve.

In the next section I want to discuss some of the issues arising from the way I have constructed a sociological analysis.

8.2 A More Visible Community

The character of the scholarly output of sociologists of physical education has undergone considerable change during the course of my research. In Chapter Six, I identified some of the characteristics of the change. The distance I have had to travel in my reading is embodied by comparing my mention of literature in the Preface to Chapter Six.

My sense of security in a qualitative approach to research in physical education has minimised my status anxiety. Part of my effort to map developments in the sociology of physical education involved my attempt to locate researchers with similar interests to my own. By 1985 I had a vague idea of directions of research. Within four years of this date, a community of researchers had been made public by two collections of readings (John Evans 1986, 1988a).

One of the issues bedevilling qualitative research in physical education has been that of its status in respect of dominant approaches. My strategy in the thesis has not been to ignore this issue but to defer it.

I was keen to let you get on with your reading of my account before I drew attention to some of the literature in the re-view. I also wanted to acknowledge my work as a cumulative endeavour. I hoped that as a reader you would have a sense of my work at Bridgetown and Riverside by the end of Part II, and that you would be alerted to my selection of authoritative literature in Chapters Six and Seven. I regarded my task as an
underlabourer. My field work has taken place within an ongoing debate about what is to count as evidence. I have chosen not to rehearse that debate rather I have preferred to signal where some of the debate resides.

Andrew Sparkes (1989a), as I have indicated, has raised important questions about foundational and anti-foundational assumptions in research in physical education. My own view on the debate is that there is little point in setting up images of alternative paradigms which themselves are dynamic. I have also found it difficult to de-construct texts in sufficient detail to apportion affiliation. The logical outcome of de-construction is work on the scale of Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis's (1986) *Becoming Critical*.

I agree with Andrew Sparkes that a particular dilemma for naturalistic research is to find a way of addressing issues characterised by some as 'reliability' and 'validity'. I would like to address this dilemma by returning to Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony.

Over a period of three years I got to know the five teachers. My sense of them and our relationship was developmental. Whenever we met the story we shared had moved on. I chose to visit their schools for strategic and pragmatic reasons. They did not invite me in advance of my approach to them. Over that time-scale we were able to converse about experiences and professional development. I found that five teachers provided me with substantial research material.

Other researchers preferred larger-scale undertakings. Gordon Underwood (1983) interviewed sixteen teachers matched for age and sex; used a team of three independent judges to examine physical education syllabuses obtained from a sample of secondary schools; undertook a content analysis of the same syllabuses; and conducted a postal questionnaire "of approximately 800 schools in ten authorities in England and Wales. All secondary schools with intakes at 11,12 and 13 years were included" (1983:27) and used a two-way stratification (by region and type of school). In 1988, Gordon Underwood published details of research involving some 2000 pupils in the fourth year of fourteen secondary schools which included questionnaires, detailed observation of five schools (seventy-four lessons), and semi-structured...
interviews with some staff and pupils at the five schools. The Physical Education Association (1987) based its commission of enquiry in part on a one-in-ten sample of secondary schools in England and Wales which used a three-way stratification (by region, sex of school, size of school).

The scale of my research is underscored not only by these research designs but also by statistical data from the Department of Education and Science (1989). In 1988, there were 31,600 qualified physical education teachers in the maintained secondary sector. 16,748 of these were male teachers. In terms of a sample size, I calculate that Alan, Mark and Ed represent 0.018% of the available sample frame at the time of my research.

I suggest that the statistical significance of my research is only a problem if I make claims for all teachers of physical education and about the representativeness of my 'sample'. I have assiduously tried not to make any claims about teaching physical education beyond the contexts of Bridgetown and Riverside. I have consciously chosen not to use a third person, ethnographic present tense. My account has a time-scale that records past events not present practices. But ... One of the particularly appealing aspects of ethnographic accounts for me is the possibility of striking common ground with others. At such times there is a possibility of 'So what?' becoming 'Ah, yes'.

