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**A challenge to teacher professionalism:
The training and deployment of Specialist
Teacher Assistants in the North West of
England**

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For Mum and Dad

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Glossary of Abbreviations

APL	Accredited Prior Learning
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CA	Classroom Assistant
CACE	Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education
CT	Class teacher
CSG	Curriculum Study Group
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DHT	Deputy head teacher
ERA	Education Reform Act
FEI	Further Education Institution
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
HT	Head teacher
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
ITT	Initial Teacher Training
LEA	Local Education Authority
LMS	Local Management of Schools
NN	Nursery Nurse
NNEB	Nursery Nursing Examination Board
NW	North West
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OECD	Organisation in Europe of Child Development
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
STA	Specialist Teacher Assistant
TES	Times Educational Supplement
TTA	Teacher Training Agency

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Abstract

Assistants have been working in schools for many years. There are numerous types of assistants at the moment, such as: school caretakers, cleaners, cooks, dinner ladies, classroom assistants (including nursery nurses) and school secretaries. They relieve teaching staff from non-professional or time-consuming tasks, which could be carried out by a responsible adult, rather than a qualified teacher. The STA initiative introduced a different set of tasks for classroom assistants. These placed a direct emphasis on assistants “contributing to teaching and learning of basic skills” (DfE 1993: par. 33).

STAs were trained to work in the classroom supporting children with mathematics and English activities as opposed to carrying out non-teaching tasks such as: photocopying, making booklets or preparing resources for lessons, previously expected of assistants. The STA scheme was the first initiative to acknowledge explicitly that assistants could contribute to teaching; a professional duty expected of a teacher. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) construed this as a challenge to teachers’ professionalism; but the STA initiative has not created a new challenge. The vision that assistants can contribute to teaching has been known for some time. The Plowden Report (CACE 1967) first discussed the prospect of introducing teacher aides almost thirty years ago, but at that time it was not realised. Since then to the present day, assistants have seen their deployment change through the plethora of educational policy and the demands they have placed on teachers in their classrooms. This has led teachers to use the support they receive of assistants in different ways to maintain and raise standards in education. Assistants’ roles, in recent years, have

changed and they are likely to continue to change, as announcements from the government indicate (DfEE 1998). However, a concern regarding the STA scheme is that a minority of STAs' roles went much further than what might be expected. They were used as surrogate teachers with qualified teacher responsibilities.

Introduction:

A controversial initiative

This research is an attempt to study the training and deployment of a sample of Specialist Teacher Assistants (STAs) in the North West of England and to discover whether the controversial implications surrounding the initiative, which was evoked by teaching unions (NUT 1994; ATL 1995) are founded. The main concerns underlying the STA initiative was its similarities to Initial Teacher Training (ITT), especially ITT competences (discussed further in chapter 8). Furthermore, it followed the failed government attempt in 1992 to create a two tier teacher training system, in which, John Patten, the then Education Secretary, proposed candidates with two A levels could enrol on a one year course to become trained as infant teachers (nicknamed the 'mums' army'). Teaching unions (NUT 1994; ATL 1995) believed the STA initiative could be the mums' army in disguise.

Tensions about the STA initiative were based on genuine concerns from teaching unions and teachers, who had experienced much change in teachers' status and work over the past two decades prior to the STA initiative. In fact, government control in what children were taught (e.g. National Curriculum) led teachers to believe they were to 'become mere technicians or functionaries, implementing orders that had been decided elsewhere (McCulloch, Helsby and Knight, 2000:1). Others, including Ball (1987), Campbell (1996) and Webb (1993) expressed similar conclusions. The Specialist Teacher Assistant Initiative was introduced in this period when teachers perceived new policies were damaging their professionalism. Gaining support for the initiative was a difficult task due

to the fact that it was the redefinition of a much more controversial proposal, which had caused an instant wave of disapproval from teaching unions.

Rationale

The study was initiated because of the controversy surrounding the STA initiative at that time, and the uniqueness of the training it provided for assistants. Candidates enrolled on to the STA courses with much enthusiasm because it suited their needs as it offered:

- Up-to-date training on methods for supporting children,
- Part-time study so it was convenient for those adults who were employed, and
- Free tuition fees [fees paid by the DfEE], so there was no cost to the STA candidate or the school.

The criticism of the initiative by teachers and the enthusiasm of STA candidates for the STA initiative made both the STA training process and subsequent STA deployment an interesting focus for research. It also generated other areas of interest. Firstly, it highlighted the government's view that there were similarities in the training and work of teachers and assistants. Secondly, it provided an opportunity to follow the development of the initiative at that time to see how the STA initiative would change. Thirdly, it enabled the researcher to analyse how teachers would use the STAs in their classrooms, despite the controversy surrounding their training. Finally, it was a new initiative and from the onset generated interest among researchers, although the number of projects that emerged following the STA initiative was small or concentrated on a specific aspect of it (discussed in chapter 4). This research project had a broader focus, as it would examine the roles, relationships with teachers and challenges teachers faced with the new form of classroom assistants. It was also anticipated that with little existing research on classroom assistants in general, this study would make a significant contribution to the analysis of trained assistants in classrooms.

Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this study was *‘to track the development of STAs during their training and on their return to their primary schools’*. This aim was broad, so objectives relating to the main aim were identified. The research objectives were:

1. *To examine how STA courses have been planned and implemented.*

The programme content, criteria and pedagogy provided the initial focus for the research [see: chapter 7].

2. *To analyse the strategies used to appoint, deploy and support STAs in schools.*

Not all STAs were employed as classroom assistants prior to their training; some trained as STAs to help them gain employment as a classroom assistant in school. The criteria head teachers used for their appointment or the criteria head teachers would use if employing a classroom assistant needs to be examined. Through the STA training, head teachers may specifically look for an STA, or they may look for something else in a prospective assistant. Once employed, after gaining the STA qualification, their duties may have stayed the same, developed further, or were similar to their training; factors affecting their deployment will help in assessing their work in schools. Of relevance to this, is the support the STA receives thereafter. This study examines how teachers in schools supported STAs after their training [see: chapter 8].

3. *To identify and explore the issues raised by the introduction of STAs in primary schools.*

The STA initiative was introduced at a time when a selection of new routes into ITT was drawn up by the government such as, the ‘Licensed’ and ‘Articled’ teacher schemes. The STA initiative could have been an attempt to encourage more adults into schools, or *cheaply paid teachers* into schools, especially when the STA competences were similar to the ITT competences. STAs could be used as a substitute for a teacher (without full time classroom responsibility) because they would have some teaching knowledge. This study will examine how STAs are deployed in schools and what impact this has had on teachers’ perceptions of their own status [see: chapter 9].

The main aim and three objectives defined the STA research and only data relating to these areas would be collected [Specific research questions to the main aim and objectives will be identified in chapter 6]. However, despite the issues surrounding the STA initiative, the use of classroom assistants is not new.

Who are the assistants working in primary schools?

Assistants have been working in schools for many years. Their duties have varied according to the function they performed. They include: caretakers, cleaners, cooks, dinner ladies and school secretaries. All these assistants carry out duties, which ensures the school functions efficiently and effectively. One group, classroom assistants work in the classroom supporting teachers. They relieve teaching staff from non-professional or time-consuming tasks, which could be carried out by a responsible adult, rather than a qualified teacher (Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) 1992 and Mortimore et al 1994). Traditionally, these assistants undertook duties to ensure the classroom was properly equipped and a safe environment for children, such as, stock control, child welfare, and various domestic and administration assistance. However, throughout the 1980s the duties of these assistants changed (Clayton 1993 and McGarvey et al 1996). They were welcomed into the classroom to carry out tasks working with children, such as, hearing children read, supporting children in craft lessons and aiding with practical group activities.

The increased use of classroom assistants in primary schools has been generated by a number of factors, including:

- The awareness of the needs of Special Educational Needs (SEN) children in The 1981 Education Act. Assistants can provided valuable support provision.

- The increase in workload teachers experienced from the introduction of the National Curriculum (Campbell and Neill 1990). Assistants can relieve teachers of some of their administrative duties.
- A response to finite budgets, in which classroom assistants have been employed in schools as a “cost-saving exercise” (Lorenz 1992) caused through Local Management of Schools (LMS).
- The response to class sizes (Moyle and Suschitzky 1997). Two adults can be better than one in classrooms, which have 30 or more children.

According to DfE statistics in 1994 (commencement of the STA initiative) the numbers of support staff in primary schools rose from 13,641 in 1991 to 21,914 in 1994. The increase in the employment of classroom assistants seemed to suggest schools required more support in the classroom. The extra support they needed was not for administration duties, but support in the classroom to achieve higher standards and coverage of the National Curriculum. Unfortunately, despite classroom assistants growing popularity within primary schools most do not have suitable qualifications to support the children they work with. They have only received training from their school, their Local Education Authority (LEA), or on-the-job training from individual teachers. Such was their growing importance that a course designed specifically to train classroom assistants was needed (CACE 1967; Kennedy and Duthie 1975; DES 1978; Clayton 1990 and Balshaw 1991). The government responded by introducing the STA initiative in 1994.

What is the STA initiative?

In Circular 14/93, the DfEE announced plans for a one year part time course offering training for assistants which placed a direct emphasis on assistants contributing to teaching and learning of basic skills (DfE 1993: par. 33). This course was aimed at adults who were over 21 years of age and already working with children, or those seeking to

work with children. Experience working with children was not necessary, providing candidates had the minimum entry requirements of 2 GCSEs at grade C or above (or equivalent) in mathematics and English. A course of this type was a significant move for assistants, as previous recommendations for training assistants had not been endorsed (CACE 1976; Kennedy and Duthie 1965; Clayton 1990).

Four months later, criteria for STA courses were established (DfEE 1994). These criteria ignited a controversial debate. The design, implementation and assessment of STA training was similar to Initial Teacher Training (ITT). Teacher unions became suspicious of the introduction of STAs (NUT 1994; ATL 1995). The National Union of Teachers (NUT) urged its members not to participate in the initiative as STAs could be used in substitution of qualified teachers (NUT 1994). Despite the implications of the STA criteria, twenty-four pilot courses were set up in 1995, most of which were teacher training institutions. Therefore, it was realised by teacher unions (NUT 1994; ATL 1995) that these assistants, if they were trained by teacher trainers and the DfEE/TTA (1994) criteria for STA courses was met STAs could be more like “teacher surrogates”. They would be doing what teachers do, in the way teachers do it, without being the ‘real’ teacher (adult with qualified teacher status).

Despite the implications of the STA criteria, the government continued to invest in the STA training (Ofsted 1996) and more courses were made available. The publication of: *The progression routes to qualified teacher status for classroom assistants*, by the University of Southampton (TTA 1999) provided an account of how pilot training

schemes for classroom assistants provided an easier way into teaching. This had been an option provided for the trained STAs, yet no Higher Educational Institution (HEI) offered Accredited Prior Learning (APL) as an option, despite the Conservative government's recommendation for this to take place (Circular 14/93). If HEIs had offered the STA courses as a means of APL it would have had an affect on teacher professionalism; more routes into teaching would have been created, without careful monitoring of standards of entry.

This did not deter the government from establishing more innovations for classroom assistants. In 1998 the DfEE Green Paper *Teachers meeting the challenge of change* (DfEE 1998), provided further plans for classroom support. The government proposed plans to encourage university students to provide classroom support by 'integrating teacher training modules into their undergraduate degrees' (par. 113). Undergraduates could act as teaching associates, which would provide schools with an additional adult and give better access to the latest developments in key school subjects. The drawbacks of this proposal were:

- Teaching associates would be paid the same as classroom assistants, which could vary significantly throughout the country.
- Undergraduates may only be able to offer limited time to schools, for example, during vacation periods, which may not suit the needs of the school.

This was not the only proposal for additional support in the classroom. In fact, twenty million pounds was allocated in April 1999 to recruit and train approximately 2,000 extra literacy assistants, and a promise to provide an additional 20,000 assistants for schools by 2002 (par. 141). These initiatives for additional support would provide many

opportunities for schools and assistants, which the government hoped would bring better working conditions for teachers and help raise standards.

The issue of providing more and better support was only a small part of the DfEE (1998) Green Paper: *Teachers meeting the challenge of change*, the Labour government believed that it was imperative for modernisation in teaching, especially since recruitment to teacher training had become increasingly difficult (Par. 16). The reasons for this, according to the government were:

- Few incentives for excellence (par. 20)
- Unsystematic professional development (par. 21)
- Inadequate support (par. 22)
- Poor image (Par. 23 - 25)

The government devoted three paragraphs to the last point, which seems to suggest that a strong reaction was evident in this area, although this strong reaction was not supportive of teachers:

Its [teaching profession] public image has been further undermined by its defensive reaction to criticism of some aspects of the education service and of its performance compared to other countries. . . Teachers too often seem to be afraid of change and therefore resist it. (par. 23)

The government was critical of how teachers were conducting themselves and had been for some time, this in turn had affected morale in the teaching profession, which may have affected the attractiveness to teaching. To understand how this had occurred, whilst assistants' role in schools seems to have changed considerably from domestic helper to assistant teacher (Clayton 1993), it is necessary to explore the development of the educational policy.

Structure of the STA research

The development of the educational policy shows how a range of factors which were impinged both on the professional status of teachers and the development of assistants in schools, which led eventually to such an initiative like the Specialist Teacher Assistant.

Th factors are examined in three phases, which are:

- The professionalism and partnership years (1960 – 1972)
- The critical years (1973 – 1987)
- Challenge or Reform? (1988 – 1993)

The first phase starts in March 1960, when David Eccles, the then Minister of Education, reported to the House of Commons his dismay about how little he knew about what went on in schools compared to his international counterparts (Jennings 1985: 15). This instigated an interest in the content and assessment of the curriculum as well as its teaching, which was to grow stronger with successive governments. In this decade teachers experienced much autonomy, with no real opposition. Teachers decided what to teach and how to teach it. Meanwhile, assistants were given menial tasks outside the classroom such as, milk monitoring, library duties or repairing books (Razzell 1967). These tasks were menial and did not require them to work with children. However, this phase was important for assistants as teachers and others in the education system were beginning to recognise the extra support received from these adults (Lord 1964; Razzell 1967 and CACE 1967). Therefore, chapter 1 will examine the professionalism and partnership years 1960 – 1972.

The second phase provided crucial issues, which would affect the way teachers, were perceived. In 1973 the oil crisis revealed the extent of the UK's economic failure and the

consequences following this, such as youth unemployment, was blamed on teachers. The editors of the Black Papers (Cox and Dyson 1971), who had criticised teachers from 1969, were now taken seriously by ministers, who believed children were being failed. This led to both Labour and Conservative governments producing official reports on education, such as Bullock (DES 1975), Warnock (DES 1978), Cockcroft (DES 1982), Swann (DES 1985). The Conservative government developed this view further by a succession of educational legislation in the 1980s, including the 1981 Education Act, 1986 Education Act and the 1987 Teacher's Pay and conditions Act, which caused much disruption in schools. From 1973 – 1987 teachers autonomy was challenged, whilst assistants saw their role become more productive as they were integrated into the classroom to support children.

The third phase saw policies being put into action, which had been aided by the other phases. The first policy of this phase – The 1988 Educational Reform Act, had a relatively smooth passage because teachers were being defeated over key issues by the government. This legislation completely changed the balance of power in education. The government controlled what teachers taught children and teachers experienced a reduction in their autonomy. The affects of this policy were still a major issue when the STA initiative was introduced in 1993. These policies created a means for Challenge or Reform, which will be addressed in chapter 3.

The first three chapters of this thesis demonstrate how the education system has changed, the challenges that these changes presented for teachers and the opportunities

they created for assistants. The structure of the chapters are centred round these areas, in the form of three themes, which are:

- i. Policy context [policy and its implications]
- i. Status of Teachers
- ii. The role of assistants

The examination of these themes will provide an analysis of the pressures related to and implications associated with the STA initiative for STAs and teachers, which will be explored further in chapter 4.

The literature review and analysis identified the key factors in the debate about the STA initiative and a research proposal was drawn up on this evidence. Research methods were identified, justified and discussed based on the nature of the research [chapter 5]. Data was collected from a sample of STAs, head teachers, and class teachers in the pilot study, which then informed the development of the research for the main study. The main study used a different sample to that of the pilot study, instead head teachers, teachers and STAs were interviewed in Cheshire and Lancashire. The study was therefore split into two parts - the pilot and the main study. These are explored in chapter 6. Analysis of all the data from both the pilot and the main study was divided into three strands: STA courses [chapter 7 and 8], STA deployment [chapter 9] and STA and teacher professionalism [chapter 10]. The conclusion provides a discussion on the issues found from the implementation and practice of Specialist Teacher Assistants (STAs) in primary schools in the North West of England. It focuses on the impact of STAs in schools, and STA policy on aspects of primary education, especially its affects on teachers and teacher education [chapter 11].

Overview

This work and its findings, given the current situation in education, is very topical, especially since there has been an influx of policies in the past 10 years or more, which has had an affect on all staff, although much work has concentrated on teachers. In particular, some believed these policies had caused the ‘death of teacher professionalism’ and ‘that teachers would become mere technicians or functionaries, implementing orders that had been decided elsewhere (McCulloch, Helsby and Knight, 2000:1). Others, including Ball (1987), Campbell (1996) and Webb (1993) expressed similar conclusions. The Specialist Teacher Assistant Initiative was introduced in this period when teachers perceived new policies was damaging their professionalism. Gaining support for the initiative was a difficult task due to the fact that it was the redefinition of a much more controversial proposal, which had caused an instant wave of disapproval from teaching unions.

The government had a different view. They believed their policies would make teachers more accountable and help to raise standards in education. One way of raising standards was to use assistants more effectively in the classroom by providing more training opportunities. The STA scheme was one such opportunity, which would provide essential background training for adults working with children, who were not qualified teachers. HEIs, where STAs are taught and schools, where STAs are employed, have in a minority of cases, influenced STAs to be used as a teacher. These STAs crossed over the boundaries of teaching as they were expected to:

- Cover teacher absences or non-contact time (and therefore had the responsibility of a whole class of children),

- Plan lessons in mathematics or English to teach to a whole class of children
- Submit weekly plans of the lessons they taught children they worked with.
- Become actively involved in assessments, in particular, they would be expected to assess children using teacher assessments and Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs).

Their judgement was not questioned.

- Organise other assistants/helpers

Therefore, this leads one to question whether schemes, like the STA, have deprofessionalised the teaching profession, or whether teachers need to redefine their professionalism.

Chapter 1

1960 – 1972: Professionalism and Partnership.

The key features, which shaped primary education, professional status of teachers and the role of assistants in the 1990s emerged almost three decades earlier. Between 1960 and 1972 teachers ‘exercised considerable autonomy’ (Bell 1999). Teachers’ autonomy over the curriculum throughout this phase had been generated many years earlier with the abolition of the Board of Education in 1926, which gave direct oversight of the curriculum to teachers (Ball and Goodson 1992). This gave teachers’ autonomy over what to teach children and how to teach it and seemed to provide teachers with professional status.

Throughout this phase assistants had minimal contact with children. Most did not have any training for their tasks, unless they had gained the NNEB nursery nurse certificate (courses started in 1945), but even then, their duties in school were more of a helper to the teacher. However, this phase was the turning point for assistants because it was during this phase that they were beginning to become recognised for the duties they performed in the primary school (Lord 1964; CACE 1967; Razzell 1969).

It was also a phase which followed a period when both major political parties shared a commitment to the education system. In particular, the 1944 Education Act established and legitimised the separation at 11 years of age, which had been proposed in the Hadow Report (1931), thirteen years earlier. This Act also established free secondary education for all, which in turn, raised the school leaving

age from 14 to 15 (although only implemented in 1947) and provided more educational provisions for children (three types of secondary schooling – grammar, secondary modern and technical). The implementation of the Act was aided further by other factors, such as a climate of expansion and high spending (Bell 1999). Education became a “national system, locally administered” (Chitty 1992), which created a partnership between national and local government. Full employment, sufficient finance in the country, and an increase in birth rate led to an increase in schools, teachers and pupils, that all created a mood of optimism.

Unfortunately, the inadequacies of this “partnership” slowly began to emerge throughout the 1960s, and came to a head through the financial crisis of 1973 induced by the oil crisis [see: chapter 2]. One aspect of the inadequacies was how little the government knew about what went on in schools, especially the curriculum. Government interest in the curriculum would develop in and after this phase and it would have a continued affect on the work of teachers and assistants. Therefore, to identify the main points in this phase, which are relevant to the thesis, this chapter and the two subsequent ones, have been divided into three sections, which are:

- **Policy Context**
- **The Status of teachers**
- **The Role of the classroom assistant**

Policy Context

In the 1960s there was a policy thrust for change in the education system generated by both the government and the general public expectations. Chitty (1992) believes that this was a consequence of a “radical and progressive spirit of the sixties”, which may have been the result of the British public experiencing full employment, which brought financial security, independence and better working conditions. For many

people, this had not been realised before the sixties. This “spirit” found in British society had a direct impact on the education system:

The decade saw a vigorous expansion of parental interest in education, which expressed itself in the creation of a number of influential campaigning pressure groups. (Chitty 1992: 14)

The public’s attitude, especially towards traditional values in education, and towards authority, was changing. The public wanted to contribute to the decisions, which affected them, or their children. This opinion led to the 1960s education system being characterised by four features, which were:

- *A growing government interest in the curriculum,*
- *Public and political pressure to abolish the 11+ examination and selection at eleven years of age,*
- *The introduction of comprehensivisation.*
- *The growing government concern of child-centred education.*

A growing government interest in the curriculum

In March 1960, Eccles (Minister of Education), in the House of Commons announced that “parliamentary debates on education should include discussions on what was being taught in schools” (Jennings 1985: 15). This change in policy had happened because Eccles was unable to provide clear answers on the school curriculum at international conferences (Jennings 1985). Eccles was dismayed at his lack of knowledge and decided to show an interest in what was being taught in schools. In 1962 he set up the Curriculum Study Group (CSG). After almost forty years of no state involvement, the CSG was regarded as a dangerous intrusion by LEAs and teachers unions (Thomas 1990). LEAs and teaching unions may have responded to the CSG in this way because:

- Eccles had not consulted with any of the educational interest groups, such as: LEAs, HMIs, and teaching unions, on the creation of the CSG.
- More than half the people in the CSG had little or no real knowledge of schools.
- Teachers feared that the Ministry would impose central control of the curriculum.

(Adapted from Jennings 1985: 16).

The CSG continued to operate for a further two years, despite opposition. It collaborated with the Nuffield Foundation in its development of science teaching in primary schools, and initiated projects in mathematics (Thomas 1990). In 1964, the Schools Council, which replaced the CSG, as a result of the disquiet caused by the existence of the latter committee, continued the development in mathematics and science. The Council itself consisted of a full representative body of all interests groups, including teachers, LEAs advisors, HMIs and DES officials. Its creation was seen as an act of reconciliation between central government, local government and teachers. Unfortunately, Mann (1985) claimed the Schools Council was nothing more than:

. . . a piece of quasi-political machinery to bring together different elements in the education service. What no one considered sufficiently was the differing status of these representatives in their various constituencies. Nor was it ever safe to assume that all the representatives of one body shared the same assumptions and same commitment to the council (Mann 1985: 180)

Despite its many good projects, such as the *Curriculum Project* series, it had failed to reform the examination system, which would “bring about changes in the curriculum” (Mann 1985). It had also proved to be insufficient to challenge the autonomy that teachers had over the curriculum (Bell 1999). Consequently, it was of no surprise that in 1984, Keith Joseph, the then Secretary of State for Education, closed the Schools Council. By establishing the Schools Council the government of the 1960s had made the first steps in entering “the secret garden of the curriculum”; a challenge

to teacher autonomy over the curriculum that would ultimately lead to the National Curriculum and the development of the STA initiative.

Pressure to abolish selection at 11.

The education system experienced challenges throughout this phase. During the period, 1960 - 64, there was a strong tide of educational opinion against testing (Galton 1994). The 11-plus exam, and its selection of eleven years olds, was “riddled with failure” (Benn and Chitty 1997) and seen to be an unreliable guide to children’s ability (Barber 1997). The 11-plus exam placed much emphasis on the results of the last year of primary education. Depending on children’s results, location, and ability at eleven years of age, the LEA would decide whether they would be taught at a grammar school, or secondary modern. Although:

Butler and his colleagues expected that selection for the grammar school would be based on a combination of IQ tests – the eleven-plus – and discussion between parents and teachers (Barber 1997: 39)

Unfortunately, this did not happen and it became even more unfair as pupil population increased, and grammar school places did not (Benn and Chitty 1997). Therefore, it was failing children as well as causing social divisions. Benn and Chitty (1997) provided four reasons for its failure:

- One research project after another delivered the undermining message that intelligence testing was fallible. It was believed by the government that intelligence is inherited, but it is not, it is developed, and some children may develop later than others
- Errors in school placements were high.
- There was a great deal of inequality in the outcome. Males were given more opportunities than females, based on the fact that females will marry then have a family, and a grammar school education was not necessary for them.

- Talent was wasted, as some pupils did not pursue their education further than the grammar school.

(Adapted from Benn and Chitty 1997: 8)

The government acted upon the strength of the public unrest with the 11+ examination. The result was a new beginning for the education system – the introduction of comprehensivisation which, in turn, produced significant changes in primary education including the functions of classroom assistants.

An introduction to comprehensivisation

Based on the previous evidence, the tripartite school system was flawed and another system had to be sought. This new system – comprehensivisation, would provide one school for all pupils. Indeed, it had often been more economical in some small rural towns, rather than having a grammar and a secondary modern school. Unfortunately, it also started political opposition between the major parties in educational policy. From 1962 – 64, Sir Edward Boyle, who replaced Eccles as Education Secretary, appeared sympathetic to the inadequacies of the “old system” and wanted to facilitate change. He was especially sympathetic to the idea of comprehensivisation (Lawton 1994; Chitty 1992), but others in the Conservative Party were not. It became impossible for him to seize this initiative and later in 1964, the Conservatives lost the general election. Boyle was later used as a scapegoat for the loss of the general election. The Labour party, who was in office from 1964 - 1970, accepted the ideology of comprehensivisation (DES Circular 10/65). Although, Ball (1990) believes that the Labour Party were not clear in their support for comprehensivisation (many of the major politicians were still in favour of grammar schools).

In fact, Circular 10/65 did not provide LEAs with a legal duty to change to comprehensive education; they were simply invited to choose a scheme and start the planning process (Benn and Chitty 1997). Ball (1990) states that:

Many Conservative LEAs sanctioned the building and reorganisation of comprehensives straightforwardly on the basis of cost-effectiveness. (Ball 1990: 31)

Comprehensives were cost-effective because there would be one school for all children, instead of three individual schools. Chitty (1992) claimed that:

Between 1960 and 1970 the number of comprehensive schools grew from 130 to 1145, catering by the end of the decade for over 30 per cent of maintained-sector pupils. (Chitty 1992: 14)

Some LEAs were encouraged to change from the tripartite education system¹ to comprehensivisation through this factor. Indeed, the Conservatives, despite earlier suggestions, were in favour of comprehensivisation based on this fact. The abolition of testing at 11 years of age and the introduction of comprehensivisation both highlighted the possible strength of economic gains and the general public opinions towards government educational policy. These two issues would continue to develop over the next three decades, at the expense of heavily criticised educational ones, such as, the development of child-centred education.

The growing government concern of child-centred education

The Hadow Report in 1931, which argued strongly for a “break at age eleven” between the junior and senior stages of elementary education (Alexander 1994) legitimised the idea of primary education and argued most famously for the curriculum “to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored” (Board of Education 1931: para.

75). This idea made way for child centred education. The Plowden Report² (CACE 1967) also supported the use of child-centred methods. Plowden and her committee condemned testing, and selection at eleven years of age. They reported that there was “a danger of spending too much time on testing at the expense of teaching” (par. 422). More importantly, they claimed that children’s intellectual ability might not have developed enough by the time they reached eleven years of age. Therefore, selection at eleven years of age created a false impression of children’s ability, for example:

Just as some children at the age of five are shorter than most other children of the same age, but reach the average height when they are fifteen, so some children have a higher rate of gain in intellectual ability than others. . Brain maturation is not complete until the end of adolescence at the earliest (CACE 1967: par. 58)

As children’s ability differed, so too the CACE (1967) believed that teaching methods should differ. Instead of using whole class teaching, it supported “individual work”, or more commonly known as “differentiated work”, reporting that:

In the last 20 years schools have provided far more individual work, as they have increasingly realised how much children of the same age differ in their powers of perception and imagery, in their interests, and in their span of concentration. The more obvious this becomes, the less satisfactory class instruction seems (CACE 1967: par. 754)

Plowden and her committee supported child centred methods, especially those based on Piaget’s theory on learning through play for younger children, claiming:

Play is a central activity in all nursery and in infant schools. This sometimes leads to accusations that children are wasting their time in school: they should be “working”. But this

¹ The tripartite secondary education system consisted of grammar, technology, and secondary modern schools.

² The Plowden Report (1967) was published under the Labour administration, but it had been Sir Edward Boyle, the Conservative minister of Education in 1963, who asked the CACE to research into aspects of primary education.

distinction between work and play is false . . . Its essence lies in past notions of what is done in school hours (work) and what is done out of school (play). (CACE 1967: par. 523)

The Conservative Party believed that learning through play was 'playing about' (Thomas 1990); but teachers believed that these methods, used wisely could be very effective (Thomas 1990). Other teaching methods, such as: group work, discussions, investigations, and mixed ability teaching, were encouraged for junior children. Plowden's child-centred methods were to become commonly known as progressive (Thomas 1990; Ball 1990; Chitty 1992 and Galton 1994). The Plowden report was hailed as the "progressives charter" (Galton 1994) because it opposed the traditional teaching methods claiming that 'finding out has proved to be better for children than being told' (CACE 1967). Unfortunately, this pedagogy had been misinterpreted. The result of the widespread adoption of such devices like grouping, and busyness in the classroom, without appropriate training or management, was mediocrity (Alexander et al 1992). It was argued that these practices lacked any serious rationale, and became little more than a passport to professional approval (Alexander et al 1992).

Furthermore, certified teachers had experimented with a range of other teaching methods for sometime, although it was not widespread. The removal of the 11-plus exam encouraged teachers to use other approaches, and gave scope to develop a wider primary curriculum, which according to Galton (1994) was used to motivate children. Child-centred teaching methods encouraged children to take an active involvement in their education, for example, finding answers to questions from reference books in the school library, rather than the teacher dictate the answer to the child. Children could discover solutions for themselves, which could give them a better understanding. Galton (1994) claimed that several research reports, such as Kemp (1955), and Gardener (1950, 1966) noted that children taught using these

methods achieved higher standards. These methods gave teachers more freedom in their work, but what was perhaps not recognised by teachers at this time, was just how much autonomy they enjoyed over the curriculum (Bell 1999).

Status of teachers

Teachers' autonomy and freedom over the curriculum had not always been realised. In fact, teachers' professionalism to decide on these matters had not been recognised until the abolition of the Board of Education in 1926. Prior to this date there were two types of teachers: uncertified and certified teachers. Uncertified teachers were trained using an apprenticeship type scheme. The apprentice teacher would work for five years under a competent master or mistress in an approved school, before teaching. Certified teachers were those students, who had attended teacher training colleges and were offered up to three years training, but could teach anytime after their first year, for which they were awarded a teacher's certificate. The widespread development of teacher training colleges was only established in the early nineteenth century (Pollard et al 1994), so many teachers in schools were uncertified at the turn of the century. Dent (1977) claimed that only one quarter of the teachers in elementary schools was college trained in 1900. Ozga and Lawn (1981) believed these figures to be incorrect, they claimed that there were six certified to every five uncertified teachers. Although these figures vary, both suggest that there were a large number of uncertified teachers working in schools at this time.

To remedy this situation, teacher training was reorganised. The 1902 Education Act gave LEAs the power (e.g. finance) to provide and maintain teacher-training colleges, instead of other organisations, which would increase standards, provision and places. The same year, London County Council provided a new type of training,

an academic teacher training course, through which students could opt for a three-year teachers certificate, or a four year graduate teacher's certificate (jointly administered by a university, and teacher training college). Others soon followed in the footsteps of London County Council (Dent 1977). As teacher training changed and became more academic, teachers demanded more recognition, and more pay. After much conflict the Burnham Committee was set up in 1919 to establish teachers' pay. Teaching union representatives, the government, and LEAs would jointly represent this committee. By 1926, the Board of Education eliminated its regulations on the curriculum, and gave teachers autonomy over the curriculum. Autonomy, controlling pay and status symbolised professional status (Lawn 1988).

Ozga and Lawn (1981) believed much of this had been achieved because of teacher unrest at the turn of the 19th century, which had culminated in a series of disputes and strikes. Lawn (1988) also argued that the Conservatives feared that teachers, who were growing in numbers and were mostly Conservative voters, could favour the Labour Party over themselves in their fight for professional status. This encouraged the government to alter the nature of control in education. Lawn (1988) concluded that this situation was created to benefit both teachers and the government, as the Conservatives foresaw that the Board of Education could operate the education system more cheaply and efficiently, without curriculum involvement. From this period the curriculum was the teacher's domain. Teachers controlled what they taught children and the teaching methods they used. This gave teachers autonomy over their work, and a general belief of practitioner professionalism (Hodkinson and Issitt 1995).

By the time the 1944 Education Act (“The Butler Act”) was introduced, there was a broad consensus in Britain about the organisation of state-funded professional support. These services were provided and controlled by the State. Within this consensus, quality in these services were ensured in the following ways:

1. There was a general belief in practitioner professionalism, backed up in most cases by independent study in HE to degree level or beyond. The reward for this professionalism within the public sector included job security and provisions for promotion.
2. This professionalism operated in the context of public policy-making, strategic planning and resource allocation, with service delivery at local level. Essentially bureaucratic structures provided support for professional activity and controlled and limited its development and direction.
3. All this took place within a framework of national legislation, which set broad objectives, national pay scales and conditions of service and state funding, although there would be variation from one local authority to another in terms of available resources, forms of provision and policy priorities

(Adapted from Hodkinson and Issitt 1995: 2)

These factors were also supported by the notion that there was full employment, sufficient finance in the country, an increase in birth rate, which led to an increase in schools, teachers and pupils. Britain had become a thriving economy, which had an emphasis on expansion (Bell 1999). This economic growth presented a mood of optimism to the general public.

By the 1960s teachers had experienced a freedom to exercise their own judgement in matters of the curriculum for over three decades, although the 3 Rs and a commitment to these subjects consistently and continuously dominated the primary curriculum (Thomas 1990; Alexander 1994). However, other influences were sought, such as: HMIs, and LEAs (Thomas 1990). HMIs had influenced the teaching of

subjects, such as the teaching of mathematics, by running short in-service courses, under the direction of Edith Biggs (Thomas 1990). Many LEA advisory services had influence in some authorities, for example, Robin Tanner, HMI, who worked in Oxfordshire, gave considerable support to teachers of art and craft (Alexander 1994). The West Riding Inspectorate under the leadership of Alec Clegg (the then Chief Education Officer) was effective in language, dance and arts (Thomas 1990), whilst in Staffordshire, Harold Fletcher and Leonard Sealey supported mathematics (Thomas 1990). Alexander (1994) claims that these figures, and more, were drawn into an effective network where good practices were nurtured and explored. For those outside the network, practices could be adopted, but not necessarily comprehended. Alexander (1994) claims:

. . . that key texts . . . were read, if at all, not in the original but in digests produced by LEAs, teacher trainers, the unions and the educational press; complex ideas were thus over-simplified or misunderstood; practice was diluted and bowdlerised. (p. 27)

Towards the end of the sixties, there came criticism of teacher education, in particular, the work of the college and departments of education (CACE 1967; Dent 1977). The quality of the courses was questionable; they had too little practical help, and some college staff were out-of-date with current primary work (CACE 1967). Dent (1977) acknowledged this had happened. He wrote:

During the later 1960s there arose a widespread demand for a thorough investigation of the education and training of teachers in England and Wales. Hostile critics alleged that the entire system was out-of-date . . . the teaching poor, the curriculum irrelevant to the work of schools, and the standard of the Teacher's Certificate low. (Dent 1977: 149)

To add further criticism of teacher education, a Select Committee that had been appointed in 1968 to investigate education and science ended up turning its attention

to teacher training. This later led to a Committee of Inquiry being set up to investigate teacher education and training (DES 1972).

The report of this investigation, known as the James Report (DES 1972) recommended three cycles for teacher education. The cycles were (1) personal education, (2) pre-service training and induction, and (3) in-service education and training. Cycle one was given a mixed reception that ranged from cordial approbation to apprehensive dislike, whilst cycle three was warmly accepted (Dent 1977). The second cycle, known as the “licensed teacher”, teachers’ unions rejected and the government did not pursue it any further (Mackinnon and Statham 1999)³. The outcome was that the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) was accepted as the required teaching qualification (Dent 1977), and as a result teaching became an all graduate profession. Unfortunately, this created major consequences within teaching colleges. This was not a good time to increase provision as the decline in birth rate severely reduced the demand for teachers so training numbers were drastically reduced. This meant that many of the teacher training colleges had to merge with others, or amalgamate with a university or polytechnic, to increase standards, and to continue training teachers. Whilst some colleges survived this development, others were “sentenced to death” (Dent 1977). With fewer colleges of education the number of teacher training places were reduced, but it did not affect the supply of teachers in schools in this period as the birth rate in Britain was decreasing. In the late 1980s when the birth rate started to rise again, other solutions to a fall in teacher supply were sought. One solution was increasing the amount of assistants in schools [see: chapter 2 and 3].

³ However, between 1986 and 1988 the “licensed teachers” scheme would be revised and introduced into English primary schools.

The Role of Classroom Assistants

During the 1960s, assistants, who worked with teachers, received little recognition. Most did not have any training for their tasks, unless they had gained the NNEB nursery nurse certificate, but even then, their duties in school were more of a helper to the teacher; there was minimal direct contact with children. They were the “invisible workers” (Mortimore et al 1994). Assistants were often referred to as auxiliaries, or teacher aides, and would carry out menial domestic and administration tasks, such as, clean the paint pots and play areas (for younger children), attend to sick children, undertake duplication of worksheets and prepare art materials. Razzell (1969) provided more details of these tasks. He claimed:

The tasks these aides undertake are many: they issue the milk to the classes, supervise the library, catalogue, classify and cover books with polythene jackets and keep the shelves in good order. In other schools aides supply the classes with consumable stock, keep pencils sharpened, the cupboards and stockrooms tidy, repair damaged equipment, undertake duplicating, act as escorts to children, set out audio-visual aid equipment, sort out lost property and not infrequently make tea for the staff at lunch time (Razzell 1969:85)

According to Razzell (1969) assistants worked for numerous teachers, and carried out a variety of duties. They carried out these duties to ensure the whole school functioned properly, rather than being based in one classroom. These duties were carried out on a daily routine to ensure efficient management and organisation of the classrooms, and most importantly, they relieved the class teacher from doing them. These are the “traditional” duties expected of assistants. Assistants used in this manner had no specific duties, they were “Jills of all trades” (Moyles and Suschitzky 1997).

Some officials in education were beginning to recognise the potential of assistants in school. This recognition was enhanced by the shortage of qualified teachers and increase in pupil population. More teachers would be needed, and they might not be forthcoming. Percy Lord (TES 1964a), Chief Education Officer for Lancashire, believed the answer to this problem was obvious:

There are a hundred-and-one things that happen in the schools that auxiliaries can do, including perhaps supervision of work, that the professional teacher has given (TES 1964a: 931)

He believed that assistants could do more than they were in their schools and called for:

Teachers to take a less rigid view of the employment of auxiliaries. The present day status of teachers was high enough for them not to feel apprehensive. (TES 1964a: 931)

Lord (TES 1964a) was in favour of reforms being made to the deployment of assistants, but the editor of the TES (1964a) referred to it as *scandalous if auxiliaries were given certain types of teaching to do*. Lord (TES 1964a) did not refer to auxiliaries teaching. He perceived that assistants could supervise children in their classrooms, under the direction of the teacher, but this had been misinterpreted. The proposed training programme of teacher aides (CACE 1967) enhanced Lord's view further. This recommendation was suggested because assistants could be used to "cope with large classes, and to provide substantial benefits quickly at a relatively low cost" (CACE 1967: par 1189).

Teacher aides would be given training in *general education as well as children's development, the educational services and the social services for children* (Par. 1041). They would *cover a wider range* [to work with children from 5 to nearly 13, which would include first and middle schools, or primary schools] *in their study of children's development and know more about the materials and equipment used in*

primary schools. (Par. 1041). They would be trained at *further education colleges* (par. 1049), and although school leavers would be able to train to become a teacher aide, the report stated:

We are anxious; however, to attract older women and to bring them as rapidly as possible into full service in the nurseries and schools. We therefore recommend that suitable candidates of 21 years of age and over should be permitted to qualify after one year of training, in which the equivalent of one day a week would be spent on course work. (CACE 1967:Par. 1046)

These recommendations were not realised. It was clear that professionals working in education were anxious about unqualified adults entering the classroom, and working with children (TES 1964a; TES 1964b; CACE 1967). The anxiety generated opposition from unions, which inhibited the development of the assistant's role for the next twenty years.

Conclusion

This chapter has laid a foundation for the beginning of a typology for the thesis. It has identified four points relevant to primary teachers, which are:

1. Development of teacher autonomy. *Throughout this period all challenges to teacher professionalism were minimal and teachers were largely autonomous over matters relating to the curriculum. Teachers were enjoying the privileges of belonging to a profession.*
2. The parallel development of classroom assistants. *Assistants, like any employees, are effected by developments within their environment. As teachers and schools became re-organised, so did assistants. However, between 1960 – 1972 teachers and the school system were relatively unchanged, and so assistants' roles in*

schools remained the same. This of course would change in the next era (1973 – 1987, see: chapter 2).

3. Eccles and the curriculum. *Eccles' lack of knowledge of what went on in schools encouraged state intervention in the curriculum, and later pedagogy. This state intervention caused the start of the breakdown between educational groups and the two main political parties – Labour and Conservative.*
4. Opposition to extending the role of classroom assistants. *In the early 1960s, the idea of assistants supporting children in classrooms was rejected (TES 1964a; TES 1964b). An assistant entering the classroom was considered scandalous, as if the assistant would be a threat to a teacher.*

Chapter 2

1973 – 1987: The critical years

Throughout this phase assistants' contribution to working with children was slowly increasing. The main reason for this was the additional support they could provide to teachers who were confronted with large classes (CACE 1967) and in particular to children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), who were now being found increasing in numbers in non-specialist schools and classrooms (CACE 1967; DES 1978). The 1981 Education Act, which provided more awareness of SEN provision, helped to develop the role of assistants in schools further. It also brought an increase in the number of employed assistants as LEAs offered financial assistance to some forms of SEN provision; for example, because some children need individual personal care (Barber and Brighouse 1992).

In contrast, teachers found their autonomy challenged even further throughout this phase. Conservatives wanted to revert back to traditional teaching methods, which had been promoted by the Black Paper writers (Cox and Dyson 1971). The government accepted the themes of the Black Papers, such as: a decline in standards, lack of respect for authority and the growing concern about progressive methods (Ball 1990), although these themes were not always backed up by evidence. Following the OPEC oil crisis there was the economic recession of 1973 – 75, for which, education was blamed (Bell 1999). In the aftermath of the oil crisis, youth unemployment increased significantly. This was the first time since 1945 that youth employment had become a problem (Bell 1999). The Conservative leadership

believed this was a direct result of progressive teachers, who failed to equip young people with the skills to become productive workers (Lawton 1994).

The economic crisis had generated a climate in which right wing ideas could flourish, especially calls for a return to the days of formal teaching and high academic standards associated with a grammar school education (Chitty 1992). This crystallised in a public debate on the standards of teachers and the quality of their teaching. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s government documents were published which challenged teachers' work and teacher education (HMI 1978; DES 1983; DES 1985). These documents criticised teaching methods and gave the impression that standards had fallen. This had damaging effects on teachers and their autonomy over the curriculum was being eroded. By 1987, The Teachers Pay and Conditions Act was passed, after months of disruption in classes due to government and teaching union disagreements. This gave the government control over teachers' salaries, pay awards and conditions in school, including introducing an appraisal system for teachers. Therefore, the 1973 oil crisis and the related economic difficulties heralded a period of unprecedented educational change that impacted on teachers, their pupils and classroom assistants.

Policy context

Throughout this phase the education system and those in it faced much criticism. It was a time when government evidence was collected, which would damage the public image of the education system. The key features of the policy context for this phase centred on: educational expenditure, standards of teachers and the quality of teaching, criticisms of the curriculum and teaching styles, parental choice and teacher education. Government criticisms of these features created a challenge to teachers'

autonomy over the curriculum and teaching methods in schools, but most importantly, laid the foundations for new policies, which would change the balance of power in the third phase. This would affect all those who worked in the education system, especially teachers and their assistants.

Educational expenditure

Conservative leadership blamed the problems of the youth unemployment on teachers. Ball (1990) argued, however, that there was no clear evidence of decline, and more pupils were leaving school with examination passes. According to Lawton (1994) the increase in unemployment for school leavers was not the fault of teachers, but the economy. He claimed:

Britain's rate of growth was relatively low, our balance of payments was not always healthy and many traditional industries were out-classed by overseas competition. Successive governments from 1945 onwards attempted to find solutions without complete success. The system appeared not to be working. (Lawton 1994: 43)

From 1945 onwards Britain had faced an economic recession due to the cost of war and recreating itself, which had meant that Britain had sacrificed many overseas investments and had borrowed massively from other countries, especially the USA. Lawton (1994) argued that the recession had just been waiting to occur, but the public had been unaware of this until 1973. After the oil crisis, peoples' lives started to change. Full employment was no longer guaranteed, and the optimism that the 1950s/60s brought with its mass rebuilding of Britain, had declined. This was further hindered with the three-day week in 1974 - a response to the miners' dispute. The miners wanted a pay increase, and in a time when spending was being restricted, Edward Heath, the Conservative PM, refused. He then went to the country for a new mandate, but was defeated, and so the Labour leader, James Callaghan, was left to

deal with the miners. The new Labour government decided to agree to the miners' demands and brought temporary peace in that troubled industry (Morris and Griggs 1988). They also upgraded nurses' and teachers' salaries, but at what cost? Whilst, the Labour government was seen to poise optimism to certain groups, by 1975 cuts in expenditure were more drastic than ever. The budget of 1975 saw a massive reduction of 75 million pounds in education, with the DES drawing up plans for cuts of 500 million pounds over the next four years (Morris and Griggs 1988). With the country's economic position worsening and deficits accumulating no one group was immune from change.

This came at a crucial time for teachers when the birth rate continued to fall. The DES repeatedly revised downwards its estimate of the number of pupils on roll in schools in the coming years, and consequently the number of teacher training places needed (Dent 1977). According to Thomas (1990):

The planned contraction of the training capacity for teachers would reduce the number of new teachers each year from 40,000 at its peak to fewer than 20,000 each year by the early 1980s (Thomas 1990: 86)

The fall in birth rate had reduced the demand for teachers and it was inevitable that there would be cuts in education. Teachers were faced with redeployment, redundancy, or were offered early retirement (Ball and Goodson 1992). Barber (1997) stated that:

This led to an apparently endless round of school reorganisations and closures, which substantially reduced promotion prospects and sapped teacher morale (Barber 1997: 35)

LEA over-spending had been highlighted through the economic crisis and record increases in LEA monies. The DES were keen to find out what LEAs had been

spending their money on, as well as wanting to provide an agreed framework as a means of improving consistency and quality of school education across the country. Therefore, in Circular 14/77 (DFE 1977), all LEAs were required to provide their curriculum policies and practices of their schools. All but one LEA replied (Thomas 1990). Both major parties, Labour in government and Conservatives in opposition, agreed with this legislation. This marked the first steps of reducing educational expenditure from the LEAs.

Standard of teachers and the quality of their teaching

The publication of the NFER study: *The Trend of Reading Standards* (Stuart and Wells 1972) raised further issues. Standards in education were being attacked. The media treatment of the report led teachers to believe there was a decline in standards in literacy (Coe 1988). In addition, the then Secretary of State, Margaret Thatcher set up a Committee of Inquiry (the Bullock Committee) to look at the teaching of English. This may have been a calculated move. Ball (1990) argues that the Black Paper writers claimed that politically motivated English teachers were influencing what they taught to children, and how they did it. These teachers wanted to transform the education system, with their progressive teaching methods. The Bullock Report (DES 1975) concluded that there was no significant change in reading standards between 1960 and 1970. Unfortunately, this did not receive much attention. Instead, traditionalists tried to criticise progressive schools, which were seen to be encouraging a decline in standards.

One primary school, The William Tyndale School in London, appeared to prove that the Conservatives accusations were true, although this may have been the case of an

exception proving the rule. In 1975 this school became a public scandal after one of its traditionalist teachers complained to the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) about teaching methods. When inspectors were refused entry into the school to assess what was happening, the media escalated the situation. This ILEA school became caught in a battle between traditionalists, progressive teachers, and ambitious teachers. Barber claimed:

The school embarked on an experiment, which tested the limits of teacher autonomy and led to a state of affairs best described as anarchy. In their attempts to be "progressive", the majority of teachers abdicated responsibility for the learning process and failed even to keep records of pupils' progress. They took an extreme view of teacher autonomy. (Barber 1997: 46)

Robin Auld QC was appointed to conduct a public enquiry into the teaching, organisation, and management at the William Tyndale School. He stated that there was a lack of discipline, the content and quality of the teaching caused serious alarm, and relationships between all parties concerned in this school had broken down (Auld 1976, par. 838). He identified that the ILEA had *failed to intervene at an earlier stage* (Riley 1998), and their lack of LEA policies on attainment had contributed to the problems of this school (Riley 1998). Teacher professionalism, and the "loony left" ILEA (Ball 1990) were said to be the essence of this scandal.