I take the force (sic) of Stephen Tyler's (1987) argument to be that postmodern ethnography is evocative. As a form, ethnography:

... has none of the rape of the scientists's "looking at", or of the macho braggadocio of "let's see", or of the deployment of armies of argument, or of the subjugation of the weak in the politician's "doing to". Seeking neither the reason that makes power nor the power that makes reason, it founds in the receptivity of "listening to" and in the mutuality of "talking with". It takes its metaphor from another part of the sensorum and replaces the monologue of the bull horn with dialogue. (1987:216)
Although I sometimes have difficulties with the force of Stephen Tyler's argument, my own development is much more linked to the crafting of evocative accounts. The literature associated with educational case study in England and ethnographic evaluation in North America addresses the debate about 'reliability' and 'validity'. I wish to acknowledge the presence of the debate and some of the passions it arouses. In physical education, those reared on different approaches to observation have already locked horns on these issues.

My preference, epistemologically and ontologically, is for an approach to educational research that in its process and product stimulates professional development. I want to find space in my work for evocation and Elliot Eisner-inspired educational criticism. There is no fight involved here over either/or, winner-take-all debates. My response to the 'reliability' and 'validity' debate is that it is the differentness of accounting that will lead to praxis in teaching. What matters is that teachers are enabled to develop in a profession that needs all the help it can get. It is my hope that material drawn from Part II of this thesis will be used by teachers and student teachers.

In the concluding part of this chapter, I want to consider the threatened species 'marginal man'.

8.3 What Hope for Marginal Man?

During the course of my research, I gained a sense of some of the exhilaration to be experienced by teachers in the imminence of teaching particular subjects at particular moments to particular groups. I was aware of the energy and motivation successful teaching and curriculum development engendered. But I also noted some of the difficulties to be faced by teachers in their everyday working lives. Part II has examples of the highs and lows of teaching.
A number of the contributors to the sociology of physical education literature have used the concept of 'marginality' to refer to the status of physical education and physical education teachers (see, for example, Leo Hendry 1975, Les Bell 1986, Thomas Templin 1988).

When initially conceived, my research was intended to ground my work with student teachers in current practice in physical education. It had become evident that 'academic' pressures on BEd courses had created difficulties in preparing student teachers for their practice. Although I was unaware of the terms at the time, I was looking for that person described as an 'expert pedagogue' (David Berliner, 1986), or a 'moral craftsman' (Richard Tinning, 1987). Lawrence Stenhouse (1984b) argued strongly that:

Teaching is the art which expresses in a form accessible to learners an understanding of the nature of that which is to be learned. (1984:70)

I saw improvements in teaching as a counter-blow to the status arguments. I appreciated that the scale of the blow would be determined by constraints at the school and societal level.

I did find exemplars of the good practice I was looking for in the research schools. Although I left my post in the college of education shortly after the completion of the intensive field work, two teachers from the research did take sessions with student teachers at the college after my departure. I also found that all five teachers experienced problems as physical education teachers.

At Bridgetown, Alan, Mark and Ed had to deal with the difficulties posed by the industrial action.Traditionally, physical education teachers have been actively engaged in the extra-curricular life of schools. In some schools, the main kudos to be gained by physical education teachers was through the success of sports teams rather than excellence of teaching within the curriculum. At Bridgetown, all three teachers had invested time in teams and clubs prior to the action. In Alan and Ed's cases conversations with them after the action ended indicated the vitality the extra-curricular
activities gave to their work. Following his move from the school, Mark became involved in a variety of sports through the youth service in Parkgate and continued with his soccer summer school for children in and near Bridgetown School.