Anti-progressives thrived on this scandal. Conservatives, in particular, believed that teachers had become dangerous and politically motivated (Ball 1990), and even supporters of child centred methods, like HMIs, were beginning to change their views of teachers (Coe 1988). A year later, in 1976, Neville Bennett's book: *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress* was interpreted as raising serious questions about the use of informal methods in the primary classroom (Bennett 1976). His survey findings concluded that children taught by formal, or traditional methods made

greater gains than pupils did in classes with informal, or progressive teaching methods, despite the fact that the teacher whose children achieved the highest results was classified as 'informal' in her classroom approaches¹. This book became very influential, and the media expanded on the results, even the BBC devoted a Horizon programme to the critique of informal teaching methods (Coe 1988).

In October 1976, the Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, seemed to accept the criticisms of teachers and gave a speech at Ruskin College, Oxford, about the current state of affairs in the education system. Chitty (1992) believed that at that time the Labour government of 1974 - 79 were thrown on the defensive, as they:

appeared to be acutely embarrassed by association of the party in the eyes of the public with so-called progressive education . . . Each Education Secretary in the 1974 - 79 Labour administration was distinctly half-hearted in defence of comprehensive schooling and of the new advances in primary school teaching. (Chitty 1992: 22)

Barber (1997) argued that it was not as clear as this. He believed that the educational establishment was defensive about the speech because they thought that the Prime minister had accused them unfairly, trying to deflect blame for the country's dire economic straits. Barber (1997) claimed that, in fact, Callaghan gave a mild, tentative and gently phrased speech, which suggested that standards are not what they should be, the curriculum in schools was insufficient to the needs of industry, and the teaching profession should be held more accountable.

¹ Bennett's statistical methods came under much attack, and as a result, in the June 1981 issue of the British Journal of Educational Psychology he withdrew his original findings (Coe 1988).

Criticisms of the curriculum and teaching styles

A few months after the Ruskin Speech, Shirley Williams, the then Secretary of State for Education, initiated *The Great Debate on Education*. This debate was a series of regional conferences that focused on four subjects: The school curriculum 5-16, The assessment of standards; The Education and Training of teachers; and the school working life (Thomas 1990). The outcome of this was the Green paper *Education in Schools: A Consultative Document* (DES 1977). This document discussed how the teaching force should be managed and commented on LEA over-spending (see: Educational expenditure, p.21). Two issues arose regarding the teaching force: the contraction of the teaching force and making the teaching force an all graduate profession to improve the standards of teachers teaching in schools.

In 1978, the HMI's report - *Primary Education in England: A Survey by HM Inspectors of schools* (HMI 1978) was published. A large part of this report concentrated on the curriculum, and teaching methods. The curriculum was scrutinised. English was considered to be "consistent with gradually improving reading standards of 11 year olds" (HMI 1978: par.8.18), but more improvement needed to be made. Mathematics was considered to be "disappointing" (HMI 1978: par. 8.21). This later led to an investigation into the teaching of mathematics in the 1980s (*The Cockcroft Report* DES 1985), which provided evidence to show:

A seven-year difference in achieving an understanding of place value. When asked to write down the number that is one more than 6399, average children of 11 entered the correct number but average children of 10 did not. Additionally, some children of 7 carried out the task correctly and some of 14 did not. (Thomas 1990: 5)

The report (HMI 1978) also claimed that there were "few schools [which] had effective programmes for the teaching of science" (HMI 1978: par. 5.66), and

“provision was inadequate” (HMI 1978: par. 5.76). The need to provide a whole curriculum, especially to establish a scheme for science, was a major issue for centralising the education system. The development of science, and technology in the 1970s was very important. Although some schools had established a scheme for science, there were inconsistencies. Moon (1994) claimed:

One school might have attempted to achieve a balance between the different scientific disciplines (physics, chemistry, and perhaps astronomy and earth sciences). The other, however, could have leaned heavily on the tradition of nature study. (p. 15)

Teachers’ inability to teach science, or lack of confidence in teaching it, and misinterpretation of what it meant, was highlighted as a weakness by the Conservative Party. Other subjects were also criticised in the report as having a “lack of progression and much repetition”(HMI 1978: 8.26). The aim for the curriculum in the 1980s was:

. . . to establish priorities and to keep the curriculum within realistic limits. Agreement on these matters should be sought far more than is now done with other schools in the locality, primary and secondary, and in accordance with national needs (HMI 1978: par. 8.30)

Furthermore, HMIs (HMI 1978) found those informal or progressive teaching methods, suggested in the Plowden Report (CACE 1967):

Limiting teaching to a form that relies on posing questions, or allowing children to pose questions, and then leaving them to ferret out the answers seems to be less effective than a more controlled form of teaching with explanations provided step by step. But a combination of the two approaches was consistently associated with slightly better scores (HMI 1978: 122)

HMIs acknowledged that “teachers need to become familiar with a range of teaching techniques” (HMI 1978: par. 8.61). They needed to understand the weaknesses and strengths of these techniques, and their ability to teach them, so that they could then match the method with the lesson and children’s ability. Three-quarters of the

teachers in the HMI (1978) survey used the didactic (formal) approach to teaching. Therefore, progressive teaching was not as widespread as the Conservative Party and anti-progressive writers believed.

In 1979, when the Conservative Party re-gained office, their general impression, according to Lawton (1994) was:

- Schools were chaotic and teachers were lax, or - worse still - militant egalitarians were using the classroom for subversive political activities.
- Britain was producing poor quality school leavers.
- Schools needed to concentrate on the basics. (Adapted from Lawton 1994: 47)

Lawton (1994) claimed that these were difficult times for those attempting to run the education system, including those in HE and FE institutions, schools, LEAs, and others who could have a direct influence on children's education. All these criticisms made the public become more alarmed with what was happening in schools, and parents became very anxious about their children's education (Galton 1994).

Parental choice

The Conservative Government's first legislation was the 1979 Education Act, which repealed the Labour Party's 1976 Education Act, which invited all LEAs to move towards a complete system of comprehensive schooling. This Act, however, did not enforce decompensivisation, but removed the compulsory requirement to switch to a comprehensive system and abolish selection at 11. The government position on selection for secondary education also helped shape the 1980 Education Act. This introduced the Assisted Places Scheme (APS), which subsidised places in some independent schools for bright pupils whose parents could not afford to pay the full fees. The Conservatives' message, by introducing APS was quite clear; they were

legitimising the need for and use of private education, and gave the impression that the local comprehensives were failing bright pupils. This act also increased parents' rights in several ways. For instance, more parents were on governing bodies, LEAs and governors had to provide information to parents, and LEAs could not refuse places in schools to parents who lived outside a school's catchment. A year later parental rights were increased further by giving parents the opportunity to challenge LEA decisions over SEN provisions (1981 Education Act). Again, teacher professional autonomy came under further pressure.

A challenge to teacher education

Throughout the period 1981 – 1985 there was a growing interest over teacher education. Sir Keith Joseph, the then Secretary of State for Education, along with Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister, believed that teacher training institutions were centres of progressive theory, which produced ineffective teachers (Lawton 1994). Both were:

obsessed with the need to reform teacher education. They shared the belief that teacher-training institutions were centres of progressive theory, which produced ineffective teachers. (Lawton 1994: 74)

Wilkin (1996) claimed that this had led to a belief that:

The failure of the economy could be attributed to weaknesses in schools, which had neglected to provide industry with appropriate skilled workforce (Wilkin 1996: 138)

A number of official publications addressed these issues and provided evidence to support them, including:

- DES (1981): *Teacher training and the Secondary School* – Put forward the suggestion that initial training should be more relevant, and that practising teachers ought to be more involved in initial training.

- DES (1982a): *The New Teacher in School* – Provided evidence that 25% of newly qualified teachers lacked some of the skills needed in the classroom.
- DES (1982b): *Mathematics counts (The Cockcroft Report)* – claimed that “at present many pupils who are being offered mathematics courses which are not suited to their needs, and many teachers of mathematics lack suitable qualifications” (DES 1982b: par. 800)
- DES (1983): *Teaching in Schools* – Stressed the need for greater care in selecting students for teacher training, as well as the desirability of eliminating unsuitable students during training.

(DES (1981, 1982a, 1983) Taken from Lawton 1988: 166)

These publications helped to influence the 1983 White Paper: *Teaching Quality (DES 1983)*, which was an attack on teacher education. Joseph believed that one quarter of all newly trained teachers were inadequately equipped with the skills needed for teaching (Wilkin 1996). According to Ball (1990), who quoted from the Social Affairs Unit Document, *Detecting Bad Schools: A Guide for Normal Parents* (Anderson 1982):

Teachers with Cert. Ed after their names have studied nonsense for three years. Those with B.Ed for three or four years. Those with PGCE have had a rest for one year studying nonsense after doing a proper subject and those with MEd or AdvDipEd have returned for super nonsense. (P 11)

Following the publication of the 1983 White Paper: *Teaching Quality (DES 1985)*, the Committee for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) was set up in 1984. This agency inspected all ITT courses. If they were not CATE approved; they could not carry qualified teacher status. CATE members were supposedly from a wide group of educationalists, although Wilkin (1996) argues that appointments were

made by the Secretary of State for Education on a personal basis. Consequently, a situation was created in which:

Teacher trainers needed to conform to centrally prescribed standards, work harder, and have more regard for the practical world – above all, they must “produce” teachers who have much greater concern for economic and industrial efficiency; research and scholarship become low priorities (Lawton 1988: 166)

A plethora of educational policies

The culmination of the criticism of the key features in this phase led to numerous educational policies being made law. In 1984, The 1984 Education Act allowed the government to allocate sums of money to LEAs for particular educational purposes, thus reducing education authority’s control over how money was spent. By doing this, LEAs were being by-passed to enable the government to pursue its own policies. A year later, in 1985, another White Paper: *Better Schools (DES 1985)* was published. In this paper the government claimed that “three-quarters of primary schools had weaknesses in their curricular planning and implementation” (par. 17), and “a significant amount of teachers were performing below standard” (par. 158). This justified the government’s actions to reform the education system. In 1986 there were two more education acts. Education Act (No. 1) reduced LEA spending power even further than the 1984 Education Act, and Education Act (No. 2) required every maintained school to have a governing body, which would have a stronger parental voice and increase their influence over the management of the school. The governors would be required to present an annual report to parents, and arrange an annual meeting to discuss the report. As parents’ power continued to get stronger, the LEA powers seemed to diminish.

This trend continued over teachers' pay. From early 1985 until 1987 there had been a long dispute between the government and teachers about the pay award (Lawton 1994). According to Lawton (1994) it had developed because the government had been long dissatisfied with the negotiating machinery which gave central government responsibility for paying the bill for teachers' pay without complete power to decide what the bill should be. The 1987 Teachers Pay and Conditions Act abolished the Burnham Committee, the body that determined teachers' pay and which consisted of teachers' union representatives, LEA representatives and DES officials. On abolishing this committee, the Education Secretary took direct control over teachers' pay and conditions at work. A formal contract was drawn up for teachers, defining for the first time, the minimum number of hours to be worked (1275 hours) and introducing mandatory teacher appraisal. Government intervention in restructuring the education system, including teachers' working conditions and what they taught, had begun. This was, by the mid 1990s, to lead to a significant shift in the relationship between teachers and classroom assistants and to a reconsideration of the professional status of teachers.

The Status of teachers

The educational policies of both political parties between 1973 – 87 gave more control to central government (1987 Teacher's Pay and Conditions Act, 1988 ERA, and 1993 Education Act) and made teachers and LEAs more responsible to parents (1980, 1981, 1984 and 1986 Education Acts). This paved the way for the "New Right" challenges in which individual responsibility and choice were favoured (Hodkinson and Issitt 1995) [see: chapter 4]. The basis of this was:

- Individual institutions and service providers competing with each other so that, in theory, they had to improve quality and value for money in order to stay “in business”, as customers chose their services.
- To facilitate this “market”, funding was allocated to individual institutions as cost centres. Furthermore, funding increasingly came either from competitive tendering for contracts or through performance related formulae. In education the key criterion was the ability of an institution to recruit pupils or students.
- Such performance related funding required the setting and publication of measurable performance indicators, such as examination results. Such indicators were intended to give an objective measure of quality, which enabled the customer to make informed choices.
- Finally, quality was assured by a series of regular external inspections, for example, Ofsted.

(Adapted from Hodkinson and Issitt 1995: 3)

Bottery (1998) argued that these changes were inevitable as they:

... are in most cases a function of pressures and issues which transcend any one governmental agenda or political ideology; they would be happening to professionals irrespective of any particular election (Bottery 1998: ix)

He claimed that the challenges teachers were facing had stemmed from Britain’s declining position within the world economy. In such a situation:

... governments of both left and right have had to devise ways of reducing demand, of cutting back on services, and of increasing their scrutiny of how financial provision is used at site level. (Bottery 1998: 6)

Therefore, in the 1970s, a decline in pupil population helped to legitimise a reduction in educational expenditure, while high unemployment amongst school leavers, and media attention on the criticism of “progressive” education created a national debate on education. This created a situation in which both major parties, Labour and Conservative, believed teachers must be controlled and the curriculum restructured.

The implications were that children were not only failing, but were being failed by teachers (Pollard et al 1994).

Economic pressures were not the only reasons for the acceptance of the criticism and control of teachers; the fact that teaching was not generally regarded as a true profession was an important factor. Teachers had only been granted anything approaching professional status since 1926 [see: chapter 1]. This meant that teachers were not looked upon as “true” professionals. True professionals are, according to Ozga and Lawn (1981), defined using the trait approach, which distinguishes professions using set criteria. They argue that professions need to be intellectual, learned, practical, technical, client - focused, organised and altruistic. Bottery (1998) believes that there are more criteria for professionalism, at least seventeen, although he notes that much debate centres around three of them:

- that of expertise (the possession by an occupational group of exclusive knowledge and practice)
- that of altruism (an ethical concern by this group for its clients)
- that of autonomy (the profession’s need and right to exercise control over entry into, and subsequent practice within, that particular occupation)

(Taken from Bottery 1998: 3)

Ozga and Lawn (1981) argue that these criteria are a catalogue of desirable attributes, which exist within law and medicine, but are only marginal in teaching. Similarly, Bottery (1998) points out that there is undeclared presumption on what basis lawyers and doctors, the accepted professions, are accorded such a status. He raises the question: How does one choose to define professionalism?

Throughout the last three decades many have attempted to define teacher professionalism (Etzioni 1969; Shulman 1983; Ball 1987; and Pollard et al 1994).

Etzioni (1969) defined teaching as one of the semi-professions because of the lack of clearly defined skills and the inability to control recruitment and membership in teaching. Shulman (1983) opposed this view. He believed that professionals are capable not only of practising and understanding their craft, but also of communicating the reasons for professional decisions and actions to others. Teachers complied with these criteria because they were the masters of procedure, of content and rationale, and capable of explaining why something is done (Shulman 1983). Ball (1987) defined teachers as a state-mediated profession because they were created by the state, for use by the state. The State decides the needs of its clients (children, parents and society), and how these needs must be met. Whilst, Pollard et al (1994) referred to teachers as the emergent professionals because they did not originally exist as a profession.

Furthermore, professionalism, for teachers, must include some reference to autonomy over the curriculum and pedagogy. Throughout this period, however, there had been many debates about control over these areas, for example, Callaghan (1977), HMI (1978), DES (1981), DES (1982a), DES (1982b), DES (1983), and DES (1985). The William Tyndale Primary School case provided evidence for the *Black Paper* themes, and was used as evidence that teachers needed to be made more accountable and less autonomous (Ball 1990). Neville Bennett's book: *Teaching Styles and Pupils' Progress* (1976) was interpreted as further evidence of this (Morris and Griggs 1988; Ball 1990). As spending on education reduced and teachers were made redundant, they found themselves being heavily criticised. This made the introduction of the next set of policy initiatives easier and created a climate in which the functions of classroom assistants would change.

The Role of classroom assistants

One way in which the reduction of teachers was overcome was through the integration of assistants from general school duties to working with children inside the classroom. This was an advantage to teachers who had a large number of children in their care. According to Morris and Griggs (1988) teaching unions argued that:

The object of aides [assistants] was to adulterate the teaching profession . . . and use them as a cost cutting device (Morris and Griggs 1988: 31)

Nevertheless, the contribution of classroom assistants was slowly increasing throughout this period. The main reason for this was the additional support they could provide to teachers who were confronted with large classes (CACE 1967), and in particular to children with SEN, who were now being found in increasing numbers in non-specialist schools and classrooms (CACE 1967; DES 1978). Following Plowden's recommendation (CACE 1967) to train teacher aides, a training programme for assistants in Scotland was proposed in 1975 (Kennedy and Duthie 1975). This pilot training course, in which auxiliaries were trained to work with children from 5 - 11 years, was initiated because the number of auxiliaries in Scotland had more than doubled in a two-year period (1970-1972). Candidates were selected, and provided with a pre-service training programme, which lasted four weeks. Most of the candidates were mature women (over the age of 21 years). Kennedy and Duthie (1975) noted that *women selected to be auxiliaries had not been in school for at least fifteen years* (Kennedy and Duthie 1975: 5). The training programme consisted of familiarising the auxiliaries with modern primary education methods, handling resources, first aid, record keeping, and providing opportunities to work with children. After the training programme they worked in school with the knowledge they had gained. From January to August 1975, three in-service training courses were set up for the trained auxiliaries. The first one was on *reading*, the

second was on *writing and printing*, and the third was on *speech and drama* (Kennedy and Duthie 1975).

At the end of all the training, and the end of the project, which had lasted 9 months, a one-day conference was set up for the teachers who had worked with the auxiliaries to express their views. The teachers' views and concerns about the auxiliaries were considered to be very important. The success of the programme depended upon the teacher's acceptance of the training. Before training had taken place teachers had believed that:

- (a) *The pressure of another person in class would inhibit them.*
- (b) *Auxiliaries might engage in teaching.*
- (c) *Money spent on auxiliaries would prevent money being spent on teachers to reduce class sizes.*
- (d) *Auxiliaries would create a friction between pupils and teachers.*
- (e) *Auxiliaries were not necessary.*
- (f) *The time spent in preparing and planning for an auxiliary would outweigh the advantages of her work.*

(Adapted from Kennedy and Duthie 1975: 4)

These concerns seem to indicate that teachers felt threatened by introducing a training programme for assistants. At the end of the study, teachers claimed:

they enjoyed their teaching more, their teaching was easier, and there was a more relaxed atmosphere . . . auxiliaries are particularly useful when children are working in-groups. . . and [teachers] were in favour of allowing their auxiliary to listen to reading. (Kennedy and Duthie 1975: 105)

This training programme had made the teachers involved realise the potential of an assistant. These teachers wanted non-professional help in the classroom, whereas previously it had not been considered relevant (Kennedy and Duthie 1975). Unfortunately, support in the classroom at this time was still limited due to a decline

in school rolls. The desire of LEAs to protect levels of teacher employment and the financial stringency of the 1970s led to cuts in expenditure on assistants (Mortimore et al 1994).

However, if money was not available to employ more assistants, then assistants needed to be sought elsewhere (support need not come from employed assistants). The most common source of assistance came from mothers. They would offer their services free of charge to help their own child, or because they had a genuine interest in working with children. This home-school link had started to develop from the late 1960s through Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) (CACE 1967). As was seen in the previous chapter, there was a growing concern amongst parents about the quality and provision in their children's education during this period (HMI 1978). This encouraged some parents to offer their support to their child's school. Parents were hearing children read, and aiding with practical activities, such as handicrafts, and cookery. Head teachers encouraged parents to volunteer their support. They recognised the potential skills and knowledge some parents may have to offer and their support was used as a means of supplanting paid ancillary help (Thomas 1987).

The 1981 Education Act raised the importance of the use of extra assistance in the classroom further, following the recommendation of the Warnock report (DES 1978). The report noted that assistants were crucial if children with learning disorders were placed in an ordinary class. This had previously been recommended, but not implemented (CACE 1967; DES 1975). The 1981 Education Act provided more awareness of SEN provision, and helped to develop the role of assistants in schools; to work with children in their classrooms, opposed to carrying out their traditional

tasks [see: chapter 1]. It also brought an increase in numbers of employed assistants as LEAs offered financial assistance to some forms of SEN provision. In some cases, children needed individual personal care assistants to support them (Barber and Brighthouse 1992).

By the early 1980s there were a number of different types of assistants being used in primary schools to meet the needs of pupils and the school. Hegarty et al (1981) identified four roles for assistants, that of:

- The 'general' role consisted of a mixture of less specific duties; for instance, photocopying, labelling books and cleaning paint pots.
- The 'caring' role involved responsibility for the general welfare of the children; for instance, toileting, feeding and mobility.
- The 'educational' role was supporting SEN children with classroom activities, under the teacher's direction.
- The 'para-professional' role included supporting with therapy with planned activities, such as speech therapy and physiotherapy.

These roles were very broad offering different levels of support. Whilst care and general assistants were performing non-professional tasks; educational and para-professional assistants were performing professional tasks. They were being used as apprentice or substitute teachers without being prepared for the task (Goode 1982).

Two points arise from this development:

- Classroom assistants have moved away from the traditional roles, such as duplicating resources, domestic duties, preparing equipment. They have ceased to work outside the classroom; instead they have entered the classroom and worked alongside children in their curriculum activities.
- Classroom assistants are being used in a range of different ways depending on context and relationships with the teachers but these roles, as yet, are not supported by training.

Many classroom assistants relied on teachers for guidance (DES 1978) as they had little or no experience and few had relevant training (Clayton 1990). The only assistants with any relevant training for supporting children were nursery nurses (Clift et al 1980; Hegarty et al 1981), who were holders of the Nursery Nurses Examination Board (NNEB) certificate. The NNEB NN course provides training for child care and education workers in a wide range of settings including family centres, hospitals, nurseries and primary schools. It is broad in content in order to reflect the diverse settings that the holders of the qualification enter and did not specifically concentrate on the education of young children, or children with SEN in the primary school. The NNEB nursery nurse training was not adequate for assistants who were working with children who had SEN. Clift et al (1980) confirmed this view; they reported that some NNEB NNs felt dissatisfied with their training because they felt it did not adequately prepare them for their role in school. In 1982, the NNEB revised its syllabus to include special needs topics, such as, developmental deviations, physical handicaps, learning difficulties, social and emotional difficulties. The recognition by the NNEB to improve its courses was not enough. Other courses were needed and throughout the 1980s various one year diplomas in child education and other nursery nurse courses, such as the BTEC nursery nurse course and the NVQ nursery nurse course, were provided to improve the training of these assistants.

Conclusion

During the 1960s and 1970s major policy changes emerged, which would affect teachers, assistants and their schools in the 1980/90s. Whilst, throughout much of this time assistants had been given a low status in schools, their potential, especially when working with children in deprived areas (CACE 1967; DES 1975), was

increasingly recognised. Teachers and their work was the focus of criticism and debate. This was not helped by economic recession, a fall in numbers, and debates about the relevance of the curriculum and a decline in standards. State intervention in education generally and the curriculum in particular continued to increase throughout the 1970s (DES 1975, DES 1977; DES 1978; HMI 1979) and the 1980s (the 1980, 1981, 1984, 1986(a), 1986(b) Education Acts, also, the 1983 and 1985 White Papers). The government's distrust of teachers was apparent through the plethora of educational legislation enacted during this period.

However, this was only the beginning, the real challenge came after 1988. In that year the most important piece of legislation throughout a thirty-year history of educational policy – the 1988 Education Reform Act was passed [see: chapter 3]. This policy and the ones that followed in the next period, 1988 – 1993 would challenge teachers' status even further. Assistants would also find themselves challenged and their roles extended. They would find themselves receiving more support from institutions, schools and the government.

Chapter 3

1988 – 1993: Challenge or Reform

Throughout the 1980s the education system was subject to considerable change, most of which affected teachers and much of which had implications, direct or indirect, for classroom assistants. Assistants had started to become more involved with what went on within the classroom; for example, supporting children with learning related tasks, rather than carry out administrative or clerical functions (Mortimore and Mortimore 1994; Moyles and Suschitzky 1997). Teachers also saw their role in schools change and become subject to increasing scrutiny. Throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s teachers had been criticised for failing their pupils. This led to the government introducing policies to:

- Increase parental rights in education (1980 and 1981 Education Acts),
- Make teachers and governors more accountable to parents (1986 Education Act),
- Investigate the curriculum and teaching methods (DES 1975; HMI 1979; DES 1983 and DES 1985)
- Start to control educational expenditure (1984 Education Act and the 1987 Teacher's Pay and Conditions Act).

This legislation and the defeat in the dispute over the pay award in 1987 had profoundly weakened teachers' confidence generally. In particular, it reduced the influence of teachers' unions over government educational legislation (Barber 1997). Teachers had been out manoeuvred over a number of issues, and this secured a relatively smooth passage for the next phase of educational legislation, which was far more radical than anything that had preceded it. The 1988 Education Reform Act

was ushered in as soon as the re-elected Conservative Government resumed power in 1987.

Policy Context

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) was the most important piece of educational legislation since the 1944 Butler Act. It completely changed the balance of power and influence in education (Lawton 1994) and was instrumental in controlling teachers and teachers' work (Ball 1990). The main provisions of this act were:

- It empowered the Secretary of State to prescribe a common curriculum, later known as the National Curriculum, to pupils of compulsory school age in maintained schools.
- It required LEAs to delegate certain responsibilities for financial management and appointment and dismissal of staff to the governing bodies of schools, powers that the governing bodies could delegate to the head teacher.
- It allowed a secondary or primary school with over 300 pupils, on the resolution of its governing body, with the consent of a majority of those parents to opt out of LEA finance and control, and be given a "grant-maintained" status. The school would then own its own premises, employ its own staff, and receive an annual grant directly from central government, not from the LEA.
- It established mechanisms to ensure that the limits set by LEAs or governors on the number of pupils a maintained school admits are not lower than the school was physically capable of accommodating.

(Taken from Mackinnon and Statham 1999: 66)

The 1988 ERA will be most remembered for the first three provisions, which were the National Curriculum, Local Management of Schools (LMS) and the establishment of grant-maintained (GM) schools.

The National Curriculum

Initially, teachers had been in favour of the principle of a National Curriculum (NCC 1990; Moon 1994; Webb and Vulliamy 1996). It was believed that a National Curriculum would clarify specific subjects to be taught, specific areas to be taught, especially to what extent or depth, and time spent on each subject. This would provide a structure within which to work. Prior to the National Curriculum, this did not happen; teachers may not have been teaching the same subject areas, or spent the same amount of time on subjects for similar groups of pupils. Moon (1994) stated that before the National Curriculum there were inconsistencies between schools:

One school might have attempted to achieve a balance between the different scientific disciplines (physics, chemistry, biology, and perhaps astronomy and earth sciences). The other, however, could have leaned heavily on the tradition of nature study. (Moon 1994:15)

A broad and balanced curriculum for all would ensure these inconsistencies were minimised. More importantly, it would support continuity and progression from the primary school to the secondary school and teachers welcomed this (NCC 1993). The government from 1989 – 1992¹ gradually introduced the curriculum in the form of eight lengthy documents. These documents were produced by the National Curriculum Council (NCC), which had been set up by the Secretary of State, to advise the Secretary of State, who would then make final decisions on educational matters. Pollard et al (1994) believed that:

The government's basic strategy of taking power to itself . . . [and] restricting the 'producer' power of teachers in favour of 'parental' consumers (Pollard et al 1994: 20)

The National Curriculum provided teachers with aims and objectives to achieve in each subject, termed attainment targets (AT) and AT levels. To ensure children

¹ In 1989 the NC documents for English, mathematics and science were introduced. In 1990 technology was introduced, followed by history and geography in 1991, then in April 1992 art, music and PE.

reached their required level of attainment, national testing was introduced from 1991, in the form of Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs). The introduction of national testing made teachers accountable for standards in education, irrespective of which social and demographic area schools were situated. This signified that:

Accountability is now being stressed over and against autonomy (Goodson and Ball 1992: 8)

This surprised and offended many in the educational world (Goodson and Ball 1992; Moon 1994).

Furthermore, the organising and planning for the National Curriculum created extremely heavy workloads for teachers (Campbell et al 1992). They were spending too much time on National Curriculum administration (Alexander et al 1992), and in some cases spending more time on planning for learning, rather than teaching itself. Angered by this additional pressure, teachers wanted a simplified version of the National Curriculum to be produced. They consistently demanded a revision of the National Curriculum to be drawn up, but by the start of the first pilot Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) in the academic year 1991/2, only the Science Order had been revised. According to Webb and Vulliamy (1996) this was more of a restructuring, than revision of the order.

The government's implementation of national testing in 1991/2 generated further unrest. Children at 7, 11, 14 and 16 years of age were required to complete SATs (Standard Assessment Tasks). SATs were introduced to ensure specific standards had been reached at the end of each Key Stage (KS) [see: appendix 1] and also provided parents and teachers with assessment information on children. These SAT results provided the government with information on those schools, whose children were achieving National Curriculum standards in the core and foundation subjects,

and those schools whose children were not. Teachers who taught these KS classes experienced extra pressures because they had to ensure that each child achieved their required level (e.g. at the end of KS 1 (Y2) children should be approximately level 2). This was especially difficult to manage at the end of KS 1. Year 2 teachers generally carried out SATs in small groups, which meant that another teacher had to supervise the rest of the class. Initially supply coverage for KS 1 SATs was not allocated by the government and the school had to fund this themselves. This added financial difficulties to the school, as well as additional workloads for teachers. One response to this was to increase the level of support for teachers in classrooms.

The end of a 'partnership': the introduction of LMS and GM status.

The 1988 Education Reform Act had secured maximum delegation of financial and managerial responsibilities to schools, and reduced the involvement of LEAs in educational expenditure in two ways:

- Firstly, through the LMS scheme, based on a formula funding, each LEA must now devolve a minimum of 85% of its total budget for schools directly to the schools for them to manage. For LEAs the consequence of this has been that many of its former roles and functions were now carried out by individual schools or had been discarded [This provision also had an affect on teachers, for further discussion see: *The Educational Market Place*, later in this chapter].
- Secondly, it is now possible for schools to 'opt-out' of LEA control and be funded directly by central government (Grant-Maintained (GM) Status). Schools, which opt for this route, receive their annual budget, even the proportion that would have been retained by the LEA. Thus reducing LEA control accordingly.

In each case, the change in the system of financing education gave schools more flexibility to deploy staff resources in different ways. In many schools, this meant appointing more classroom assistants. This aspect of the legislation, in particular,

signalled that the centrality of the partnership between local government and central government was over. This had been a calculated move. Nigel Lawson, Margaret Thatcher's last chancellor, wrote in his autobiography:

The 1988 ERA was based upon the fact that it would 'kill two birds with one stone' . . . Not only could we make possible the improvement in standards of education the country so badly needed [the introduction of the National Curriculum], but we could also solve the linked problem of the relationship between central and local government, and the lack of local government accountability (taken from Radnor and Ball 1996: 63)

Radnor and Ball (1996) argued that the issues of the quality and cost of education are embedded, this had been the agenda since 1979, when the Conservative government gained office. Leading to the allocation of resources on the basis of a public formula, subject to DfEE approval, rather than by local political or professional judgement. These changes were further exacerbated by the plethora of documentation and legislation, which followed in the wake of the ERA.

The 1992 Education Act

In order to maintain the implementation of the National Curriculum the government established new arrangements for the inspection of schools in the 1992 Education Act. This had occurred because HMIs were believed to be part of the educational establishment, which consistently attacked government educational policy. The government's view was that:

Experts are unnecessary when the market takes over (Lawton 1994: 77)

HMIs were perceived as teacher sympathisers, and therefore did not fit into Conservative ideology. According to Lawton (1994), by 1992 the number of HMIs fell from nearly 500 to 175. He also reported that Margaret Thatcher (the then Prime Minister), and two Secretaries of State for Education, Kenneth Baker (1986 - 1989) and John MacGregor (1989 - 1990) had been critical of HMIs.

Inspection of schools became the responsibility of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), headed by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. Inspection teams headed by a registered inspector consisted of a lay inspector, who had not been involved professionally in education, and a number of independent inspectors (who were experienced educators), not employed by Ofsted. Every maintained school was to be inspected every four years. The inspectors were to report on the quality of education, educational standards achieved, the efficiency of financial management and the moral, social and cultural development of the pupils (Mackinnon and Statham 1999). They were also to consider the deployment of staff, including ancillary staff, and the implementation of the National Curriculum.

Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice (Alexander et al 1992)

Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice (Alexander et al 1992), commonly known as "*The Three Wise Men Report*" generated a debate on pedagogy in primary schools and confronted traditional assumptions (Pollard et al 1994). It did this by discussing two issues:

- The standard of education in primary schools. Alexander et al (1992) claimed that it was "*evident that primary schools have undergone considerable disturbance over the last three years*" (Alexander et al 1992: par. 28), but "*many teachers have found it hard to adapt their current practice to the new requirements*" (Alexander et al 1992: par. 29). They believed that "*while they had not detected a general rise or fall in educational standards there are some long standing weaknesses in classroom practice*" (Alexander et al 1992: par. 44). This could be amended by the improvement in the quality of education.
- The quality of education in primary schools. Alexander et al (1992) claimed that "*teachers must possess the subject knowledge which the statutory orders require. Without such knowledge, planning will be restricted in scope, the teaching techniques and organisational strategies*

employed by the teacher will lack purpose, and there will be little progression in pupils' learning" (Alexander et al 1992: par. 120).

Alexander et al (1992) also claimed that "a school must have direct access to specialist expertise in all nine curriculum subjects" (Alexander et al 1992: par. 4.1). The government had, as part of the introduction of the National Curriculum, made in-service courses available to support teachers in subject areas. Unfortunately, these in-service courses for subject specialists were:

Short-burst, "quick fix" one-day events concerned with curriculum implementation (Day 1993: 84)

Government run in-service courses had no diplomas or certificates awarded to teachers for their participation on the course. In fact, most could not be called courses; Day (1993) refers to them as *one-day events*.

In response to this report, another report known as the 'Three Wise Women' (David, Curtis and Siraj-Blatchford 1992) was published. This report attempted to present findings on the then current debate on educational standards and teaching quality, which perhaps may have been misrepresented in the 'Three Wise Men' report. In particular, the report addressed the early years of schooling, which Alexander et al (1994) had neglected. They favoured the child centred methods where the curriculum had been based on first-hand experiences and indicated that standards in KS 1 had been better from 1989 – 1991 than KS 2 'as child-centred' practices were more widely applied in infant classrooms. This evidence was backed up by government publications (DES 1990; DES 1991).

Alexander et al (1992), also, favoured the use of whole class teaching, over differentiated methods, yet David et al (1992) argued that to match the curriculum to the child is central to good practice, it is useless to present children with tasks that are too easy, or too difficult. David et al (1992), therefore, believed that:

Greater proportions of time spent on whole class teaching is not the answer for our youngest children (David et al, 1992: 17)

Topic work, a common concept in infant classrooms, was another aspect of KS 1 teaching which was criticised in Alexander et al (1992), however, David et al (1992) claimed:

We are not contesting the value of subject-based curriculum planning, assessment or recording but we feel that if themes are to be introduced then some subjects may well, in our opinion, neglect important themes (David et al 1992: 19)

Again evidence was provided to back their allegations and provide good practice (DES 1991; Campbell et al 1991).

As a response to the fall in standards, David et al (1992) believe that Alexander et al (1992) claims were 'contradictive'. An example of this is their response to the deterioration in numeracy. Alexander et al (1992) claimed that it is due to teachers' lack of skills in this area, yet they also claimed that areas such as 'geometry', 'measures', 'probability' and 'statistics' had improved, which are specialised areas. David et al (1992) stated that the alleged fall in standards might well have been caused by the 'disruption of the intemperate pace of the introduction of the National Curriculum and its associated assessment procedures'. Unfortunately, this perceptive document had little affect on the government policy as the subsequent white paper and the next Education Act was to show.

The 1993 Education Act

In the same year as the 1992 Education Act and “The Three Wise Men” report, John Patten published his White paper: *Choice and Diversity* (DfE 1992). In writing this paper, Patten intended to ‘create a stable system of education that sets international levels of excellence . . . and create the conditions necessary to harness that commitment and raise standards and levels’ (p.64). He developed five themes in the paper:

- *Quality*: The government was firmly wedded to quality within the framework provided by the NC, measured by the school assessment and examination process and – very importantly – judged by a powerful and independent inspectorate.
- *Diversity*: The provision of education should be geared towards local circumstances and individual needs, such as the Assisted Places Scheme and opting for GM status.
- *Increased parental choice*: the government believed that parents know best. To ensure that this belief was widely accepted parental influence increased throughout the 1980/90s, for example, the use of open enrolment, inclusion of parent governors and the publication of league tables – the more pupils a school attracted, the larger the budget.
- *Greater school autonomy*: Before the 1980 Education Act schools were merely administrative units for the LEA. LMS ended this era, and gave schools control over their budget, at the expense of the LEA.
- *Greater accountability*: Scrutiny by parents, employers and the local community at large was intense, interested and increasingly informed, to the benefit of children.

(Adapted from DfE, 1992: 2-5)

According to Lawton (1994), John Patten was very proud of having written some of the sections of this paper himself. Others did not receive Patten’s white paper with the same enthusiasm. It became known as “Chaos and Perversity” because it was extremely long and it lacked coherence (Lawton 1994). Despite its critics, this paper was to provide the framework for the 1993 Education Act, which was even longer

than the 1988 Education Reform Act (Lawton 1994). Barber (1997) refers to this paper and its subsequent act as ‘ a monstrously complicated piece of legislation’.

The 1993 Education Act had a considerable affect on teachers. It removed Initial Teacher Education (ITE) from Further Education/Higher Education (FE/HE) funding councils and set up the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). The TTA provided information and advice on teaching as a career, and in England, set criteria and acted as the funding agency for teacher training courses (Mackinnon and Statham 1999). The TTA not only controlled funding for ITE courses but also for in-service courses for teachers (including higher degrees). Later in 1993, the TTA was to play a crucial part in the introduction of new criteria for ITE, and to establish the STA initiative

The 1993 Act also simplified the ‘opting out’ process for schools (first established in the 1988 ERA) and other ways of establishing grant-maintained schools were introduced. Independent schools could ‘opt in’ to grant-maintained status, or new schools could be set up within the grant-maintained sector (Mackinnon and Statham 1999). Once the act became law schools voting to opt out of LEA control “dried up”, and the expected target of 1500 schools had not been met by the 1997 election (Barber 1997). Another feature of this act was the introduction of measures to deal with schools that were *failing* after Ofsted inspections. These measures were based on the belief that:

Children were not failing, but were being failed. (Pollard et al 1994: 20)

Patten was able to introduce this legislation with relative ease, due to the demoralisation of the teaching profession; but this was to change. His constant failure to ask for expert opinion led him to ignore the teaching unions’ advice altogether (Lawton 1994). This united the teaching profession; the unions shared a collective

anger about his approach to teachers. Barber (1997) claimed that Patten had turned down seventeen requests from the NUT to discuss educational issues, and in January 1993 he was absent from the North of England Educational Conference at which it had become traditional for the Secretary of State for Education to deliver a major policy speech.

The Dearing Report

By January 1993, dissatisfaction with the National Curriculum and the assessment arrangements caused the NUT to ask members (from primary and secondary schools) to ballot on their support for a boycott of SATs on the grounds that they were causing teachers to have excessive and unacceptable workloads. Most teachers were willing to boycott the SATs. This proposal had originated from the Secondary English teachers' united opposition to the inadequately trialed KS3 SATs, which had failed to represent the curriculum that they had been teaching. Further hostility mounted when John Patten in a speech to the ATL on 7th April 1993 criticised teachers for their 'unprofessional response' (Webb and Vulliamy 1996). However, despite the objections to the SATs the government was determined to make sure the tests went ahead as planned. This was a costly mistake for the government. Teachers did not feel that their professional concerns were recognised and respected (Pollard et al 1994). This ultimately led to the collapse of the KS2/KS3 SATs. According to Lawton (1994) the cost of printing and delivering the unused SAT papers cost the government thirty-five million pounds. For the first time since the implementation of the National Curriculum teachers had been united in their opposition. The

government, with advice from the National Curriculum Council, decided to compromise, and they sought advice from Sir Ron Dearing².

In 1993, Sir Ron Dearing was commissioned to investigate the National Curriculum and its associated assessments. He was asked by the Secretary of State for Education to review the National Curriculum with a view to “slimming down” the curriculum, simplifying its assessment arrangements, considering the future of the 10-level scale of attainment, and improving the central administration (Mackinnon and Stratham 1999). Within the same year Dearing produced two reports - an interim report (July 1993) and the final report (December 1993). His recommendations for Key stages 1-3 were:

- To reduce the statutory curriculum enough to free about 20% of teaching time for use at the discretion of schools.
- To identify an essential core for each subject, and reduce the number of attainment targets, so as to concentrate on the core.
- The National Curriculum when revised would not be altered for five years.
- National tests were to be simplified. This would reduce teachers’ time spent on administration, and assessment.

(Adapted from Mackinnon and Stratham 1999: 45)

These recommendations were accepted. The government, with the support of Sir Ron Dearing, was seen to be compromising over this issue. Consequently, the National Curriculum was reduced from nine documents to just one. The new draft curriculum orders were issued in May 1994, for planned implementation from August 1995. Once again, when tensions were reduced the government brought out yet more legislation, which had an affect on teachers. Two Circulars intended by the

² The government sought a ‘professional listener’ in Sir Ron Dearing, who was due to become the Chairman Designate of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority in October 1993, and who had been asked in June 1993 to take over the running of the National Curriculum Council.

government to offer guidance to teachers, instead were perceived as putting more pressure on them:

Circular 5/93

Circular 5/93 [which was later replaced by Circular 15/94] proposed the publication of information in primary schools to parents, (including Standard Assessments Tasks [SATs] results for 7 year olds), in the form of league tables, which identified whether children in individual schools were achieving national standards in education. The results appeared in LEA pamphlets and together with public examination results (GCSE and A level), were published in most national newspapers. The results were in rank order, so the public could see how schools compare. These league tables were unfair. Pollard et al (1994) claimed that:

Teachers in the inner city had very justifiable concerns about the publication of league tables . . . They felt that they could not take into account the progress individual children had made or the enormous efforts made by teachers. Comparisons in the media, which began to emerge over the period of data-gathering, were perceived by many teachers as demoralising and insulting to both staff and children (Pollard et al 1994: 98)

These tables do not reveal how effective schools have been and have not taken into account pupils' social background. Therefore, Lawton (1994) believed that:

The publication of assessment results should be accompanied by warning about data interpretation; and schools should be listed alphabetically not in league tables (Lawton 1994: 113)

Circular 14/93

Circular 14/93 generated an increase in teachers' workload by introducing new arrangements for ITT. These involved: students spending more time in schools and gave class teachers more responsibility for the training of student teachers. To make

sure this had happened teachers were expected to assess students on a set of criteria, which was competence based. These competences were school-based and gave future employers details on the strengths and weaknesses of the student. It seemed ironic that the Conservative government would give teachers such a responsibility, when for years teachers had been criticised for incompetence. However, there was another group of professionals in education, who were distrusted more than teachers; the teacher trainers.

The Conservative Government had been dissatisfied with teacher trainers for some time (HMI 1979; DES 1983; DES 1985; 1992 Further and Higher Education Act; 1993 Education Act). Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the Conservative government became obsessed with the need to reform teacher education (Lawton 1994). This was based on three factors:

- Firstly, there was a fear that there would be teacher shortages in the 1990s. Lawton (1990) claimed the government feared teacher shortages because: The attractiveness of teaching had declined (e.g. low morale of present teachers), women were being attracted to other occupations where salary and conditions of service were better than teaching, careers could be interrupted through child-rearing.
- Secondly, the government believed that newly qualified teachers lacked the expertise to be effective classroom practitioners as most HE institutions were accepting students onto teacher training courses with the minimum grade of A level results - grade E (Plowden 1987; Galton 1989).
- Finally, the government was dissatisfied with the quality of ITT courses. They believed that some trainers in institutions were concentrating more on the theories in education, instead of more subject-based teaching. In 1992, at the Conservative Party Conference John Major stated *"I want to reform teacher training. Let us return to basic subject teaching, not courses in the theory of education (the B.Ed ?). Teachers should learn how to teach children to read, not waste their time on the politics of gender, race and class"* (taken from Lawton 1994 p 74)

New routes into teaching

The government attempted to address these factors of teacher shortages, lack of expertise and their dissatisfaction with current ITT, with the introduction of Articled and Licensed teachers in 1990. The Licensed teachers scheme was designed to attract those who might want to enter teaching as a second career; the Articled teachers scheme was on-the-job training for young graduates. These two schemes had their problems, which were:

- These two schemes provided more ways for adults to become teachers, without completing a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) or Post Graduate Certificate in Education (P.G.C.E), the two desired ways, by teachers, in which to enter the teaching profession. This could cause difficulties for teachers with traditional qualified teacher status (QTS), since Articled and Licensed teachers would be cheaper to employ than teachers with traditional QTS.
- The schemes provided adults with expertise (e.g. candidates for Articled teachers were graduates and those for Licensed teachers could be managers, or professionals in another field), but they may not have any knowledge of child development, how children learn or how to teach.
- The schemes provided largely school-based, rather than predominantly HE training. The government had started to direct teacher training to practising teachers, instead of university lecturers, put much pressure on the teacher 'mentor', but the assessment criteria for the schemes were not monitored, so the quality of the teacher could vary from school to school.

Despite the initial concerns, both schemes may be achievable with a good candidate and school.

In 1992 Patten introduced a further policy initiative for teachers' training to work with KS1 children. This proposal was different to the two schemes mentioned previously, in that to qualify for entry to teaching candidates only needed two A levels or equivalent, instead of a degree. Candidates would become qualified early years teachers after completing a one-year college-based course, instead of receiving

school-based training. With this proposal, Patten may have been achieving the aim of providing more teachers, but:

- The proposal reduced expertise. Patten believed that early years teachers, those teachers that taught 5 - 8 years olds, did not need as much training as those teachers who taught 8 years olds, and above. This occurred because the care of young children is often regarded as an extension of the mothering role (Curtis and Hevey 1992).
- The proposal reduced quality in training. Patten proposed a one-year training course for teachers in a college, instead of school or HE institution. Patten believed that there were many mothers at home teaching their children, when with training, they could be doing this in a classroom.

Patten's proposal was never realised, but if it had been, it would have created a two-tier teacher training system; graduate teachers and non-graduate teachers. The media nicknamed his proposal the "*mums' army*". Lawton (1990) believed that there were considerable dangers in providing more routes into teaching, especially when:

Pressures to recruit more and more unqualified teachers or under-qualified teachers will be enormous (Lawton 1990 p. 150)

The STA initiative, introduced in Circular 14/93, could have been construed as such a strategy [see: chapter 4], therefore, providing a challenge to teacher professionalism.

The status of teachers

Throughout this period teachers experienced many changes. These changes transformed schools not only as organisations, but also as places in which to work.

Teachers were affected in three main ways:

- Teacher Professionalism
- Perceptions of teachers and teaching
- The educational market place

Teacher Professionalism

It was noted in chapter one that the debate about the nature of teacher professionalism had continued over many years. Indeed some educationalists (Etzioni 1969; Pollard et al 1994) were unsure whether teachers should be classed as true professionals, like doctors or lawyers. By the end of 1972, teachers had autonomy over the curriculum and new recruits on ITE course would become graduates. This autonomy and graduate status provided teachers with the belief that they had achieved professional status. Whether or not this was the case, when the Conservative government removed teachers' autonomy to decide what to teach children by introducing a National Curriculum, their professional status had been adversely affected (Helsby 1995).

Pollard et al (1994) believed that many teachers supported the introduction of the National Curriculum as a structure, as they realised deficiencies in the system existed. They did not anticipate that they might be used as "teaching technicians" (Ball 1987) or that curriculum control would become part of the remit of central government enforced by rigorous inspections. Lawn (1996) believes that teachers were becoming more like competent employees, trying to meet production or efficiency targets, decided nationally. Even the responsibility for the implementation of the National Curriculum in schools did not rest with teachers, but with the governing bodies of those schools. Yet, the removal of teachers' autonomy over the curriculum did not decrease their workload; it increased it. So much so that teachers became concerned that because of the overload in the curriculum, coverage of the basics, such as reading was being neglected (Webb and Vulliamy 1996). It was not only the planning of the National Curriculum that provided concerns; National Curriculum

assessments put much pressure on teachers. Teachers were required to show evidence that every child in their class had attained levels in all subjects. Many teachers felt *exhausted, deskilled and demoralised* (Webb 1993: 3).

Perceptions of teachers and teaching

Teachers' perceptions of themselves had been adversely affected through the introduction of the ERA. These perceptions had created changes in the way teachers worked. Pollard et al (1994) argued that:

. . . they were co-operating and working with colleagues more [more staff meetings] . . . most teachers felt they were far more aware of what their colleagues were doing . . . However, some of the increased co-operation was a response to the stress and overload that colleagues were feeling and it was an attempt to alleviate this. (Pollard et al 1994: 92)

There were some positive aspects to the plethora of legislation. The National Curriculum helped to eliminate repetition in teaching and to ensure that feedback on pupils was available when they moved into another class or another school.