The commitment to the extra-curricular and the taken-for-grantedness of teaching in lessons became issues for all three teachers during the industrial action as the material in Chapter Three indicates. I have consciously chosen not to report some of the micro-political details of life for physical education teachers at Bridgetown. It was evident, however, that there were unresolved tensions in the school after the end of the industrial action which left the three teachers concerned about their relative value in school priorities. I was particularly judicious with Alan's briefings and recognised within a short time of transcribing his material the value of the elision convention (...). As I indicated in Chapter Six, there are issues here I would like to follow up beyond the thesis. I have in mind here ways of sharing with the research schools particular problems and with a wider audience the ethical dimensions of research contracts.

At Riverside, Bob and Tony, in Dickensian terms, were experiencing 'the best of times'. Their stock was high and they had access to a brand new Sports Hall from December 1987. I have tried to describe their experiences in Chapter Four. But there was evidence at the school of tensions experienced by the teachers as physical education teachers. Once again, I would like to take up some issues of the division of labour at the school once the thesis is completed. There is comparatively little research material about the teaching of physical education in independent schools and I would hope to make a contribution to the literature in this respect.

On three occasions during the research I have had opportunities to give papers about my work at Bridgetown and Riverside. On each occasion I have felt extremely protective about Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony. In this thesis I have also felt protective. No teacher has had the opportunity to see my account of them and I am aware of a duty of trust and confidentiality. I have tried to resolve these concerns by avoiding an
ethnographic present tense which might have indicated practice beyond the temporality of the research. I have also not attempted to offer comparatively evaluative comments about teachers, managements, pupils or school contexts. I did take an evaluator's role with regard to the quality of off-site facilities at Bridgetown and provided details of my role in 6.4. In this respect, I am mindful of Thomas Templin's comments that:

PE teachers themselves may perceive PE or PE teachers as marginal in terms of contributing to pupils or to their own life and occupational experience and career development. As a consequence they help sustain the low status and support, that are given to the subject. (1988:80)

Concurrent with my research at Bridgetown and Riverside there was an on-going national debate about the significance of sport in schools. I have indicated in 6.3.3 how different agencies sought to make statements about physical education and sport in the curriculum. Notwithstanding the difficulties caused by the industrial action and the associated debate about teaching as a socially-(under)valued occupation, physical education teachers also had to deal with media attention.

In their discussion of Unpopular Education, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies noted that:

Those who are involved in practical activity may find their own activity re-presented back to them by the media, not simply inverted or reflected as in a mirror, but always systematically transformed according to the practices of the medium itself. (1981:28)

John Evans (1988b), amongst others, has located media attention on sport in school within the context of the social and political pressures and processes "now acting upon educational practice of every sort in British schools and elsewhere". His paper and contributors to his collection of readings (1988a) are indicative of a further refinement of the sociology of physical education.
Meanwhile, following programmes like the BBC's *Panorama* in March 1987, the five teachers in my research were left to explain their practice to colleagues. Since the issues stimulating the *Panorama* documentary were rooted in developments attributed to the Inner London Education Authority's influence, Parkgate also received detailed coverage of the 'controversy' in the regional media. At a time when, in both schools, there was an opportunity to move forward the teachers had to deal with calumny. To the 'marginality' of the subject was added an inherent sinfulness. I have no detailed field notes about the teachers' mediation of these tensions.

In response to the rhetorical question at the start of this section, I believe that hope for 'marginal' man rests on an ability to come to terms with the articulation of lesson, school and cultural contexts that make the teaching of physical education more not less possible. Collaborative, small-scale research, carefully negotiated will be particularly important if teachers are to be supported and supportive of each other. I hope that Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony will be able to use their experience of the research process to further stimulate their own professional development.

8.4 *Hit and Run or Knock for Knock?*

In 6.4 I suggested that I regarded part of my research with Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony as interventionist. On one of my first visits to Bridgetown, Alan forthrightly asked me whether I was there to do some 'hit and run' research. It was a fair question and one that I have carried with me throughout the research. I would like the thesis to be my answer to his question.

I did arrive at the schools with a range of research questions which were progressively focussed. My account of the process of research has attempted to indicate how this focussing occurred. In the intervening years I would characterise my experience of research as much more akin to the 'knock for knock' variant. I was able to share in the teachers' daily lives and learn
again about teaching physical education but I also tried to support their work.

My intention throughout has been to find out more about how teachers construct the lesson contexts that make teaching and learning possible. Although my interest in teaching has been focussed by personal construct psychology I have sought to provide a sociological analysis founded on an ethnographic process and product.

I have attempted to re-present my experience of research in a way that gives voice to Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony and offers you as reader a description rich in meaning. As many ethnographers would attest, it is at this point that the tale from the field starts.

My thoughts at the end of the thesis are about Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony. I wonder what they think of my account as bedtime reading. Allegorically, in some more of Dylan Thomas's verses, I might find a role:

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words have forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.
8.5 About the form and content of the thesis

In 2.1, I mentioned briefly my research contract with the headteachers and physical education teachers at Bridgetown and Riverside schools. As part of my strategy for re-presenting my field work I consciously chose not to go into explicit detail about my research contract at that point in the thesis.

In Chapters Six and Eight, I deliberately left a number of issues unresolved because of the constraints of my contract and my approach to the thesis. Now that you have reached the end of the thesis, I would like to share with you some of the reasons for this.

Firstly, I made assumptions about you as reader. In particular, I did not want to pre-empt your reading of the tale from the field. Secondly, at a personal level I felt privileged to be able to research with Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony and felt obliged to write in a non-evaluative way. This also encouraged me not to make claims for the significance of my research role in changing practice in the schools. As I indicated in Chapter Six, both the scale and pace of change is problematic and I did not want to presume to have had an effect that I could not without any doubt intimate. Thirdly, I was very aware of being in two different types of schools at a particular point in time.

My personal contract with the schools effectively precluded me from developing specific issues in the thesis such as patriarchal approaches to physical education, critical commentary on curriculum content and the structure of physical education and games (particularly at Riverside). I did not, for example, develop in detail issues surrounding my letter to Mr Mitchell (see 6.2.2).

However, such issues offer an opportunity to return to the schools and develop different contractual relationships. I hope to develop the material for INSET use both within and beyond the schools. For the moment these issues remain embedded in the text.
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18 November 1985

Mr Wells
Riverside School
Parkgate

Dear Mr Wells

I would like to enlist your help! I am a senior lecturer in Movement Studies at a local college of higher education. I have been granted a sabbatical term by the college in the Spring Term 1986. I would like to spend as much of the time as possible in one or two local schools. My particular interest is in teaching and learning in physical education.

I am extremely keen to visit Riverside School. I have been aware of the work of your school for many years. In December 1984, I became a resident of Parkgate and this has focussed my interest in Riverside. I would be delighted to give details of my work to you, or a colleague, should you be able to help further my interest in physical education.

At present, I am free on Fridays to discuss my interests and I would be delighted to come to the school for an introductory discussion.

Yours sincerely

Keith Lyons
FIELD WORK VISIT: Riverside and Bridgetown Schools
Wednesday 23 & Thursday 24 March 1988

Itinerary

Arrangements were made to visit the schools in the fortnight prior to planned arrival. Negotiation direct with teachers. I arranged to stay with Bob on the Wednesday evening.

The two days:

Wednesday:

4.15am Leave Devon
8.15 Arrive Bridgetown School (arranged to meet Alan at 8.30 re job)
8.40 Meet Alan and arrange to see Rugby at 10.30
9.00 Riverside School. Meet Bob & Tony arrange times
9.05 Bob Basketball
10.00 Read Alan's job application whilst sitting in Bob's old office.
10.30 Watch Alan's Rugby lesson with Third Year 'Vegetables'
11.30 Met Alan to discuss application. Sat in Community Tutor's room for one hour. Carried on discussion until 1.15 with food.
14.00 Arrived at RP Schoolboy Sevens. Met Bob. Stayed until Riverside played.
16.00 Back to Riverside to meet Tony just returned from injection. Give Tony questions
16.30 Called in on Bridgetown. No male pe staff but talked to Mr Mitchell and Mr Lindsay arranged meeting (possibly lunch on Thurs). 30 mins general chat. Left request for info & questions
17.20 Back at RP Sevens. Game cancelled!
19.00 Arrive at Bob's and evening at home.
24.00 Write up some notes from evening chat and identify some questions for tomorrow.
Thursday