Nevertheless, Helsby (1995) argued that these changes had:

a damaging effect on teachers' freedom of action, since increasing paperwork and other demands were absorbing time and energies that could otherwise be devoted to more 'professional' activities, such as classroom teaching (Helsby 1995: 326).

These teachers believed that the changes to their work were prescriptive, involved a loss of teacher control and increased state control over the curriculum.

This feeling of diminution in status was not equally distributed across all sectors of the education system. Early years teachers appear to have been worst affected. The NUT (1994) accused the Conservative Government of adopting the idea that:

Teaching at primary level is less demanding and less important than at secondary and higher levels. (NUT letter, 1994)

Whilst, Pugh (1992) argued that:

It is often assumed that anyone can teach young children (Pugh 1992: 27)

This is a misguided public image has damaged early years teachers' perceptions of themselves and others of teachers. This perception may have emerged because of the nature of early years pedagogy. Younger children are provided with child-initiated activities, or activities regarded as *play*. Children benefit from learning from first hand experiences rather than subjected to whole class, teacher directed approaches (David et al 1996).

Unfortunately, this image of teachers teaching less intellectual work has led to early years teachers having the lowest professional status in schools (Pugh 1992). David et al (1996) argues that the National Curriculum was too big for early years teachers to deliver to children. An approach to teaching was needed based on the need to provide young children with concrete experience before they acquire more abstract knowledge. This type of teaching requires much understanding and expertise. This is recognised elsewhere. In Scotland teachers have to complete a post-qualifying diploma in addition to their initial training to become an early years teacher.

The Educational Market Place

Another factor, which affected teachers' professional status, was the increasing attempt to use *market forces* as a process for educational resource allocation. Since the 1988 ERA responsibility for financial management was at institutional level. LMS, one of the measures generated from the 1988 ERA set out to create a "market within the school system" (Barber 1997). Funds were allocated to schools according to the number of pupils on roll. The result was that the school's budget depended on how many pupils it could attract. Schools found themselves in competition with each

other. Open enrolment became popular as a means to attract more money. Of course, some schools took this to the extremes, as Barber (1997) claimed that one school offered a free shower fitting to all parents who chose it. Parental choice was increasing. They could exert choice over where they wanted their child to be taught. This could have serious consequences for schools, for instance, parents could move their child from one school to another, with this move, the allocated funds for the child's education would move with them. Consequently, those schools which parents did not desire their child to go to would close. This only resulted in more competitiveness, especially since published league tables may influence parents.

In some cases, primary head teachers argued that LMS had given them "far more autonomy than prior to the 1988 ERA" (Bell 1996). Head teachers were often delegated the responsibility of becoming the budget holder through the school governors. This gave them the power to manage the school's finances and staffing costs. Head teachers' favoured their increased power through LMS (Mortimore and Mortimore 1991; Webb 1993; Southworth 1997). However, the Conservative government, by giving head teachers and the governors of the school the responsibility of managing their own budgets, had diminished LEA control over school funding. Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, believed LEAs were very wasteful of monies allocated for education (Lawton 1994). This way, head teachers could manage their school more efficiently and effectively.

Another measure from the 1988 ERA, the National Curriculum had in fact centralised the market by placing unimaginable control and power in the hands of the Secretary of State for Education (Bottery 1998). The outcome was that the market was in a

process of strengthening centralisation and decentralisation The outcome of centralisation was:

- Teachers' lack of autonomy in making judgements on content and assessment, and the consequent threats to professionalism.
- The requirements to implement policies at variance with what are perceived to be the needs of pupils.

And the outcome of market decentralisation was:

- A parallel lack of autonomy and consequent threat to professionalism, but this time through having to follow the dictates of the market.
- The challenge to equity of provision as the need to compete produces a situation where differential funding is the norm.
- The breakdown of co-operation between institutions as they are forced to seek competitive advantage.

(Taken from Bottery 1998:18)

Schools were becoming more business like and heavily influenced by parental "consumer" demands, it was becoming clear that government involvement and consumer needs had been favoured over the expertise and experience of teachers. It initiated a flexible financial climate in which alternative types of posts could be costed and used.

The role of assistants

It is clear that throughout the 1980s the education system experienced considerable change. These changes included: provisions made for Special Educational Needs (SEN) children (in the 1981 Education Act); curriculum developments; the introduction of national assessments and record keeping; and the changes in the management of the school (in the 1988 ERA). All these issues affected teachers; all had implications, direct or indirect, for assistants. In particular, government pressure

to make teachers more accountable for the standards achieved by their pupils encouraged head teachers to increase the employment of classroom assistants to help to raise standards (Atkin and Bastiani 1988). According to DfE (1994) the number of support staff in primary schools rose from 13,641 in 1991 to 21,914 in 1994. Teachers were sometimes prepared to reduce their own numbers to employ more support staff (Warrington 1992; Moyles and Suschitzky 1997) because extra support in the classroom was needed. This led to schools employing assistants as a “cost effective exercise” (Mortimore et al 1994), thereby using classroom assistants as cheap but effective labour.

Assistants have also been referred to as “classroom trade-offs” (Merrick 1994) because there was a danger that they were used instead of employing more teachers. Assistants, through their lack of qualifications/training, or as a consequence of market forces, were paid far less than teachers were and had variable rates of pay (Warrington 1992). In fact, some assistants were paid as little as seven thousand pounds per year for working thirty two hours a week, on a term-time contract (Mortimore et al 1994), whilst their responsibilities were steadily increasing through extra demand required of teachers and pupils. Poorly paid assistants were being exploited³ (Mortimore et al 1994) and lower paid assistants were being encouraged to work beyond the limits of their job descriptions, as some head teachers had unrealistic expectations of them. Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) wrote:

Some schools preferred to gain as many adults hours as possible for the money they had available, and to employ classroom assistants rather than a teacher, since this was less costly for the same number of hours. (Moyles and Suschitzky 1997: 1.14).

³ Those classroom assistants who were expected to take on duties previously carried out by teachers.

Heads may have been using their existing resources in a more effective way, to enhance their teaching, but there was widespread discontent amongst assistants who felt they were overworked and underpaid (Woolf and Bassett 1988).

Assistants have proved, since the advent of LMS, to be cost-effective. Mortimore et al (1994) argued that after LMS there was a general principle which head teachers and governors used to employ and deploy staff, that of “fitness-for-purpose”. This approach establishes whether schools have the right balance and mixture of staff to meet the schools needs. This requires a periodical review of the traditional ways of working and involves an analysis of whether the right people are doing the work to which they are best suited. This means that existing working arrangements are challenged. Staff audits are often used to find where there are gaps in the expertise of the school, what duties can be undertaken by someone else to free a member of the teaching team and suitable staff development is provided.

In fact, as the education system changed after the 1988 ERA, assistants’ profile in schools changed considerably. Assistants were now spending more time in the classroom with children. Mortimore et al (1994) described how one classroom assistant in their study had the responsibility of supporting practical group activities, and five support staff were involved in curriculum planning and curriculum delivery. Through extra pressures from the National Curriculum assistants were being regarded by teachers as an ‘extra pair of hands and eyes’ (McGarvey et al 1996) and a ‘valuable educational resource’ (Clayton 1990). Nursery nurses also found that their tasks were altered accordingly. HMI (1992) stated that under the teacher’s supervision, nursery nurses:

helped plan the work of the class [e.g. craft and sand and water activities], mounted and displayed children's work, maintained contact with parents, and supervised large group of children. . . . They reported children's achievements to the teacher and many helped to keep records of the pupils' progress. (HMI 1992: 7)

Moyles and Suschitzky (1994) claimed that since the National Curriculum nursery nurses had found themselves adopting a teaching role. These assistants were increasingly involved in supporting children with core subjects, especially language development. Moyles and Suschitzky (1994) reflected on this progression in their deployment, and called for the NNEB to revise the NN training, stating:

particularly in relation to the theoretical and practical issues of curriculum content and planning and the assessment and recording of children's learning (p 257)

This addition in their training was deemed to be necessary as their roles in school were seen to be changing because of the implementation of the National Curriculum. On the whole, all these courses prepared the classroom assistant to support the welfare of the child, rather than the children's education. There was a need for a training course to specifically train assistant's awareness of the National Curriculum. This led to the introduction of the Specialist Teacher Initiative (see: chapter 4).

Therefore, throughout the period from 1988 – 1993 classroom assistants had experienced major changes to the nature of their role in school. Three main points had helped this:

- Heads had control over budgets, and therefore, could employ classroom assistants if they so chose.
- The National Curriculum and other legislation, especially SEN, increased the demand for classroom assistants.
- Schools were financed in such a way as to respond to this demand but in doing so, the role of the classroom assistant developed further.

Conclusion

The government's distrust of teachers had been apparent through the influx of educational legislation in the 1980s (the 1980, 1981, 1984, 1986(a), 1986(b) Education Acts, also, the 1983 and 1985 White Papers, as well as the 1988 ERA) and even after the 1988 ERA, more followed (the 1990, 1992 (schools), 1992 (Further and Higher Education), 1993, 1994 Education Acts). Their final move was in the creation of a new ITT course, the BA with QTS in Circular 14/93, published in November 1993. This new legislation was introducing the BA with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). These new criteria had been on the Conservative government's agenda for many years, as they had continually preached about their dissatisfaction with ITT. By 1993 the government had control over how teachers were trained, what teachers were teaching, how children were assessed, inspection of teachers and schools, ITE funding, and school funding. Teachers' professional status had been challenged.

In contrast, classroom assistants from the mid-1970s have become recognised for their efforts in supporting children. Several reports (DES 1978; ILEA 1985; HMI 1992) mentioned the support that assistants provide in the classroom. Unfortunately, classroom assistants' status, responsibilities, and the organisation of their time at the moment do not seem to be well matched. More is being expected of assistants, who have little or no training. A nationally recognised training programme would support assistants and their teachers. Assistants would know what was expected of them and teachers would know what activities their assistant was capable of carrying out. Specific training for classroom assistants would decrease the need for teacher direction, which would be beneficial for those assistants who still remain to be deployed in several classrooms, instead of one. The STA initiative, announced in Circular 14/93, was introduced as a means of raising standards, appearing

sympathetic to teachers' increased workload and providing assistants with some sort of educational training. It was a unique course because it is the only course specifically designed to train classroom assistants [see: chapter 4].

Chapter 4

The Specialist Teacher Assistant (STA) Initiative: Policy Issues.

There is a whole range of adults other than the person with qualified teacher status (QTS) now working with children in classrooms. They include untrained assistants, assistants who have participated in short term courses in child care/education and those assistants who have trained to be an early years assistant, such as nursery nurses. Whilst, assistants' qualifications, job title and pay may differ according to their qualifications, their roles may be similar, depending upon their previous experience with children. There are, however, differing perceptions about the nature of assistance, the variations in the training of assistants or the lack of it, and teacher's expectations of assistants. This has led to considerable confusion over pay and deployment of classroom assistants. Above all, the increasing use of non-qualified assistants in schools has given rise to a need for training for those assistants.

Training for classroom assistants

LEAs in the 1990s started to offer more in-service training courses for assistants in supporting children. Clayton (1990) published the Wiltshire County Council training scheme for special welfare assistants called SAINTS: Special Assistants' In-service Training Scheme. Unlike the two schemes mentioned previously (CACE 1967 and Kennedy and Duthie 1975), this programme only lasted one day. It consisted of:

- Whole group session on special educational needs and the 1981 Education Act, the role of special welfare assistants, and working cop-operatively with teachers.
- Dividing assistants into two groups, and depending on the special needs of their child, attend either a session on medical/physical difficulties or one on behavioural management.

- Educational aspects of special needs were covered, which included: helping with reading, number and written work, encouraging communication, developing self esteem and preparing learning materials and displays.
- A whole group session so that assistants could share experiences and ideas

(Taken from Clayton 1990: 73)

At the end of the training programme assistants claimed that additional courses were needed (Clayton 1990).

Other LEAs, besides Wiltshire (Clayton 1990), soon followed for example, Cambridgeshire (Balshaw 1991) and Leeds (Lorenz 1992) have invested heavily in unqualified support staff. DES (1992) recommended that classroom assistants could support the teacher more effectively with the practical curriculum with better training. Unfortunately, short in-service courses alone could not provide the training assistants needed. Clayton (1990) identified the need to extend training a step further. He proposed that classroom assistants should be taught in teacher training colleges, so that they would feel that they were:

An integral and valuable part of the education system. (Clayton 1990b: 49)

Before the introduction of training courses for classroom assistants some researchers argued that teachers need training themselves to understand how to lead support teams (Atkin and Bastiani 1988; Moyles with Suschitzky 1997). The TTA (1998) recommended that training to equip teachers to work with other adults in the classroom was essential.

Teachers require these organisational skills to manage other adults and themselves, otherwise any assistance in the classroom could be seen as an intrusion, rather than support. Thomas (1992) stated that:

All sorts of trends encouraged schools to welcome extra adults into classrooms, but no one seemed to have given very much thought to the changes which might occur when extra people move into the domain of the teacher. There seems to have been the assumption that these people would effortlessly and seamlessly slide into the classroom to work alongside the class teacher; that simply to provide "help" for the teacher would automatically be a Good Thing. Unfortunately, it isn't; often it can be a burden rather than a help. (Thomas 1992: xi)

Campbell and Neill (1990) identified evidence of support being a burden or no help in their study. They studied a national sample of teachers and their use of time during KS 1. They concluded that seventy percent of teachers saw lack of time as the main problem in implementing the National Curriculum. They spent 44 percent of their time teaching, as compared with 56 percent on non-teaching tasks (Campbell and Neill 1990), but the majority of teachers (67 out of 95) received additional support from an assistant (a minority (28) received no additional support at all). This support had not made an impact on their workload because 43 teachers only had an assistant for 1 to 5 hours per week, sharing the assistants' support time with other teachers, opposed to two that had an assistant for 16+ hours a week. Therefore, teachers who received none, or limited additional support from an assistant did not perceive their workload had been reduced. Consequently, if an assistant's allocated time with a teacher was sporadic then this made the organisation and management of support difficult. Planning for an assistant, with no qualifications in childcare, could have added to their workload, since teachers would have had to organise work for the assistant, direct the assistant on how to teach the activity, as well as organise the rest of the children. Time to speak to the assistant about the activities would be snatched, rather than planned (Moyles and Suschitzky 1997) because the assistant would be required elsewhere in the school. In order to meet this need, a national initiative was

required. In 1993 just such an initiative was launched by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA).

Training Specialist Teacher Assistants

In March 1994, four months after Circular 14/93, the DfEE sent out letters to FE/HE institutions inviting them to bid for courses designed to train classroom assistants. This letter contained the criteria for the courses. The course was to be known as the Specialist Teacher Assistant (STA) Scheme. Institutions interested in bidding for the STA courses had to submit their proposal by 3rd May, five weeks after the invitations to bid had been sent out. The government wanted STA courses to start in September 1994, or at the latest January 1995.

Course providers fulfilled the requirements of the STA course by designing a course using the STA competences set by the DfEE/TTA (1994). These competences provoked two concerns amongst teaching unions. One teacher's union, ATL, was opposed to this type of assessment because:

what is meant by competences is by no means widely understood or agreed . . . We remain unconvinced that there is sufficient understanding of, or expertise in, the use of competences or teacher profiles as a basis for professional development. (ATL 1995, consultative letter to the STA courses providers)

The ATL believed that:

. . .the [use] of competences seems dangerously simplistic and confused. (ATL 1995, consultative letter to the STA courses providers)

They claimed that teachers work in the classroom could not be defined in a list of competences; certain skills and attributes were needed which could not be measured. The same, therefore, the ATL argued, can be said of the work classroom assistant's carry out in the classroom [see: chapter 8].

Furthermore, the DfEE with the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) had written the 25 STA competences. These competences [see: appendix 2], were very similar to ITT competences [see: appendix 3], which is not surprising since both sets of competences were written by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). Consequently, teachers perceived that STAs were being assessed by using the same criteria as those applied to initial teacher training:

The role proposed for Specialist Teacher Assistants resembles too closely that of a teacher, but based on a narrow set of teacher competences, rather than that of a classroom assistant. (NUT, consultative letter to all FE/HE institutions on the STA courses, 1994)

Evidence to support this statement was found in the STA and ITT competences; both sets of competences were listed under similar sections [see: chapter 7], also the subsidiary competences were similar, for example:

8. b. 4 present learning tasks and curriculum content in a clear and stimulating manner (STA competence taken from DfEE letter 1994)

2. 6. 4 present learning tasks and curriculum content in a clear and stimulating manner (ITT competence taken from Circular 14/93)

Key questions about the introduction of STAs, and the nature of their role in schools began to emerge. The NUT (1994) perceived the STA initiative was:

very similar to the original proposed and universally rejected one year scheme for training nursery and Key Stage 1 teachers . . . [and could] undermine the role of the qualified teacher. (NUT, consultation letter to all HE/FE institutions, 1994)

The NUT (1994), in support of more training for assistants, but not the STA course, sent an outline of a model for training classroom assistants to the government. The criteria included various topics to which classroom assistants should be introduced:

- Child development
- Supervision of groups

- Working alongside a professionally qualified teacher and nursery nurse where appropriate
- Liaising with parents
- Coping with classroom administration associated with dinner money
- Technical skills associated with the preparation of classroom materials
- General care, first aid, health and hygiene of young children
- The display of children's work
- Issues concerning confidentiality
- Supporting teachers in the development of literacy skills associated with choosing books and reading and telling stories to groups of children.

(Adapted from NUT 1994)

This model largely covered the work expected of current classroom assistants. For those adults interested in a career as a classroom assistant, the NUT model would be useful. However, for those assistants who have some qualifications in child-care and received on-the-job training from their class teacher, this model may not be useful because the NUT model seems to indicate that nursery nurses are already fully qualified. Therefore, the NUT training scheme for assistants could be an intermediate training course before nursery nursing. The model was rejected [reasons unknown] by the government.

Another teaching union, The ATL (1995) received information about the STA initiative when plans had already been set in motion, and it was too late to send any constructive comments. Consultation between teachers and the government were limited; professional expertise was not considered. The ATL (1995) stated:

We regret that it is felt necessary to proceed with such haste with a project that could have great long term benefits for the education service, but which is intrinsically complex and which will be endangered by any lack of careful planning . . . Fuller and extensive consultation with the

teaching profession, henceforth, is essential. (ATL, consultation letter to all STA course providers, 1995)

The government ignored this response and the STA initiative went ahead as planned.

Many FEI/HEIs did not bid for the STA scheme, as a response to the government's disinterest in the teaching unions' views. Those that did submit a bid for the STA course may have had mixed motives. For example, Lancashire County Council (LCC) was seeking to continue its existing practice because it had promoted training for classroom assistants for many years. All assistants recruited through LCC are provided with a six-week induction course. This helps both the employer and employee. Others may have been encouraged to bid for STA courses because the government had provided two million pounds to set up pilot STA courses. By this time FE/HE institutions, like schools, were managing their own budgets. Since *The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act* financial control of FE/HE had been given to the Further Education and Higher Education Funding Councils. This council funded institutions on the number of students attending their campus. Low numbers on roll, irrespective of the size of the campus, meant limited financial resources. This created problems for institutions.

The DfEE, themselves, were also concerned with financial arrangements, especially course costs. Some institutions bid for more money than others. These institutions may have provided more opportunities for candidates (e.g. specific resources may have been needed to teach STAs). They may have over budgeted on the assumption that they would be given less than the sum for which they had bid. It is therefore not surprising that the DfEE considered those institutions, which responded to the DfEE STA course criteria and cost of training was appropriate. HEIs were motivated at

least in part, by financial gains, and the DfEE were motivated by the need to ensure that selected institutions used DfEE STA criteria. In the pilot year 24 institutions were chosen to train STAs. The DfEE reported that a number of bids were received from FE/HE institutions, independent associations, schools and LEAs, but most STA course providers were from HEI institutions.

It could be argued that this was a calculated move on the DfEE as the HEIs chosen were already teacher training institutions and, therefore, would be the best institutions to train STAs if the courses were:

A range of high quality and cost effective routes into primary teaching. (Circular 14/93, para. 4c)

It was interesting that these institutions were used to deliver the STA courses, as most lecturers in teacher training institutions who worked on STA courses were normally involved in initial teacher training (from National Level 1 - 3). In fact, at a later date, one of the STA course providers, STA course provider LE, taught STAs alongside first year student teachers in some subjects. By this time scepticism was mounting about the nature of STA courses and the role STAs were to fulfil in schools. The ATL (1995) and the NUT (1994) were urging its members not to participate in the initiative. The NUT (1994), in particular, claimed that the criteria for STA courses were like a *diluted teacher training course*. This, undoubtedly, must have had an affect on head teachers' and teachers' perceptions of the STA scheme.

The TTA also wanted STA courses to be used as an alternative route into teacher training. The STA training was to be used as accreditation of prior learning (APL) for those students who wished to pursue a B.Ed qualification (Circular 14/93). This indicated that the course qualification could be used instead of the statutory two A

levels for entry requirement onto a B.Ed. This could reduce the quality of candidates entering the teaching profession, especially since some STA course providers recruited candidates without the entry requirements (Ofsted 1996) because of lack of time in recruiting. Further concerns were expressed over the name of the course. The use of the word *specialist* in STA scheme raised concerns. It may have been perceived STAs would be a specialist in what s/he would be trained in, which was teaching basic skills in mathematics and English, even if this was not justified by the evidence related to their training.

In the academic year 1995/6 the government realised that the concerns mentioned previously would have an adverse affect on the STA initiative. They responded to this by criticising STA course providers for the inadequacies of the pilot year (Ofsted 1996) and changed the funding allocation. From 1996/97 the government removed funding allocation for the STA courses from the FE/HE institutions to Grants for Education, Support and Training (GEST). Now schools were given the money to buy their STA training. This would reduce expenditure on STA courses even further (schools managed their budgets and would opt for the cheapest course) and would encourage competition between STA course providers (so schools would be encouraged to purchase the STA course).

Responding on the STA initiative

The STA initiative from its onset generated interest among researchers, although the number of projects that emerged was very small. They varied in length and focus. Some were only concerned with the first year of the initiative or with a limited aspect

of it, whilst others ranged more widely, one was a national evaluation of the whole project. They were:

- Recording Competence (Twistleton and Edwards 1995)
- The National Evaluation (Ofsted 1996)
- Classroom Assistants and Teachers (Moyle and Suschitzky 1997)
- The Impact of Training STAs (Loxley, Swann and Bhatti 1997)
- Roles and Responsibilities of Classroom Assistants (Lee and Mawson 1998)

Recording Competence (Twistleton and Edwards 1995)

The researchers, Twistleton and Edwards (1995) were based at St. Martins College, University of Lancaster. Their research investigated the use of the STA competency record, using interviews and document analysis. This included both large and small samples, for instance, interviewing a small sample of 8 class teachers, 8 STAs and tutors and analysing the STA records for all STAs at a local college. These data collection methods used were valid for the research project and its audience. This research identified:

- The tutors' dissatisfaction – *There was some dissatisfaction from tutors about the training that they had received in preparation for using the record (1995: 9). Also, tutors did not feel able to voice their worries about being able to assess the competences (1995:10)*
- STA competency model – *The majority of completed STA records represented a check-list of what had been covered . . . some students had achieved more than this (1995: 12)*
- Areas for the Record Development Group of St. Martins College to modify the STA record. It also led to another research project on mentorship for the STA course.

The focus of the research was on how to use the STA competences and their assessment. It did not, however, consider the deployment of STAs once they returned to school or their relationships with teachers.

The National Evaluation (Ofsted 1996 and 1997)

Ofsted (1996) evaluated the STA initiative on behalf of the DfEE. The DfEE and Ofsted were interested in the STA initiative because 2 million pounds had been spent on implementing it. An evaluation of the initiative was needed to provide ministers with an overview of the success of the courses. The DfEE carried out the initial evaluation of the STA initiative by sending surveys out to all STA course providers, who in turn sent the surveys to the participating schools. Each head teacher, STA and the STA's class teacher was required to fill the survey in which comprised of multiple choice questions. This was a national sample using all the STAs and their schools in the pilot year of the STA course. All forms were confidential to DfEE staff and results were not published. Officials from Ofsted completed a follow-up exercise, which was an overall evaluation of their inspection of courses and included tutors, teachers and students comments. The main details covered were centred on the course. This led to a further evaluation on 'A guide to good practice' (Ofsted: 1997), their second publication on the STA initiative, which provided brief details of successful practices in: recruitment of students; STA training; deployment in school and assessing and reporting on students' competence.