8.45 Over to Bridgetown to see staff. No one available. Arrangements made yesterday for meeting Thursday pm.
8.55 Back to Riverside and wait for Tony Help to put out B/B backboards
9.05 Second Year B/B observed
10.00 Write up notes in SH office whilst Tony teaches First Year B/B. Referee one of two courts to end lesson (NB Tony's comments at end of day) Leave series of questions for John
10.45 Staff room for coffee with Bob. Meet John and general chat.
11.00 Return to Bridgetown to arrange visit to Mr Mitchell - cannot stay for lunch.
11.30 Back at Riverside SH. Interview and lunch with John.
14.00 To Bridgetown SH to meet Ed. Observe Fifth Year lesson whilst looking at facilities.
14.45 Back at Bridgetown await meeting with Mr Mitchell prepare items for discussion.
15.45 Finish chat with Mr Mitchell and give him notes for record.
15.55 Meet Ed and discuss/interview. Ends at 5.15
17.30 Meet Alan and discuss/interview. Ends at 7.10
19.30 Arrive at Bob's, Meal, brief chat
20.15 Arrive at Tony's home. Discover note to say he has gone out for meal at local wine bar
20.45 Meet Tony in Wine Bar. Brief chat.
21.15 Leave for Devon
23.30 Write up some notes at Gordano Services, Bristol
01.30 Arrive in Totnes
08.00 Check tapes and notes.
08.30 Type up itinerary!
During the course of contact with Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony, I wanted to record discussion of a number of topics. I gave advance notice of the topics by means of a typed sheet. I used the sheet as a framework for conversation with each teacher.

There were two of these kinds of conversations with teachers.

1. Talking About Teaching

TALKING ABOUT TEACHING
June 1986

Dear Alan, Mark, Ed, Bob and Tony,

Please excuse my long absence from your schools. 'Working', examinations and moving house have all distracted me. I would like to return to your schools to do four things. Firstly, I would like to ask your permission to talk to you about your experience of teaching (and, if you agree, record the conversations). Secondly, I would like to talk to some of the pupils in your classes. Thirdly, I would like to work on the data base we discussed briefly in the Spring Term. Fourthly, I would like to establish contacts with my college should you want to use facilities there.

If possible I would like to arrange a time and place convenient for you to conduct our conversations. In the Spring Term, I put forward some ideas of questions I thought I would like to ask you. If, like me, you have filed them away and cannot put your hands on them at the moment perhaps the following topics will serve as a focus:

1. your background
2. your professional development
3. experiences of teaching
4. perceptions of learning
5. relationships with pupils
6. relationships with school
7. curriculum development ideas
I hope these topics will not cause any concern and I would like to re-emphasise the agreement we have made about confidentiality and anonymity.

On the attached sheet I give some indications of possible items for discussion.

If at all possible I would like to add an eighth section which I am not quite sure is better talked or written about. It would be extremely helpful for me to consider the impact of my intrusion into your daily routine. Throughout the term I was treated excellently even when I am sure I was an irritation. What is the place of an outsider in the school PE department? Perhaps we could discuss this when we meet.

Keith
18 June 1986

Topics

1. Your background

Without intruding on your background too much I would be interested to know how you became a PE teacher. In particular, I would like to know about your experiences of PE and sport as you grew up and try to identify what impelled you to become a teacher.

Would you object if I asked you your age or about your qualifications?