Initially, the DfEE methodology was flawed. The use of multiple choice questions restricts respondents' answers. Respondents were unable to provide any detailed responses because their answers had to fit into a category. Ofsted evaluated the results of the questionnaires and then visited 91 schools, which employed STAs (Ofsted 1996). Observational and interviewing methods were used to collect data from STAs, and interviews were conducted with head teachers and STA's class teachers. These methods provided data to enhance the DfEE findings. Unfortunately,

Ofsted only published positive comments in the report (Ofsted 1996) about the STA initiative and gave the impression that the initiative was successful:

In general, the courses were well planned so that the taught sessions, private study and work in schools complement one another. (Ofsted 1997: 3)

This may have occurred because Ofsted, was a government agency and the STA was a government initiative, also respondents' perceptions of the work of Ofsted could have influenced their responses. Schools may have viewed Ofsted visits very seriously because of the influence and power of this agency. This undoubtedly had an affect on the respondent's answers to questions, as all responses published in the articles were positive, for example:

I have a much greater understanding of how children learn and how the class teacher plans and prepares for the children (Ofsted 1996: 7, student response)

Another response was:

My classroom assistant has gained self-esteem. She understands my role as a class teacher and is able to support my teaching of the basic skills (Ofsted 1996: 7, teacher response)

However, data from STA course providers was collected differently. They were not observed or interviewed; they were inspected. Lecturers, who taught STA modules, had lessons inspected for quality and content. Contact with schools was also examined on the assumption that:

Effective training depends on a constructive partnership between the providers and the schools (Ofsted 1997:3)

Ofsted believed that the STA course would only work if both school and provider worked in partnership. The last Ofsted (1997) publication is a clear indication of this. The document offered STA course providers advice on features associated with good practice on specific areas such as: recruitment, mentors and their training, deployment in schools, and assessing and reporting the students' competence.

Unfortunately, it was not a detailed account, no contact for further explanation was provided and it was only disseminating other STA course providers' ideas, not providing a nationally agreed structure for STA courses, which was needed. More importantly, it did not consider the deployment of STAs once they had gained their STA qualification or their relationships with teachers.

Classroom Assistants and Teachers (Moyles and Suschitzky 1997)

The ATL commissioned two researchers Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) to investigate the working roles and relationships of KS 1 teachers and classroom assistants, including STAs. The research methods used were questionnaires and interviews, similar to Ofsted (1996). This was to establish validity and strengthen reliability according to its authors (Moyles and Suschitzky 1997). They sent out questionnaires. Their data collection spanned over six LEAs. Their research incorporated those schools that had classroom assistants as well as STAs, so their research ranged further than the Ofsted (1996) evaluations.

Questionnaires were sent to classroom assistants and their class teachers. Head teachers were omitted from this data collection because they wanted to examine existing working roles and relationships of KS 1 teachers and classroom assistants (Moyles and Suschitzky 1997). The questionnaires contained multiple choice questions of which teachers and classroom assistants were given the same questionnaire. Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) gave teachers and classroom assistants the same questionnaire because they believed they were doing similar tasks through pressures of the National Curriculum and LMS restrictions. Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) later criticised this data collection method because they claimed those answers

from teachers and classroom assistants were similar. They believed that respondents had discussed their questionnaire with each other (Moyles and Suschitzky 1997).

Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) also interviewed 15 head teachers, class teachers and STAs. They used semi-structured open-ended questions. Again, teachers and classroom assistant questions were identical, but this time the researchers themselves could ascertain to what extent they were completing similar tasks and roles with the use of more detailed answers. They observed the 15 STAs using an observation schedule to validate their data. This highlighted the interactions between adult and child, which represented the levels of quality in children's learning. The researchers believed this method helped them to reveal the different roles between teachers and classroom assistants. Unfortunately, Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) only asked classroom assistants and teachers about the activities they had carried out that day, not their regular tasks and responsibilities throughout the week. This may have represented an inaccurate description of assistants' roles. Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) research, in this instance, may be unreliable. It is also possible that there was an element of bias in the project because:

- Two experienced researchers, whose previous work had classed assistants and teachers as being similar, conducted this research.
- The ATL, who commissioned the research, was one of the teaching unions who were sceptical of the STA initiative at the beginning.
- The findings of this report were completed during the pilot year of the STA initiative when concerns regarding the STA initiative were high.

Despite this, Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) provided some interesting conclusions such as:

- The issue of pay structure and job description for STAs was becoming challenging to head teachers. They were neither NNEB nursery nurses (top scale of classroom assistants), nor a general assistant (start of the scale). A new category had to be formed. (p.70)
- There is evidence that classroom assistants are, in a sense, trying to be like teachers, particularly STAs, and take over 'teaching roles' of which they have only minimal knowledge acquired through day-to-day interactions with teachers (p.39)

It did not, however, discuss STAs' relationships with teachers once they returned to school or analyse the extent in which STAs were carrying out teaching tasks, for example, Were STAs 'teaching' or 'being used as a teacher?'

The Impact of Training STAs (Loxley, Swann and Bhatti 1997).

Loxley, Swann and Bhatti (1997) were commissioned by the Open University (OU) to evaluate the impact of the OU STA training on classroom assistants. They used two research methods, survey and interviews, like the other researchers before them. They sent a detailed questionnaire to all qualified OU STAs, their head teachers, and mentors. This amounted to over 600 people, but less than half were returned. The OU researchers then interviewed 14 STAs, using semi-structured questions. They also conducted informal observations of the STA working environment and deployment. These observations were not structured; aspects were recorded based on how important the researcher considered them. Ten mentors and ten head teachers were also interviewed.

Loxley, Swann and Bhatti (1997) were only concerned about the impact of training on STAs, the role and work of STAs and the impact of the STA training, therefore only data from STAs was discussed in detail. They found that after gaining the STA qualification there were two factors influencing STA deployment, that of integration

and autonomy. Integration was the term used to describe those STAs who found that teachers supported progression in STA tasks. Autonomy described those STAs who were allowed to exert control over their work. Loxley, Swann and Bhatti (1997) claimed that the constraints of the STA training were the fault of the school system. For example, lack of understanding of the STA training, management of STAs, terms and conditions of employment and STA recognition. Teacher's underdeveloped use of STAs was criticised. Loxley, Swann and Bhatti (1997) believed that most schools in their research had developed their STAs tasks further, than that envisaged of the OU STA training. This analysis was misleading. The response rate for this research was less than 50%; analysis of the other STAs had not taken place. It did not, however, consider the misuse of STAs once they returned to schools, such as 'being used as a teacher'. Instead they criticised the underdeveloped use of STAs by teachers. There were no boundaries between being a teacher and being a STA.

Roles and Responsibilities (Lee and Mawson 1998)

UNISON, on behalf of the main union for support staff in schools commissioned Lee and Mawson (1998) to investigate whether classroom assistants were being asked to undertake an increased role without proper training. This research included STAs, as well as other types of classroom assistants. There were three aims to the research:

- The conditions of employment experienced by classroom assistants
- The training and staff development opportunities provided to classroom assistants and the level of their participation in such activities
- The level of job satisfaction experienced by classroom assistants.

(Adapted from Lee and Mawson 1998: 1)

The research was conducted using a questionnaire survey, which consisted of two forms that were sent randomly to head teachers. The questionnaires were for the

head teacher and classroom assistants. Of the 1,284 surveys that were distributed to head teachers, 549 were returned. As noted with reference to Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) study, two questionnaires sent to the same school for two different respondents meant that respondents could share answers.

The conclusion based on the survey was that the role of classroom assistants had changed and was likely to continue to change. Head teachers in the study claimed that 'time should be provided for them [assistants] to plan work' (Lee and Mawson 1998: 42) and classroom assistants claimed that 'classroom assistants should be more involved with lesson planning' (Lee and Mason 1998: 45). Taking this into account, Lee and Mawson (1998) concluded:

It is clear that classroom assistants need to be more involved in school and lesson planning process and to play a full part working with children to raise standards (Lee and Mawson 1998: 46)

According to their study, STAs were not carrying out any planning or teaching, although there was a clear indication that classroom assistants and head teachers wanted support staff to have more involvement in planning. The results indicated that teachers needed training and support in how to make sure they use assistants' skills effectively. Lack of opportunities for classroom assistants were blamed on class teachers. It did not, however, ask professionals to respond in the survey, so teachers' reasons for not providing assistants with more opportunities could not be analysed. It seemed an easy option to blame a group, which did not participate in the study.

Conclusion

The introduction of the STA scheme in schools can be construed as just another national initiative used to control educational expenditure, and encourage adults in

schools. The STA initiative was a cost-effective method of using existing resources, but it made some schools aware that assistants could be used in raising standards in education (Lee and Mawson 1998). The development of assistants over the last decade has changed dramatically. They are seen as teaching children, rather than supporting the teacher. The uniqueness of the STA course¹ and the controversy² that surrounded the introduction of STA training for classroom assistants has generated an interest at LJMU about the nature of STAs; especially since the TTA (1998) allocated 20 million pounds to recruit more assistants in April 1999, with a further 20,000 assistants to be recruited by 2002. LJMU was not the only institution that was interested in the impact of introducing STAs into schools. The Open University, ATL, Ofsted, St. Martins College, University of Lancaster and UNISON were all institutions that were prepared to examine the results of this initiative. Each institution had its own area of interest, such as:

- Twistleton and Edwards (1995) – were examining the development of STA record and the use of competences
- Ofsted (1996 and 1997) - were evaluating the course content and structure.
- Moyles and Suchitzky (1997) - were comparing roles between classroom assistants and teachers
- Loxley, Swann and Bhatti (1997)- were interested in evaluating the impact of their STA course through the STAs opinions.
- And Lee and Mawson (1998) – were examining the increasing roles of classroom assistants in classrooms in the 1990s.

¹ The STA training course was the first nationally developed training course for classroom assistants.

² For example, the 'mums' army' proposal, and teaching unions' (NUT 1994 and ATL 1994) fears that STAs could be employed in substitution for qualified teachers.

The LJMU STA research project had a broader focus than the projects discussed. It examined changes in roles, relationships with teachers and the challenges teachers faced with the new form of classroom assistants.

Chapter 5

Research Design: Methods.

The previous chapter indicated the limited nature of existing research on the STA initiative. It also argued that some clear themes emerged from the limited research; for example, teachers did not welcome the STA initiative because the STA role closely resembled that of a qualified teacher. It was, therefore, an initiative, which could seem to be undermining the teaching profession. To add to this controversy, the STA initiative was caught up in problems much wider than its own policy and practice. Indeed, the initiative was introduced in a time when politicians dismissed the views of those professionals working in education insisting they were out-of-touch with the modern world (Bassey 1995). Therefore, it is not surprising that Bassey (1995) claimed:

Education in Britain since 1988 has become a political battlefield

(Bassey 1995: 22).

This led to a breakdown in relations between the government and those involved in the education system, in particular, teachers believed that the new educational policies deprofessionalised them (Ozga 1988; Lawn 1996; Helsby 1999). New initiatives, like that of the STA, were introduced, but were not welcomed by all in the education system. This would have a significant affect on how the initiative was received and supported.

In order to explore some of these issues a four-year research project was set up in the

School of Education and Community Studies at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). This project intended to:

Show something that was not known before. However small, however modest the hoped claim to knowledge is, provided it is carried out systematically, critically and self-critically, the search for knowledge is research (Bassey 1990: 35)

In an attempt to show this, the researcher adopted Bassey's (1990) set of rules for research as it indicated specific areas to develop:

- Research must be conducted for some clearly defined purpose. It should not be a random amassing of data but must entail a planned attempt to arrive at answers to specific questions, problems or hypotheses. *(Aims and objectives, see: introduction)*
- Data should be collected and recorded systematically, so that, if necessary, it can be checked by others. *(interview schedules, see: chapter 6)*
- There should be a clear rationale or theory informing the way the data is analysed. *(see: chapter 7 and 8)*

(Adapted from Bassey 1990: 35)

The researcher used these rules as a guideline for the STA research. In doing this, the researcher considered these rules as a process in which there were many stages.

Research Paradigms

In attempting to collect data related to the objectives (see: introduction) an approach needed to be established that was located within a distinctive research paradigm.

According to Bassey (1995):

A research paradigm is a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the functions of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions (Bassey 1995: 12)

The main paradigms in educational research are positivist and interpretative. McCracken (1988) claims that there are various differences between the two paradigms, such as the number and kinds of sample of respondents. In particular, qualitative research sampling in order to access categories and assumptions of which individuals view the world, whereas quantitative expects a large sample to generalise. The dominant paradigm for much of the Twentieth Century has been positivism, based on the scientific method (Anderson and Arsenault 1998; Oppenheim 1966; Cohen and Manion 1996). This approach uses data collection tools, such as, questionnaires, surveys and IQ tests. Bassey (1995) claims:

To the positivist the entire world is rationale, it should make sense and given sufficient time and effort, it should be possible for it to be understood through patient research (Bassey 1995: 12)

Usually large numbers of respondents are used to contribute to the research, with a desire of at least 60% to respond. This can amount to a mass of data, which is conveniently collected using statistical evidence. The approach is quantitative, emphasising measurement of behaviour.

These methods do not require face-to-face contact. Questionnaires and surveys are sent out to respondents to answer in their own time and return to the researcher when they are completed. The difficulties of locating the STA research project within this paradigm are that:

- *Some of the most important things in human behaviour are things that cannot be directly observed, such as intentions and feelings (Cohen and Manion 1996). The STA initiative generated strong feelings within the primary school context, but these feelings were not displayed in any working relationship or any interaction with children.*
- *Quantitative does not explain the outcome (Anderson and Arsenault 1998). It seemed to be of little help to teachers and STAs to identify 'what they already knew about the STA training'. Of*

greater assistance to both teachers and STAs would be to identify 'why it has happened and the way forward'.

The alternative paradigm is interpretative, the chosen paradigm for this research. This paradigm accepts values and perspectives as important considerations in the search for knowledge (Marshall and Rossman 1999; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Cohen and Manion 1996). It relies on the researcher rather than measurement instruments as the major means of gathering data. Bassey (1995) claimed that:

To the interpretative researcher the purpose of research is to describe and interpret the phenomena of the world in attempts to get shared meanings with others. Interpretation is a search for deep perspectives on particular events and for theoretical insights. (Bassey 1995: 14)

It emphasises qualitative, rather than quantitative measurement, as it is assumed that the data and its interpretation does not exist independently of what is being studied.

The data collection methods used are fieldwork notes, diaries, observation and interviews, which require the researcher to have contact with the respondents.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) argued that qualitative research:

- Delves in depth into complexities and processes.
- Explores little-known phenomena or innovative systems.
- Seeks to explore where and why policy and local knowledge and practice are at odds.
- Examines informal and unstructured linkages and processes in organisations.
- Focuses on real, as opposed to stated, organisational goals.
- Cannot be done experimentally for practical or ethical reasons
- Considers topics for which relevant variables have yet to be identified.

(Adapted from Marshall and Rossman 1999: 57)

This approach seeks to identify an understanding of the way in which individuals inhabit and perceive the world. The subject's interpretation of situations enables the

researcher to come up with an understanding of what those persons were doing. Cohen and Manion (1996) state that theory is emergent and must arise from particular situations; it should be grounded on data generated by the research act. Theory should not precede research but follow it. Glaser and Strauss (1967: 30) argue that a researcher should develop a theory that accounts for much of the relevant behaviour. Therefore, having derived a hypothesis or theory this is then retested against data. Theory becomes a set of meanings to provide an insight of people's behaviour. This could be used in the STA research, as it was relevant to understand why there may be differing perceptions of the STA initiative from STAs, head teachers and teachers. However, by asking questions or observing, the researcher may change the situation, which they are studying. It is, therefore, important that guidelines are set at the beginning of the research to help identify areas of development. Robson (1993) provides these guidelines:

- 1) Analysis of some form should start as soon as data is collected. Do not allow data to accumulate without preliminary analysis.
- 2) Make sure you keep tabs on what you have collected.
- 3) Generate themes, categories, and codes, as you go along. Start by including rather than excluding; you can combine and modify as you go along.
- 4) Dealing with the data should not be a routine or mechanical task; think, reflect! Use analytical notes to help to get from the data to a conceptual level.
- 5) Use some form of filing system to sort the data. Be prepared to re-sort. Play with the data.
- 6) There is no 'right' way of analysing this kind of data – which places even more emphasis on you being systematic, organised and persevering.
- 7) You are seeking to take apart your data in various ways and then trying to put them together again to form some consolidated picture. Your main tool is comparison.

The interpretative paradigm was used in the STA research because it fulfilled certain requirements, such as it:

- Provided a means of understanding the impact of STAs in primary schools.
- Explained the outcomes (e.g. consequences and successes) of the introduction of STAs in schools.
- Selected data collection methods, which are reliable (e.g. another researcher could repeat the procedure and produce similar results) and valid (tells us whether an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure or describe (Bell 1993: 65).

The data collection methods used for qualitative research would be valid for the aims and objectives of the STA research [see: introduction]. The focus of the research had an emphasis on detail and quality, rather than a mass number of people who respond in a particular way (Powney and Watts 1987). The qualitative approach seeks to explore the impact of a new initiative and to try to unfold and develop issues surrounding it. This would attempt to answer the STA research questions, and therefore, was a reliable paradigm for the STA research.

Reliability and validity

Oppenheim (1966:144) refers to reliability as the purity and consistency of a measure, to repeatability. Qualitative research relies heavily on peoples' opinions and values therefore, reliability in this paradigm can be problematic as the world and peoples' values are constantly changing. However, the researcher attempted to make the research project replicable by constructing a structured interview schedule (SIS) where all questions were read from the schedule to the respondents, if probes were used to ascertain further information it was recorded on the SIS. Furthermore, Oppenheim's (1966) recommendation to keep all field notes, SIS and documents as records for re-analysis by another researcher, if necessary, was carried out. Marshall

and Rossman (1999:193) also suggest there is a need to refer to the original theoretical framework to show how data collection is guided by concepts. Therefore, the aims and objectives of the STA research were addressed in all data collection methods. Questions regarding STA's role in school were asked of each respondent, so a clearly defined role could be sought.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) state that validity should closely reflect the world being described, in particular, the researcher needs to reduce bias. To ensure this, the researcher attempted to eliminate bias through various strategies, such as, re-reading quotes to respondents to ensure understanding, cross checking responses with other respondents or asking them the same question but reworded (Oppenheim 1966). Moreover, six to twelve months after the initial interview the researcher visited the respondents again for a re-interview, which Moser and Kalton (1985) recommended to strengthen validity. Finally, at least two or more methods of data collection were used; interviews, observation (pilot study only) and collection of documentary evidence (e.g. STA timetable, school policy documents, job descriptions etc); to measure the aims and objectives and to validate the research.

Triangulation

Kane (1985) argues that to strengthen the validity of the research one could use multiple techniques to examine the same data through different strategies, this is known as triangulation. Cohen and Manion (1996) states that triangulation is used in interpretative research to find out if by using different methods or respondents the outcomes will correspond to the same phenomena. Denzin (1970) proposed four methods of triangulation, which are:

- Data triangulation, where the same methods are used to assess different situations.
- Theoretical triangulation, where different theoretical perspectives are used to examine the same phenomena.
- Methodological triangulation, where there are two types; the first is collecting data by means of multiple methods of data collection (interviews, questionnaires, observation or document analysis); the second is collecting data from different categories of respondents (head teachers and class teachers)
- Multiple triangulation, where there is a combination of multiple observations, theoretical perspectives, sources of data and methodologies

This research uses methodological triangulation in that it uses a combination of interviews and documents analysis (and observation in the pilot study) and uses three different sets of respondents, such as the STAs, head teachers and class teachers. Adelman et al (1980) stresses the advantages of gathering information from multiple respondents by pointing to the multiple perspectives present in a social situation. Furthermore, due to the controversy surrounding the STA research the researcher needed to understand the viewpoints of all those closely involved with the STA initiative to analyse the development of it.

Data Collection Methods: Justification and discussions.

In the preliminary stages of the research questionnaires were considered as a means of collecting information quickly [see: pages 109 – 113]. Questionnaires provided information for the pre-pilot study [see: chapter 6]. However, the suggested data collection methods for qualitative research are interviews, documentary evidence and observation (Strauss and Corbin 1990, Bell 1993, Cohen and Manion 1996). These three data collection methods were used in the pilot study, although only the first two continued to be used in the main study [see: pages 96 – 107, for further explanation].

Therefore, there were three phases to the STA research project – the pre-pilot, the pilot and the main study and four data collection methods were used. The justification of the methods chosen, starting with the main data collection method, then the other three methods in priority order are:

- Interviewing. *Interviewing was the main source of data collection.*
- Document review and analysis. *Documentary evidence would provide written evidence to validate aspects of the previous method.*
- Observation. *Observation would help to analyse the working environment of the STAs and the tasks they did.*
- Questionnaires. *Questionnaires would be used to collect additional information prior to the pilot study.*

These data collection methods have both weaknesses and strengths.

The use of interviewing

Interviewing was the main method of data collection. This helped the researcher to *identify people's attitudes towards specific items* (Powney and Watts, 1987:13). It gave respondents a chance to express their feelings about the STA initiative. It also enabled the researcher and the subjects of the research to explore the nature of STAs. Misunderstandings could be checked immediately (Allison et al 1996). Researchers have argued against this data collection method. Cohen and Manion (1996) claim that using interviews as a research tool may be invalid because respondents could provide a misleading picture of the situation, unless:

(one can) compare the interview measure with another measure that has already been shown to be valid (Cohen and Mannion 1996: 281).

This is a vital point, and Gerwitz (1997) in her study of teachers' work, agrees with this statement saying:

The main potential difficulty is that the interview data consists of teachers' perceptions of change. It may be argued that the perceptions elicited are coloured by the particular activities in which the teacher is engaged at the time of interview. (Gerwitz 1997: 223)

Consequently, using people's views as the main source in any research had its potential difficulties. To combat this problem, and to make the responses reliable and valid, four strategies were used in the STA research project:

- Two visits were made to the school. Gerwitz (1997) comments on respondents' perceptions were needed. To try to eliminate bias perceptions a second visit was used.
- Three interview schedules were conducted in each school, one each with the STA, her head teacher and class teacher, so a multiple of perceptions were received. This was not a random selection. Head teachers were chosen because they had overall control over the STA's deployment. The STA's class teachers were chosen because they work closely with the STA and can report on her progression. The STAs were chosen because they were the most closely concerned with the training and deployment.
- These respondents were all interviewed individually and on the same day. This reduced the time period, in which they could discuss the interview with one another.
- Some questions in the interview schedules were the same or similar for all respondents. They were merely used to eliminate bias and to cross check answers.

Individual interviews between researcher and respondent were used. Powney and Watts (1987) claimed that individual interviews were:

- Easier to manage; an appointment system was set up for each respondent
- More confidential, only the researcher and interviewee were present
- Able to allow respondents to express their views
- More straightforward in that only one person's set of responses are gathered at any one time.

By using group interviews, instead of individual interviews, it could have affected the data collected. It could have generated inaccurate responses, in particular; employees may not have felt comfortable expressing their views in front of their employers.

Accessibility to interview all three respondents could have caused problems with teaching coverage. Confidentiality would also have been in conflict in that three people from the school would have shared their views. Similarly, the sharing of three views would have meant analysis would have proved difficult. This could have resulted in a loss of data, therefore, group interviews were not considered.

There are two dominant types of individual interviews according to Allison et al (1996) – formal and informal. The formal interview has a set of carefully planned questions, of which the answers are recorded on a standardised schedule. These questions tend to be closed and directed. The informal interview provides the interviewer the freedom to modify the sequence of questions, change the wording and to limit probe or extend the respondents questions. These questions tend to be open and less directed. Both these methods had their advantages. The main ones being that:

- Formal interview focused the interview and required the respondent to answer specific questions.
- Less formal interviews allowed respondent to speak freely about issues affecting the focus of the research.

They also had disadvantages, such as:

- Formal interviews restricted the respondent from telling the researcher what they want; this could limit data.
- Less formal interviews could easily side track the interviewee and interviewer, as it is not focused in a specific direction.

The STA research used a combination of both methods. The questions for each respondent were carefully planned into a schedule. It contained closed questions like the formal interview, and open questions like the less formal interview. The

interviews were structured, formal and directed, yet probes and open questions regarding specific issues were included (see appendix 7 and 10). There were few closed questions, for example, *How many classroom assistants do you employ?* Most were structured with probes, words such as *How* or *why* used at the beginning, so respondents could provide more detail.

A standardised format, where questions were pre-planned into a schedule, was thought to be more valid and reliable. Anderson and Arsenault (1998) agree with this point. Brenner (1985) claims that the use of the questionnaire for the purpose of the qualitative interview is a requirement. McCracken (1988) also believes that questionnaires are indispensable for interviewing. They believe that interviewing for research purposes must follow a plan related to the objectives to be achieved in the data collection. The interview should be planned in great detail and questions written the form of a checklist to create an interview protocol or schedule. In the STA research the interview schedule was known as a structured interview schedule (or SIS). Structured questions, with probes, were used because both closed and open questions had their disadvantages. These were:

- Closed questions were specific and restricted the options available for the respondent (Powney and Watts 1987; Bell 1993; Anderson and Arsenault 1998). They do not let the interviewer know how much information the respondent really has about the question and in some cases the respondent may not like the available options and cannot easily respond.
- Open questions ask for broad or general information (Powney and Watts 1987; Bell 1993; Anderson and Arsenault 1998). They consume a lot of time and make it difficult to control the interview; placing stress on the interviewer's skills.