2. Professional development

I would like to talk about your teacher training. I am particularly interested in the ways in which your course did or did not prepare you for teaching. This section would logically include your professional development to the present and so perhaps we could talk about your teaching posts.

3. Experience of teaching

I have been fascinated by the diversity of your teaching styles and I would be interested to know how your experiences of teaching have structured your approach to your work. What key factors have helped influence your own growth as a teacher? Has maturity helped?

4. Perceptions of pupils

I wonder how we understand pupils. Each of you has a special rapport with pupils. What expectations do you have of the pupils? How do you build up images of a pupil? How do you know a child learns or is learning?

5. Relationships with pupils

PE is often regarded as different in terms of the quality of contact we can have with the pupils. Do you think there are special relationships that develop with all or some of our children in PE?
6. Relationship with school

I would be interested to know how your work is made more or less possible by the school. To what extent are you given clear guidance and encouragement? What resources are available? How do you cope with difficulties or blockages?

7. Curriculum development ideas

This is a grand title for what we do every day. I mean by this how have you adapted and changed ideas to meet particular needs and interests? What process operates in the changing of curriculum? Who inputs information?

8. The researcher

9. Any other comments

Perhaps you would like to talk about the conversation based on these topics.

2. Update

SUGGESTIONS FOR UPDATE

23/24 March 1988 at Bridgetown and Riverside Schools

It is two years since I spent a term at your schools. I would like to discover what has happened to you and your work during this time. To this end I would like to spend some time in your lessons and to talk to you at length (if possible).

I would like to know about:

1. the flow of events since 1986
2. your experience
3. curriculum matters: policy, implementation and evaluation
4. institutional developments
5. the pupils
6. expectations, hopes, trends

It would be interesting to know what changes you have perceived in the last two years. Whilst you have gone about teaching, the world outside has debated:

7. the appropriate model for the physical education curriculum
8. the impact of industrial action

appendix 3
At the heart of my research lies my interest in what you do as a teacher and so I would like to discuss:

9. your thinking about teaching - process and product
10. the pupils in your care

In terms of your own ongoing personal professional development I would also like to discuss:

11. career plans and support

I am conscious that these are all questions I wish to ask. I hope that you will also be able to tell me what it is that you want to tell me (if anything!)

Finally, a number of people in teacher education are now spending more and more time discussing the teacher-as-researcher. I would like to explore the research dimension of your everyday work.

I look forward very much to meeting you all again.
REQUEST FOR PERSONAL INFORMATION

When I come to write up my research, I would like to accurately report some biographical details about you. As you know whatever I write will use pseudonyms and will reflect the confidentiality of our research contract. At no time will any reference be made to the actual name of the school or your own name.

I hope the following personal questions are not too intrusive. Please feel free to ignore any that you do find too personal.

Name:

Date of birth:

Marital status:

Present post (scale/grade):

Previous employment in education:

Secondary school attended:

Higher education (dates, name of institution, qualifications gained):

Other qualifications (professional, coaching etc):

Sporting achievements/interests:
In-service/special courses/seminars/conferences attended:

In your present post, what extra-curricular activities have you engaged in (school teams, clubs, outings/field trips)?

What non pe responsibilities do you have in your present post?

Have you been involved in any curriculum development initiatives/projects in the school? (If yes please give details)

What do you regard as areas of particular strength in your teaching?
What aspects of your work would you like to develop?

What could be done on an institutional basis to facilitate your work?

Do you have any informal/formal procedures to make these feelings known?

Could you summarise what you think the status of physical education is in your school at the present time?
Finally... I would like to know what you think the role of 'research' might be in developing teaching. Perhaps you could say something about your own experiences with me - your feelings etc. You might also like to say something about your own 'research' which goes on every day!

Thank you for responding. I have asked a good deal of you at a busy time of the term. I hope your replies will add to the picture I have of your work.