The advantages of these methods are that closed questions are easy to record and classify, whereas open questions reveal the depths of the respondent's knowledge and makes it possible to evaluate the degree of emphasis to put on their response. Both

types of questions, therefore, can elicit different types of data. A combination of both types of questions can provide a balanced, smooth flowing, yet controlled interview (Anderson and Arsenault 1998).

The wording of these questions was equally as important. This was relevant to open and closed questions. In particular, misleading questions needed to be avoided, such as:

- Questions that are double-barrelled, for example, *How would you plan and prepare for a lesson?* combine two separate questions together. Most respondents would only answer one of the questions.
- Leading questions, for example, beginning the question with a statement and asking for their view, need to be viewed with caution. These presume an answer and tend to lead the respondent in a given direction.
- Presuming questions, for example, *does your employer make adequate provision for training?* Indicates that training is necessary, but it may not be, and could provoke strong reactions.

All these questions were avoided. It could affect how respondents answer questions and it could affect the data collected (Oppenheim 1966, Kane 1985, Mann 1985).

Questions needed to be focused, yet allow for the respondent to speak freely and not feel obliged to give a certain view, for example, *What are your views on the STA initiative? What does your STA do?* (see: appendix 7, 10 and 11 for interview schedule). Furthermore, Singh-Raud's (1997) perspective on listening to responses was adopted whereby positive signs of agreement was used to encourage feedback.

He claimed that:

I aimed to show that either I agreed with them or that I did not quite understand and that they needed to explain further (Singh-Raud 1997: 41)

All interviews were arranged in advance [see: Appendix 8 and 9]. Each category of respondent had a different set of questions [see: chapter 6], but some questions were the same or similar for all respondents. They were merely used to find out more detail, eliminate bias and cross check responses between respondents. Even after a structured interview schedule is planned, the data may still be subject to interviewer bias (Cohen and Manion 1996; Powney and Watts 1987). This bias may not be intentional, but can conceal the truth. This would have an affect on the validity of the interview. Cohen and Manion (1994) reported:

... the attitudes and opinions of the interviewer; a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her own image; a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions; misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying; and misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked (Cohen and Manion 1994: 282)

Brenner (1981) resolved bias by using a set of rules. Brenner claimed the interviewer must:

- read the question as they are worded in the questionnaire
- not answer for the respondent
- repeat a question or other action when requested by the respondent
- ask every question that applies to the respondent (*This had already been identified in the group SIS*)
- not give directive information (*Information on the STA initiative was not disclosed or other respondents answers*)
- not seek or give unrelated information (*The interview was focused on the SIS questions*)
- act non directly to obtain an adequate answer where it is inadequate (*Further explanation was requested*)

(Taken from Powney and Watts 1987: 42)

Whilst the first three points are explanatory, the latter four have a brief explanation of how they were used in the STA research. The researcher adopted this set of rules

during each interview. The researcher ensured that each rule was followed, which informed the conduct of the interviews on which this research is based.

Recording the responses presented some difficulties. There were two options available to the researcher – tape recording or note taking. A tape recording would have been less time consuming in the interview and all the conversation would be available for the research. Furthermore, transcription of the interviews, which could have easily exceeded four hours per visit, would cost a considerable amount of money, if given to a specialist in this field. Money was not available for this service. A third of the respondents (e.g. STAs) were not used to being interviewed, and although to record the interviews onto a tape recorder would help to give an accurate record of the interview, it could also inhibit respondents (Powney and Watts 1997: Bell 1993). Rubin and Rubin (1995) state that:

When the public see a tape recorder they answer as if they were talking to a reporter, with short answers or guarded answers rather than with depth and reflection (Rubin and Rubin: 126)

As the STA research could provoke strong opinions it was thought that recording data by note taking was less obtrusive and may provide more in-depth responses to answers. Consequently, a space for data to be recorded was provided at the side of each question in the structured interview schedule.

To avoid note taking interfering in the interview, brief notes were taken, and then immediately after the end of the interview each was recorded in more detail while the interview was still fresh in the researcher's mind. Rubin and Rubin (1995) argued that by making transcriptions promptly it encourages you to review what you have heard and improves subsequent questioning. Therefore all school visits normally took a

whole day as it would take between 1.5 to 2 hours to reread the notes and write down in full the main points. Only in extreme cases, for example, when no other date was possible, were two visits organised in one day [see: Appendix 6, 8 and 9]. A gap of three hours was allowed between the two visits to provide time for the final notes to be written up and for travelling. It is possible that this method of recording interviews might result in some loss of data. Therefore, documents, such as policy documents, job descriptions and timetables were collected and analysed in order to limit the extent that this was the case and to provide additional data.

The use of document review and analysis

Documentary evidence is used to supplement information obtained by other methods (Bell 1993). According to Marshall and Rossman (1999: 116) it is also *an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting*. It is considered a reliable form of data collection, because as Robson (1993) states, documents are:

A permanent form and so be subject to re-analysis, allowing reliability checks and replication studies (Robson 1993: 243)

There are two types of documentary evidence – primary and secondary. Primary sources are those which came into existence in the period under research and are the product of the events being examined. Secondary sources are interpretations of events of that period. Cohen and Manion (1996) argue that primary sources, if available, are of more value to research than secondary sources. Primary sources are the life-blood of research, whereas secondary sources are used in their absence or to supplement them.

Primary sources were used in the STA research because they contained data not available elsewhere; and they were the only ones available. The documents, which provided primary data, were:

- STA course guidelines (1995/96) from four institutions. These guidelines were given to students providing them with full descriptions of the STA modules and used to promote their STA course.
- Various job descriptions from STAs on their designated tasks. These were a selection of school job descriptions, LEA job descriptions and special support services job descriptions.
- Policy documents on the deployment of classroom assistants. These were policy documents from schools advising teachers, parents, governors and government inspectors how they deploy assistants.
- STAs' timetables. These showed the researcher where the STA spent most of her time, the activities she did, and the number of children she worked with.

Although these documents existed, it could not be assumed that they would be available for the STA research. Some documents may be regarded as too confidential, and access to them may be restricted (Bell 1993). For example:

- The STA course guidelines were not always available. It was not uncommon for the STA course to have alterations from year to year, as these courses were in their early stages. Eventually, after much persistence, all STA course documents were obtained.
- School policy documents in some schools were unavailable because they had not yet been written. Those that did have a policy document for the deployment of support staff were all willing to release this document.
- Job descriptions were very difficult to obtain. There were four reasons for this: Firstly, in some cases STA job descriptions did not exist. Secondly, some head teachers did not want to release the job description because it was a confidential document. Thirdly, some were only accessible to the researcher whilst on the school grounds (they could not be photocopied or notes taken and used for the research. Fortunately, most job descriptions were a short list of duties and easy to remember). Reasons for this will be discussed in chapter 9. Finally, some STAs only had out-of-date job descriptions, which needed to be up-dated to take into account their STA training.

- STA timetables were more easily available. STAs photocopied their formal timetable (one which had been typed), or their informal timetable (one which had been hand written by the STA). Permission to duplicate the timetable was granted on every occasion by the head teacher, at the STA's request.

Once the documents were collected they were analysed. Such documents can be subjected to both external and internal scrutiny (Bell 1993, Cohen and Manion 1996, Mann 1985). External scrutiny aims to discover whether a document is genuine and authentic. Internal scrutiny aims to discover the accuracy of the document. Documents needed for the STA research were all collected from the relevant persons in the schools and STA course providers and so were obviously authentic. The accuracy and reliability of the documents was only examined through interviewee responses. For example, when all three respondents in the school reported that the document was accurate or concluded otherwise. STA timetables were usually accurate because the head teacher, class teacher and STA ensured it was adhered to. Job descriptions were often reported to be inaccurate because they were usually written before the STA training or just after the STA training. The STA tended to be carrying out more duties than the current job description reported. School policy documents on STA deployment were also reported as containing inconsistencies. In many cases the head teacher had written them, and although available for all staff to read, none had. However, only the STAs could confirm the accuracy of the STA course documents. Heads and class teachers were unsure of the STA course content. STA course leaders and STA lecturers were not consulted. This is a limitation to the analysis of the STA course documents.

Another important factor, besides authenticity and accuracy, is how author bias could affect the outcome. This was evident in the school policy documents on the deployment of STAs. Head teachers, who usually wrote this document, announced their views on deployment of support staff in this document. This is a common fault with primary sources. It has been noted earlier in the Ofsted reports and the ATL report on the STA initiative [see: chapter 4]. However, these documents were not written for research purposes, but for a range of different audiences. According to Bell (1993) bias, if detected, does not mean that the documents are not a valuable source of research data. They can reveal valuable insights into people's beliefs. Primary documents are a useful source of data collection but need to be supported by other evidence. These sources are ideally suited to be used in conjunction with other data collection methods.

The use of observation

Interviewing and the collection of documentary evidence provides important data, but may only reveal how people perceive what happens. Moser and Kalton (1985) stated that by using direct observation one finds out what the individual does, rather than what he says he does. The use of observation to collect data can validate interviewee responses. However, observation alone as a data collection method can be open to criticism lacking checks on reliability, especially if one researcher completes the research. Cross checking observations has proven to be difficult.

Mann (1985) identified two types of observation – participant observation and non-participant observation. In participant observation the observers engage in the activities they set out to observe. The researcher would become part of the team, and

be accepted as a member. Whilst, in non-participant observation the observer stands apart from the activities. Cohen and Manion (1996) believe that the former style of observation has the advantage that the researcher could develop an informal relationship with those they are observing. Information would be shared freely in this environment. This approach could, however, encourage bias, as it would be difficult to stand back and adopt the role of an objective observer. It would also take a considerable amount of time to become immersed in the situation being studied. Consequently, data could only be collected from a very few instances. This style was not adopted.

Non-participant observation is not an easy option; it can be time-consuming and it is not easy to manage (Bell 1993). It could take much experience to prepare a suitable observation schedule, and be able to monitor subject's actions. Scarth and Hammersley (1993) argue against this method stating:

Observation has been subjected to severe criticism over the past ten years or more, on the grounds, for instance, that it involves the imposition of crude, static categories upon a complex and processual reality (Scarth and Hammersley 1993: 196)

The researcher decided to adopt an unstructured observation style in the pilot study. There were no checklists or charts, so the researcher was not distracted with ticking boxes at the expense of seeing what was happening. There was no preconceived idea of what was to be seen, apart from monitoring the STA at work with the children and to make notes of the type of interaction that was happening with the children and STA (for instance, was she teaching or supporting?). Each observation, of which there were eight, was to last thirty minutes; this could have been the first half of the activity, the last half or halfway through the lesson. This time period was allocated because teacher inspection is usually completed in thirty minutes, so it seemed a

sufficient time period for the STAs. Notes of events, situations, and behaviour of the STA were taken; then they were written up immediately after the visit.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) claimed that using an unstructured style allowed the researcher to discover recurring patterns of behaviour and relationships and generate hypotheses. Unfortunately, problems soon arose. Firstly, some STAs in the pilot study refused to be observed. These STAs believed they were being inspected. This generated unnecessary anxiety. The researcher had not anticipated that this would occur. Secondly, validation of the notes from the observation was questionable. The researcher's interpretations of the observation could contain preconceived ideas, prejudices or bias. In this instance, another person (not the participant) observing the events would have been beneficial, as notes could have been compared. Finally, only one observation from each school took place. This may have been an accurate account of the STA's ability in a given task, but it was also only one task. This may, or may not have been a true reflection of a typical task expected of the STA. Thus, to use observation as a reliable and valid research method four steps were required:

- Numerous visits would have had to be made,
- An observation schedule needed to be drawn up to collect specific data,
- Permission was needed from the employee as well as the employer and
- Another researcher needed to duplicate the observation so responses could be cross-checked.

Due to its lengthy procedure and unwillingness of the STAs in the pilot study to be observed, this data collection method was only used in the pilot study. It was considered to be an unreliable form of data collection for the STA research. A similar decision was taken in respect of questionnaires, but for different reasons.

The use of questionnaires

Postal questionnaires were used in the pre-pilot study as a means of collecting information quickly (Bell 1992). This was the first data collection method used in the STA research. It was hoped that the questionnaires could develop/confirm the aim and objectives for the STA research. To develop a reliable and valid questionnaire, the researcher identified the information that was required (Anderson and Arsenault 1998). Focal areas were distinguished [see: pre-pilot study in chapter 6]. These were the areas of importance and under investigation (Allison et al 1996); it would also simplify the analysis of data, as categories would have been discovered.

The planning of the questions was an important issue. Questions requiring similar responses, such as ticking boxes, were grouped together so the respondent's concentration was not disrupted and to facilitate analysis (Allison et al 1996). Those questions which required respondents to tick a box, were multiple choice or dichotomous, where only two alternatives were offered. Questions, which required the respondent to rank their responses, were not used. The disadvantage of these types of questions is that they become very tedious, analysis is complex and ranking may omit factors that one might not think of at first (Allison et al 1996). Oppenheim (1966) believed that this style of question can produce misleading data as it is influenced by general feeling of 'good' and 'bad' instead of assessing the phenomenon on its own merit. Initially all questions were multiple choice as Cohen and Manion (1996) suggested that these questions encouraged participation because they looked simple and are easy to answer. Further on in the questionnaire, Marshall and Rossman (1999) believe that there should be questions which require a written response to provoke reactions about the subject in question.

The planning of the questionnaire as a whole was vital; lack of clear instructions or wording of questions could distort the data collected. Criteria for the questionnaire were adopted, which was:

- To look easy and attractive. A compressed layout is uninviting; a larger questionnaire with plenty of space for questions and answers is more encouraging to respondents.
- Clarity of wording and simplicity of design are essential. Clear instructions should guide respondents – “Put a tick”, for example, invites participation, whereas complicated instructions and complex procedures intimidate respondents.
- Arrange the contents of the questionnaire in such a way as to maximise co-operation. For example, include attitude questions throughout the schedule to allow respondent to air their views rather than merely describe their behaviour. Such questions relieve boredom and frustration as well as providing valuable information in the process.
- Putting ticks in boxes by way of answering a questionnaire is familiar to most respondents whereas requests to circle numbers can be a source of confusion.
- A final note at the end of the questionnaire should be to thank the participants.
- Use good quality envelopes typed and addressed to a named person
- Use first class postage rather than franked mail.
- Enclose a first class stamped addressed envelope for the respondent’s reply
- Enclose a covering letter to indicate the aim of the study, to convey to respondents its importance, to assure them of confidentiality, and to encourage their replies.

(Adapted from Cohen and Manion 1996: 96-7)

The above steps were adhered to and used in the planning/conduct of the questionnaire survey. The pre-pilot questionnaire was then distributed amongst a small sample of colleagues at STA course provider M, who had experience of planning their own questionnaires for a range of audiences. Based on their comments the questionnaire was revised with minor amendments [see: Appendix 5]. This process is imperative. The distribution of the questionnaire helped to establish what is clear and what is not (Allison et al 1996).

The pre-pilot sample consisted of all the STAs who had qualified from STA course provider M in the previous academic year (1994 – 1995). Contact was established by telephone with the STAs before the questionnaires were sent out to facilitate a good response rate. Two weeks was deemed to be a sufficient time period for respondents to return their questionnaires. Bell (1993) argued that any longer and respondents would have put the questionnaire to one side and it would never be seen again. No reminders were sent out, and non-respondents were not followed up. This action was taken because each respondent had been contacted beforehand to take part in the research; it was assumed that a non-response meant the respondent had changed their mind, and decided not to take part in the STA research.

The returned pre-pilot questionnaires (63%) were then edited. Cohen and Manion (1996) believe editing is a crucial requirement before analysis, as it checks the validity and reliability of the data. It consists of:

- **Completeness:** there is an answer to every question.
- **Accuracy:** all questions are answered accurately. A tick in the wrong box, or an error in simple arithmetic – all can reduce validity.
- **Uniformity:** respondents have interpreted instructions and questions uniformly.

(Adapted from Cohen and Manion 1996: 101)

If one or more of the above requirements were absent the questionnaire was classed as unreliable and invalid¹. After this process was completed, the results were analysed using the process described in Anderson and Arsenault (1998) [see: chapter 6]. Confidentiality had been assured, but not anonymity; therefore checklist numbers from 1 – 40 identified respondents. Only the researcher knew this information. Fortunately, this was not needed, as all the respondents who had returned their

¹ No returned pre-pilot questionnaire had one or more of the requirements absent.

questionnaire were more than willing to support the research and provided their name and addresses for further contact.

For the tick response questions, answers were tallied and a list was then drawn up. The written response questions were more difficult to analyse. All of the twenty-four questionnaires returned, at first glance, seemed to contain different responses. The content, structure and presentation were different. This meant that each answer had to be read several times. Firstly, responses were shortened or abbreviated, as some were half a page long, whereas others were one or two sentences. Secondly, similar answers from different respondents were of interest. These developed concepts and categories for the research.

Despite the questionnaires being of some use in the pre-pilot [see: chapter 6: The pre-pilot study, for further explanation], it was considered to be unsuitable for the main study because of the potential flaws in its reliability and validity, such as:

- It only provided one groups perception of the implementation of the STA initiative, that of STAs. This perception was sometimes bias because of STAs dissatisfaction over the non-recognition of their qualification. The reliability of the data was questionable.
- Some respondents provided the research with information they believed to be important, in some cases this was of value, but sometimes it was not. Therefore, the validity of the data was addressed.
- Some STAs had misinterpreted questions, this may have been the fault of the researcher or the respondent; but it meant that some responses were unreliable.
- STAs were not obliged to respond to questionnaires. The return rate of questionnaires is dependent on the respondent, irrespective of personal contact beforehand.

Self-completion questionnaires cannot probe respondents to find out what they mean by particular responses (Cohen and Mannion 1996: 94)

Conclusion

The main purpose for researching the STA initiative can best be summarised by Mouly (1978):

Research is best conceived as the process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. It is a most important tool for advancing knowledge, for promoting progress and for enabling man to relate more effectively to his environment, to accomplish his purposes and to resolve his conflicts.

(Taken from Cohen and Manion 1994:40)

This chapter has demonstrated how the STA research was planned around a sufficient process to enable conflicts regarding the STA initiative to unfold. The chosen paradigm: qualitative research was adopted but the interpretation of this structure was individual. In using this paradigm four data collection methods were sought for the pilot study: interviews, documentary evidence, observation and questionnaires. All proved to be invaluable, either for gathering data or realising the disadvantages. In considering this, only the first two were used in the main study, and will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Data collection: Procedure and findings.

The field work for this STA research consisted of three phases: the pre-pilot, pilot and main study. The pre-pilot and pilot study, carried out between February – May 1996, was used to initiate the STA research methodology. This study informed the project further and identified the methodology which best suited the research, which led to the main study. The main study was carried out between September 1997 - November 1998. The details of these three phases will be discussed under three main headings and relevant sub headings:

- **The Pre-Pilot Study**
- **Pilot Study**
 - *Sampling of STAs*
 - *STA selection criteria*
 - *Pilot Research Questions*
 - *Outline of procedure*
 - *Ethical considerations*
 - *New research questions generated*
- **Main Study**
 - *Interim findings*
 - *Final data collection*

The Pre-Pilot Study

Contact had been made with the STA course leader at STA course provider M in September 1995 (Edwards et al 1996) and co-operation was almost guaranteed. In February 1996, six months after the first round STAs had finished their training, a pre-pilot study was conducted with the help of these STAs. This pre-pilot study was used to:

- Gain contact with the STAs.
- Collect general information about the STAs (e.g. age, qualifications, present employment status).
- Establish access for help in the pilot study
- Establish sampling and selection criteria for STAs in the pilot study

In the first instance, thirty-seven out of forty STAs, who had attended the first year of the STA course at STA course provider M, were contacted¹ by telephone. They were informed about the research and, with their approval, a short questionnaire about the STA course and other general questions was sent to them. Each questionnaire was sent with a pre-paid envelope. The questionnaire consisted of a list of multiple choice questions; some of which also required the respondent to write short explanations to their answers [see: Appendix 4]. There were two sections: *You*, and *About the course*. The *You* section was designed to establish respondents' personal details, what they did before enrolling on the STA course, who recommended the STA course, and why they were interested in the course. The section entitled *About the course* was designed to elicit their views about the teaching and the modules on the STA course, as well as the course itself. It was also used to identify basic information about how far they received support from the school, and how they perceived their role in schools.

By February 1996 twenty-four out of thirty seven questionnaires were returned² (64% response rate). The pre-pilot study demonstrated that questionnaires alone were not appropriate for collecting the data required for the STA study, but they did elicit useful data and did generate research questions for the pilot study. It was also

¹ Three STAs were not contacted because they did not provide a contact telephone number when they enrolled on to the STA course. These STAs did not reply to the questionnaire.

² All STAs were asked to return the questionnaire if they wanted to be included in the STA research, therefore, it was assumed non-respondents did not want to participate in the research.

evident that to use one group of respondents, like the STAs, was unreliable and insufficient data was collected about the role of STAs in the school. Therefore, it was decided that postal questionnaires were not to be used in the pilot study and data from other adults, who worked closely with the STAs, were needed.

Pilot study

The pre-pilot study had proved useful by establishing links with the STAs and finding basic details about STA deployment. In particular, this data had identified three areas:

- Sampling of STAs
- STA selection criteria
- Pilot research questions

Sampling of STAs

Initially, in the pre-pilot study, the researcher used all the STAs who had qualified from STA course provider M in the previous academic year (1994 –1995). In fact all the STAs from the twenty-four returned questionnaires were willing to support further research. Visiting each STA would prove to be a difficult task, therefore, Cohen and Manion (1994) explain an alternative:

Researchers . . . collect information from a smaller group or subset of the population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under the study. This smaller group or subset is a 'sample' (Cohen and Manion 1994:87)

There are many types of sampling used in studies; for instance, Cohen and Manion (1994) identify 10 types of sampling in two dominant areas of probability and non-probability. The probability samples, as the term implies, is that the probability of selection of each respondent is known. The methods are:

- *Simple random sampling* – each member of the population under study has an equal chance of being selected. The method involves selecting at random from a list of the population. One problem with this method is that a complete list of the population is needed and this is not always readily available.
- *Systematic sampling* – It involves selecting subjects from a population in a systematic way rather than random fashion, for example, every twentieth person can be selected.
- *Stratified sampling* – involves dividing the population into homogeneous groups, each group containing subjects with similar characteristics, for example group A may be females, group B may be males.
- *Cluster sampling* – when the population is large and widely dispersed, for example, then a random sample of schools in a particular area may be chosen with all children in those schools forming the sample.
- *Stage sampling* – it involves selecting the sample in stages that is, taking samples from samples.

The non-probability sampling methods are often used in small-scale surveys. Despite the disadvantage of non-representiveness they are adequate where a researcher does not intend to generalise his/her findings beyond the sample. The methods are:

- *Convenience sampling* – involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained.
- *Quota sampling* – attempts to obtain representatives of the various elements of the total population in the proportions in which they occur there.
- *Purposive sampling* – involves handpicking the cases to be included on the basis of their judgement of their typicality.
- *Dimensional sampling* – involves identifying various factors of interest and obtaining at least one respondent of every combination of those factors.
- *Snowball sampling* – identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristics they require. These people are then used as informants to identify others who qualify for inclusion and these, in turn, identify yet others.

(Adapted from Cohen and Manion 1994; 86 – 9)

The STA research only had 24 STAs willing to participate in further research, so numbers were limited. Also, with further research being considered after the pilot study it was important that a method, which could be continued throughout the study, was sought. Therefore, the sampling method had to have a focus on the research, which was examining the deployment of STAs in schools; *convenience sampling* fulfilled these requirements. However, twenty-four STAs willing to participate in the pilot study was still a large number for this research project. A smaller number was needed to make it manageable. Miles and Huberman (1994) identified such a sampling method - *Criterion sampling* (Miles and Huberman 1994). Criterion sampling identifies a criterion, which all individuals had to meet to be included in the research. This was seen to be the most suitable strategy and it identified a sample almost immediately. Six of the respondents were eliminated from the research because after gaining their STAs qualification they did not pursue a career in the primary classroom, but the remaining eighteen STAs were actively working in the primary classroom, therefore, several criteria was needed to suit the sampling method.