Keith
23 March 1988
APPENDIX 5: P.E., Games and Sport at School

A questionnaire given to some pupils at Bridgetown and Riverside.
P.E., Games and Sport at School.

Introduction

I have enjoyed watching and taking part in your lessons this term. I would welcome your help in my work. I am interested in the way p.e., games and sport are learnt at school.

I would like you to answer the following questions. I have not asked you to put your name on your answers and so your answers will be treated in confidence. At the end of the questions you will be asked to decide how your answers are used.

Section One: About yourself.

1. How old are you?
2. How far do you have to travel to come to school?
3. Do other members of your family take part in sport?
4. Do you have a favourite sport or activity outside school time?
5. Are you a member of any clubs outside school?
6. What kinds of sport do you watch on television?
7. Do you ever go to watch sport being played?
8. What local sports facilities have you used? (things like swimming pools, sports halls, recreation grounds).
9. When you take part in games and sports outside school are there any of your schoolfriends involved?
10. Not all games outside school are organised by adults. What kinds of activities keep you from being bored?

Section Two: P.E. at school.

11. What kinds of games did you play at junior school?
12. Was there a teacher who taught p.e. or games?
13. Did you have any kind of dance at junior school?
14. When you came to the school you are at now, what did you know about the way p.e. was taught at the school?
15. If you knew anything about the school, how did you get to know?
16. If you knew nothing about p.e., games or sport at your school did you have any idea what they would be like?
17. Can you remember what happened in your first p.e. lesson at this school?
18. What are the things you like most about p.e., games and sport at school?
19. How could these things be made even better?
20. What are the things that you like least about p.e., games and sport at school?
21. What improvements could be made to make them more bearable?
22. Can you remember any very special moments in p.e. when you did something particularly well?
23. If you can can you describe them briefly?
24. Were there any moments when you felt very embarrassed?
25. If such moments did happen can you describe them or are they still too embarrassing to talk about? (If you can talk about them would you describe them briefly?)
26. What one improvement would make life much easier for you and make your enjoyment of p.e. and games so much greater?
Section Three: How do you learn?

27. Are there any games that you play outside school taught in school?

28. If you are good at any particular activities can you say who has had most influence on what you have learned?

29. Are you aware of the kind of situations that make learning easier for you personally?

30. What things help you concentrate in lessons?

31. What things bore you?

32. How does the weather affect you in p.e. and games?

33. What makes a 'good' teacher?

34. What makes a 'good' lesson?

35. If you were asked to advise a teacher on how to make it easier for pupils to learn, what would you say to the teacher?

36. How would you learn more?

Section Four: In and Around School

37. How much of your conversation with friends is about sport?

38. What kinds of things do you talk about?

39. Do you spend any time talking about your p.e. or games lessons?

40. How important are school teams to you?

41. How much time do you give to school sport each week?

42. Do you take part in any sport or games at lunch time or break time in the playground? (activities organised by you in your free time)

43. Is any of your time spent talking about fights?

44. Have you been involved in a fight at school?

45. Most schools have groups of people who smoke, do you know where to go if you want to smoke? (I don't want to know where this happens!)

46. Do a lot of people smoke at school or on the way to school?

47. What kinds of things happen in school on a 'good' day?

48. Do you have a routine at school for spending your time? (Do you meet the same people before school and walk to school, play the same break time games etc.)

49. What could the school do to improve the way you use break and lunch time?

50. What kinds of school clubs do you take part in or would like to take part in?

Section Five: Your advice to me.

Thank you for getting this far. I would now like to know how to use what you told me in questions 1-50. I have already said that your answers will be confidential and that I do not want to identify anyone.

What you have written will help me in my own work away from your school. However your thoughts can be of general interest to those who teach you. I will not show your completed form to anyone but perhaps the teachers would like to know in general what was said by everyone.

I would like to know if you are prepared for the teachers to be told about some of the things that came out of the answers. I must repeat that no one will see or read your answers other than me.