STA selection criteria

Out of the eighteen remaining STAs that were considered for criterion sampling method, eight were currently working with KS 1 children and ten were working with one child with special educational needs (SEN). The STAs who were working with a child with SEN were working solely with that child and no other children. The STA training did not incorporate SEN training so these STAs were not used in the pilot study. The only remaining STAs were the eight STAs who were working with KS 1 children. These STAs had three common criteria. They were:

- **Employed** (*This allowed the STAs to work as part of a team and be included in children's daily routine in school*)
- **Supporting children's learning in the classroom.** (*STAs tended to work with children on core subjects because this was these covered the areas in which their assistance was most needed*)
- **Supporting children in KS 1** (*STAs supported groups of children in KS 1 because that is the Key Stage their training had specialised in*)

These three elements were also requirements of STAs after completing the STA course (DfEE 1993). Therefore, these elements formed the selected criteria for STAs in this STA research pilot study.

Pilot Research Questions

The data collected in the pre-pilot questionnaires developed the pilot research questions, which were derived from the research objectives [see: chapter 5, for further explanation of STA objectives]. These were:

1. Research Objective:

To examine how STA courses have been planned and implemented.

Pilot Research Questions:

- How do head teachers, class teachers and STAs think the STA course has affected assistants' knowledge?
- How far has the STA course affected assistants' deployment?

2. Research Objective:

To analyse the strategies used to appoint, deploy, and support STAs in primary schools.

Pilot Research Questions:

- How do schools utilise STAs?
- How do schools support STAs?

3. Research Objective:

To identify and explore the issues raised by the introduction of STAs in primary schools

Pilot Research Questions:

- What do head teachers and teachers think about the STA initiative?
- What impact has STAs had on teacher professionalism?

Outline of Procedure

The pre-pilot study did not show direct evidence on STA deployment and support or provide evidence about what STAs did and evidence from head teachers and class teachers. Also, evidence provided by STAs from STA course provider M, did not provide data on other STA courses, which was required to broaden the empirical base of the research. Therefore, other data collection methods were sought for the pilot study – interviews with heads, teachers and STAs, document analysis and observation of STAs.

Schools were chosen for the pilot study based on whether their STA suited the STA selection criteria [see: earlier section]. There were eight STAs from STA course provider M, who suited these criteria. These STAs were contacted by telephone, and asked if they would be willing to take part in the pilot study of this STA research project. On their approval, the name and address of the school they were employed at, their head teacher's name and the class teacher's name for whom they provided support (or with whom they spent most time with) was disclosed.

Following this contact, a letter was sent to the head teacher of the school, in which the STA worked, who employed the selected STAs. Head teachers were notified because someone in authority had to decide whether the school would be included in

the research, and inform the relevant members of staff about the research. A letter was used to provide written information on the research, its outcomes and details of how they could be of assistance to the research. Within one week of this letter being sent to head teachers, they were contacted by telephone to negotiate a date to visit the school and interview the relevant teachers and STAs.

Each interview was carried out using a structured interview schedule (see: Appendix 7), so the interview was focused. Each group's questions were centred on the pilot research questions, which had been derived from the research objectives. These questions had main themes, which were:

- Head teachers were asked about appointment and support of an STA.
- Class teachers were asked about deployment and responsibilities of an STA.
- STAs were asked about their contribution to children's learning at KS 1.

At the start of the interview, each respondent was provided with an introduction which stated the purpose of the interview, who the interviewer was and why the interview was taking place. This introduction also informed the respondent about confidentiality and the use of the data [see: ethical considerations in the STA research]. Initially the respondents were asked general questions to build up confidence then more specific questions followed. This was similar to the format used in questionnaires [see: chapter 5: The use of questionnaires]. The ending of the Structured Interview Schedule (SIS) was signified on the last question, so the respondent was aware that the end was drawing near. Each respondent was thanked for participating in the research project. Each interview lasted approximately thirty minutes. The information was then recorded on paper [see: Chapter 5]. Other methods of data collection were document analysis and observation [see: chapter 5].

Ethical considerations of the STA research

It is important in any research project, not only in this one, that the respondents' rights and values are not threatened by the research. Therefore, the researcher provided the respondents with a brief introduction to the research project to give them a right to choose whether they wanted to participate in the research. The aims of the research, data collection methods used, respondents required, and how the data was to be disseminated were provided. Also it was disclosed that respondents' answers would be repeated at the end of the interview for them to verify.

Furthermore, the researcher assured all respondents of confidentiality. This was indicated in the letter sent to each school and in the brief introduction to each respondent before the interview. Oppenheim (1992) claimed that:

The respondent's right to privacy and the right to refuse to answer certain questions, or to be interviewed at all should always be respected, and no undue pressure should be brought to bear (Oppenheim 1992: 84)

In all the interviews, respondents' rights to confidentiality were granted. The answers from each respondent were coded in three stages. Firstly, they were coded by the status of the respondent; head teachers, referred to as HTs, class teachers, as CTs, and specialist teacher assistants, as STAs. Secondly, they were coded according to their school; for example, the first school visited was school 1, the second school was known as school 2, and so forth. If for any reason, a second visit was needed (e.g. through illness, or other circumstances beyond control), and a different teacher was working with the STA, this second teacher would be referred to as CTb, the first teacher being CTa. The same would occur if another head teacher had been appointed to the school, the second head teacher would be referred to as HTb, the

first being Hta. Thirdly, they were coded according to their area, for instance, school 1 in the Merseyside area, would be M1.

STA course providers were also coded in this way; for example, STA course provider C was a STA course provider in the Cheshire area. However, there were two STA course providers from the Lancashire area therefore another letter was added to distinguish the different institutions; for example, STA course provider LM and STA course provider LE. The second letter was significant to the researcher only to identify the specific institution. Coding for confidentiality was also extended to all documentary evidence, using Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) method of '*deleting the identifiers*' (for example, deleting the name) and substituting it with a code, such as, school M1 or STA course provider M. This allows only the researcher to identify the source.

New Research questions generated.

Between April - May 1996, eight schools were visited. Initially eight STAs, their head teacher and class teacher was to be interviewed using structured interview schedules [see: Appendix 7]. Unfortunately, one head teacher cancelled her interview on three occasions until finally stating that she did not agree with the STA initiative and did not wish to participate in an interview on the subject. Another head teacher claimed he could speak for both the class teacher and himself, and therefore there was no need to interview the class teacher. One class teacher was absent on sick leave (which developed into long-term sick leave) and another gained a promotion to a different school. Consequently, only eight STAs, six head teachers, one deputy head teacher, and five class teachers were interviewed. As a result the pilot study was not fully completed. Nevertheless, the data generated a new set of research questions,

which would inform the main study. The responses to the pilot study research questions were used to generate new research questions in the following ways:

1. Research Objective:

To examine how STA courses have been planned and implemented.

Pilot Research Questions:

- How do head teachers, class teachers and STAs think the STA course has affected assistants' knowledge?
- How far has the STA course affected STA deployment?

All head teachers claimed the training their classroom assistant had received from the STA course was more focused on educational support compared to other courses available for classroom assistants, for example, NNEB nursery nursing course. Head teachers, class teachers and STAs claimed they welcomed the STA training because LEA in-service training for classroom assistants was often inappropriate, and the training was free. This increased knowledge did not manifest itself in new forms of STA utilisation. This automatically led to an enquiry to find the cause of this and if the STA training was necessary.

New Research Questions:

- Is there a need to introduce a new category of classroom assistant in schools?

It was also of interest to find out if STAs from other STA course providers were experiencing the same dilemmas towards their deployment. Therefore, leading to:

- How have other STA courses affected STA deployment?

2. Research Objective:

To analyse the strategies used to appoint, deploy, and support STAs in primary schools.

Pilot Research Questions:

- How do schools utilise STAs?
- How do schools support STAs?

The STAs in the pilot study were not given revised job descriptions after their training. Job descriptions were varied; they were either absent or under review, followed the LEA guidelines or were a short list of duties, which often did not match what the STA was doing. Their deployment within schools varied. One STA was obviously being used as a teacher, two STAs were used in accordance with their STA training, and the rest were deployed the same way as before the STA course. Some of the teachers who had STAs working with them had not taken part in the STAs mentoring and did not know about the training the STA had undertaken. Two teachers had not even asked their STA about the course. Generally, class teachers tended to define STAs duties by their rate of pay, hence if they were on a low scale their role was of similar status within the school. STAs were not always used effectively by class teachers. Menial tasks were often completed by STAs (e.g. changing library books, photocopying), rather than supporting children more in the classroom. In cases where teachers had no experience of the STAs training, or they had never worked with a classroom assistant, it was often difficult for teachers to deploy STAs appropriately because they were genuinely unsure of what tasks STAs should and should not be doing.

New Research Questions:

- How far do teachers have an understanding of how to use trained classroom assistants?
- Is in-service training on how to use classroom assistants needed for teachers?

3. Research Objective:

To identify and explore the issues raised by the introduction of STAs in primary schools

Pilot Research Questions:

- What do head teachers and teachers think about the STA initiative?
- What do STAs think about the STA initiative?

At first, heads and teachers were unsure of the government intentions. The STA initiative was introduced too soon after the mums' army proposal. Some teachers believed the initiative was the mum's army in disguise. Three teachers claimed that despite the controversy surrounding the STA initiative, they were open-minded about it. Two teachers claimed that STAs should only do certain activities, for example, tidy up or administration duties, because they were on a low wage. However, there was an indication throughout the interviews with these two teachers that another issue affected their opinions. They believed that some of the things the STAs had been taught in their training were teacher tasks e.g. planning of activities, preparing worksheets, although this was not often recognised in the remuneration received by STAs.

Only two out of eight STAs had been given a pay rise after gaining their STA qualification. Two head teachers claimed they felt guilty in not being able to pay the STA more money and put the blame on their LEA for not recognising STAs. The others felt the omission of a pay scale for STAs was to their advantage. They could employ a trained assistant at a low cost to the school. All head teachers in the pilot study claimed that assistants with particular skills and characteristics, rather than the nursery nurses, were generally employed in their school because they were cheaper to employ.

STAs believed the initiative had been of use to them. It had helped them to understand how children learn and how to support them effectively. Unfortunately, few STAs were able to use their new skills in their deployment due to circumstances beyond their control [see: Chapter 9]. These STAs were unhappy in their current

role. However, another STA found her deployment had gone beyond what was required of her as a STA. There was a blurring of roles from that of a ‘supporter’ to that of a ‘teacher’.

New Research Questions:

- To what extent does the deployment of STAs in schools undermine the employment and professional status of teachers?
- How has LMS affected the status and deployment of STAs in schools?

Main study

The pilot study played a vital part in the STA research and by carrying out such a study the researcher was able to:

- Generate more informed research questions
- Test the procedures and techniques to see that they work satisfactorily. (Anderson and Arsenault 1998)
- To assess if the research design is appropriate and practical (Allison et al 1996)
- To find out if the sample size is adequate for the data required and accessible. (Allison et al 1996)

The assessment of these factors informed the conduct of the main study and based on the evidence provided in the pilot study, the main study was modified accordingly.

The modifications included the following changes:

- Data collection methods for the main study. *The use of questionnaires, and observation had proved to be useful, but flawed due to the nature of the research and its respondents [see chapter 5: ‘The use of Observation’ and ‘The use of Questionnaires’]. The data collection methods that proved to more successful were interviewing and document analysis. Hence, these methods would be used in the main study.*
- The structured interview questions were revised for each group of respondent [see: Appendix 10]. *The new research questions, which had been generated in the pilot study [see previous*

chapter: new research questions generated, which were analysed by the researcher.] did not correspond with the structured interview schedule used in the pilot study. Therefore, the structured interview schedule for each respondent had to be altered.

- *A regional focus of STA deployment was needed. After interviewing the STAs from STA course provider 1 it was evident that most were unhappy with their present employment and could seek new appointments elsewhere. They were all on temporary contracts which may/may not be renewed. Hostility towards the STA initiative, which had been quite strong in two schools, suggested that further contact with these schools might not be possible. A regional focus would provide a larger sample of STAs, head teachers and class teachers and provide opportunities for comparisons.*
- *Contact needed to be initiated with other STA course providers. If data was collected across the region then the obvious starting point for this was with STA course providers.*

The first two issues were addressed immediately. The second two issues were not so easy to address but were eventually resolved by making contact with a second STA course leader and a North West County Council Recruitment Officer, who agreed to support the project and give access to their STA programme and students. They selected STAs, using the STA selection criteria [see: page 119] and provided details of their programmes and employment. It was decided that the main study data collection would be split into two parts. The interim findings would be set up with a final data collection to follow approximately 6 months later or at the start of the next academic year, whichever was sooner. This strategy would allow for the capturing of data about changes to the STAs working practices, perceptions and duties.

The Interim Findings

In July 1996, the second STA course leader (from STA course provider C) chose a sample of five STAs, who suited the STA selection criteria and provided relevant

contact details. In September/October, the schools were all contacted, following the same procedure as that used in the pilot study. A list of interview dates was drawn up³ [see: Appendix 8]. Between October - November 1996, five STAs, their head teacher and class teacher were interviewed using the revised structured interview schedule.

In January 1997, a meeting was set up to discuss this project with the Northwest County Council Recruitment Officer. Again, this meeting vindicated a willingness to co-operate in the research. On the second meeting, the Recruitment Officer decided that it would be better to interview a sample of STAs from two STA course providers (STA course provider LM and STA course provider LE) to offer variation and a deeper in-sight to STA deployment. Therefore, using the STA selection criteria, she provided the names of four STAs from STA course provider LM, and four STAs from STA course provider LE, their head teachers' names, and the name and address of their school was provided. In February 1997, the head teachers who employed these STAs were contacted, as in the pilot study, and a list of dates for the interviews was drawn up [see: Appendix 9]. Between February - April 1997, eight STAs, their head teachers, and their class teachers were interviewed using the revised structured interview schedule.

The Final Data Collection

The final stage of data collection sought either to fill the gaps in the information already available or to explore new factors that had emerged in the data collection process. The focus of this was:

³ Initially, the researcher had wanted to interview eight STAs (the same number as the pilot study) but the second STA course leader only taught a small cohort of STAs (approximately 15 per year)

- *Documentary evidence:* Throughout the interim data collection phase school/colleges were asked about documents relating to STAs, such as, STA course documents, STA job description, policy documents on the deployment of classroom assistants, and STA timetables. These had not been obtained by the end of the second year of research because they had not been written or they were not released to the researcher.
- *Role of Heads:* After analysing the interviews from the interim phase it was noted that in some schools, heads played a significant role in the management of STAs. Although the management of the STAs varied, but in two instances (HT C1 and HT L1) the head teacher's involvement in the STA training did influence how they deployed their STA. Therefore it was necessary to establish whether or not a similar pattern could be found in all sample schools.
- *Career progression:* Two STAs (STA L1 and STA L8) had expressed a willingness to enrol on an ITT course, which their head teacher believed would be a good career move as they had the desired skills and ability to become teachers. Data was, therefore, collected on the career progression of all STAs.
- *STA deployment:* Three STAs (STA C5, L2 and L7) believed that they were not challenged enough in the light of their STA training. Data was to be collected on how STA deployment evolved over time.

In order to capture this data a revised structured interview schedule was constructed [see: Appendix 11] and all schools visited again. However, one head refused to participate in this data collection claiming that the STA's deployment had not changed. On returning to each of the schools it was found that:

- Most STAs had been re-organised within the school;
- Four STA's teacher or head teacher had left the school, which meant the researcher had to interview a new respondent (L6, C2, C3 and C5);
- Or in two instances, the STA had left the school (L1 and L8).

Fortunately, this did not affect the objectives of the final phase. Data, which was required from the final phase, was obtained. After the final part of the main study had

been collected the whole research process was complete. This had taken two and a half years. A detailed summary of this process can be seen in Appendix 19.

Analysing the STA research

The analysis on this research project started immediately after each interview had been carried out⁴. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995) and Marshall and Rossman (1999) analysing data is a constant process after each interview, then after each group of interviews at a school; and then in a selection of schools in a particular area. After the interviewing was complete a detailed analysis was carried out, using Moustakas (1994) analytical process, taken from Anderson and Arsenault (1998).

The data from both phases of the main study were analysed. These processes were:

- 1) *Immersion* - the interviews were grouped into three categories: STAs, head teachers and teachers. To help identify the main themes [see: page 122 in this chapter] they were colour coded with highlighter pens (Oppenheim 1966, Rubin and Rubin 1995 and Marshall and Rossman 1999). Therefore, Head teachers' interviews were colour coded for the themes of appointment and support of an STA; Class teachers' interviews were colour coded for the themes of deployment and responsibilities of an STA; and STAs' interviews were colour coded for the theme of contribution to children's learning at KS 1.
- 2) *Incubation* – the researcher re-read the interviews and made notes on the main themes which had been highlighted. Throughout this process, there was a constant pattern in all responses, which indicated the importance of the STA course provider. All groups made reference to the STA course; in particular, the content of the course their STA attended and the STA course teams' perceived role for their STAs.
- 3) *Illumination* - the researcher decided to analyse each group in connection with their respective STA course. It was identified that each STA course team had generated a role for their STAs. These were found in the STA course guidelines for all four STA course providers (STA course

provider C 1995; STA course provider M 1994; STA course provider LM 1995; STA course provider LE 1995). The researcher analysed each STA role from the four STA course providers and identified main characteristics by coding using symbols, such as a dot, triangle, square, circle and so forth. Characteristics identified as teacher duties were underlined.

- 4) *Explication* – once the main characteristics for each STA role was identified it was then compared to the main themes identified in the STAs' deployment in schools (which had been identified in process 1).
- 5) *Creative synthesis* – The researcher analysed how far each STA was actually carrying out their STA role provided from their respective STA courses. This was achieved by coding all three groups of interviews using symbols (see: process 3).

Conclusion

The themes that emerged from the analytical processes, especially those relating to the training of the STA, organisation of the STA and impact of STAs in schools, will be analysed in the next three chapters. These themes are discussed in detail under three headings:

- Chapters 7 and 8 [STA course]. *These chapters will distinguish the differences and similarities between the DfEE criteria for STA courses and the four STA courses, which the STAs in the research enrolled on. It will address the types of STAs each institution created and how they could be used in schools.*
- Chapter 9 [STA deployment]. *This chapter will address how each STA was managed in school according to their STA training. STAs' specific duties will be analysed to see how far they were deployed like their STA training or how they were developed further.*

⁴ The researcher photocopied all the interviews so original ones were preserved just in case the researcher needed to refer back to them at any time, or if throughout the analysis stage interviews were misplaced or lost. This was a precautionary method.

- Chapter 10 [STA impact on teacher professionalism]. *This chapter will highlight the nature of STAs in schools and the impact they had on the teaching staff that they worked alongside.*

Chapter 7.

The STA courses: Institutional Differences

The nature of the STA research was to investigate the role of STAs working in schools. It was recognised that the nature of the STA training provided by each institution might be different and this might have an impact on STA's deployment in schools. In order to establish this, the nature of the programmes in the four participating institutions was examined. The four institutions were:

Table 7.1: STA courses used in STA research

Name of institution	Length of course	Level of course
STA course provider C	1 year, part-time (28 weeks)	45 CATS credits at National Level One
STA course provider M	1 year, part-time (25 weeks)	18 ICS credits (equivalent to 60 CATS credits at National Level One)
STA course provider LM	1 year, part-time (28 weeks)	60 CATS credits at National Level One
STA course provider LE	1 year, part-time (30 weeks)	72 CATS credits at National Level One

(Adapted from STA course provider C STA course guidelines 1995; STA course provider M STA course guidelines 1994; STA course provider LM handbook 1995 and STA course provider LE STA handbook 1995)

These institutions had all used the same STA criteria (DfEE 1994) for designing their courses, therefore, it may have been expected that they would all be one year in length, be on a part-time basis and assessment aimed at National Level One; but there appeared to be distinctive differences. This was demonstrated in two ways:

- Length of courses ranged from 25 to 30 weeks in duration. *This gave the impression that some STAs were given more time in college or school, which could provide them with a better understanding or knowledge of their future role as a STA.*
- Credit ratings varied from 45 to 72 CATSs credits, *suggesting perhaps, that some courses were*

more academic, for example, the training they received was more skilled. It would also create a system whereby some institutions were looked upon as offering a higher type of STA qualification.

These STA courses were individual and unique. They appeared to prepare STAs for somewhat different roles in schools.

Content of training

According to Ofsted (1995) the STA course providers were encouraged to show *diversity in approaches* in order to *identify and disseminate good practice* even though the specific criteria for all courses were the same. This flexible approach to the criteria encouraged STA course providers to organise their courses in different ways. For example, STA course provider LE incorporated its training for KS 1 and 2; the others were specific to KS 1. STA course provider M had six ten-week modules, whereas the others had several on-going modules that lasted the whole year. In the pilot year this was accepted, but a specified course (with a level of qualification and criteria) was never finalised in the years following the pilot year [original guidelines see: chapter 4 remained]. This made a variety of STA training available.

The diversity was discussed at a feedback meeting for STA course providers in London [29.1.96]. It was apparent that an STA trained in one institution might work towards a higher level than an STA in another. This could create numerous problems regarding:

- Parity between courses – *the same course and content but some providers would provide more opportunities and understanding to issues than others.*
- Parity of outcomes – *awards for STAs would differ.*
- Parity of expectations – *employers would have different expectations of their*

STAs depending upon the training institution they attended.

To examine whether this had happened it is necessary to look at key aspects of the STA courses in more detail, especially:

- Entry requirements: *qualifications/or experience, which was necessary for the candidates to obtain prior to enrolment.*
- Modules: *subjects the STAs covered at university.*
- Practical experience: *school-based experience the STAs received to ensure competences were achieved.*

STA course provider C

The STA course team at STA course provider C only enrolled candidates who had the required qualifications but, in some cases, the NNEB nursery-nursing certificate was accepted as the equivalent. The STA course leader structured the STA course using the STA competences [see: Appendix 2]. The aim of the course was to develop basic teaching skills in mathematics and English. The course had five modules. These were not taught in block sessions, but delivered in a thematic approach to support STA learning. The course provided an introduction (primary curriculum), a middle (main themes, e.g. mathematics, language) and ending (role of STA) and gradually introduced them to themes. STA course provider C, also, had a module on the role of the STA. This was a small, but important part of their STA course. It allowed STAs to know how they should be deployed, and encourage schools to deploy them in an appropriate way. The STA team delivered their sessions using a range of seminars, lectures and workshops. They encouraged student STAs to produce games, books, cards and other resources, which could be used by children in the classroom. The structure of the STA course at STA course provider C can be seen in table 7.2.

Table 7.2: STA course provider C - STA course criteria.

Criteria	Content
Entry requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students had to be employed as a classroom assistant or work voluntarily in a school. • They also needed 2 GCSEs: Mathematics and English. • Must be 21 years of age or over
Modules	<p>5 modules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Primary school 2. Supporting children's learning in English 3. Supporting children's learning in mathematics 4. Assessing and recording 5. The role of the STA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 1 had 8 x 2.5 hrs and was taught in Wk. 1, 2, 3, 4, 22, 28, 29 and 30. • Module 2 had 9 x 2.5 hrs and was taught in Wk. 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 27. • Module 3 had 7 x 2.5 hrs and was taught in Wk. 9, 10, 11, 19, 20, 21 and 26. • Module 4 had 3 x 2.5 hrs and was taught in Wk. 23, 24 and 25. • Module 5 had 3 x 2.5 hrs and was taught in Wk. 16, 17 and 18.
Practical Experience	30 x 1 day (serial practice)
Assessment	Assignments Competency based

(Adapted from STA course provider C - STA course guidelines 1995)

The emphasis on the STA course was on mathematics and language with over twenty hours allocated to these modules. The STA mathematics and English modules covered can be seen in table 7.3:

Table 7.3: STA course provider C - Mathematics and English teaching

Subject	Content
Mathematics Curriculum at KS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • early mathematics skills (including sets, relatives, and matching), • cardinal and ordinal numbers, • four rules of number, • place value and • using/making mathematics games.
English Curriculum at KS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approaches to teaching reading, • how to listen to children reading, • making reading resources, • approaches to writing, and • reading/story telling to children.

(Adapted from STA course provider C - STA course guidelines 1995)

All students received 28 days practical experience. The practical experience in school was shared between two schools as recommended in the DfEE STA criteria [DfEE 1994]. The STA's school of employment was used throughout the STA training and for half a term (approximately 4 weeks) another school was used. This differentiated experience was to provide the STA with experience outside their school, so ideas, knowledge and skills could be shared. The second school was usually a school who already had an STA training at STA course provider C, so the STAs exchanged schools.

In addition to the training the STA course leader held regular meetings (6 per year) with the STAs' mentors, who were usually the STAs' class teacher or head teacher. At the meetings teachers would review the progress of the course, consider how to deploy and support their STA and discuss the next part of the STA training to ensure teachers knew in advance what STA's were expected to achieve. This continued contact between the mentors and the STA course leader ensured close relations between the school and the providing institution. It also encouraged teachers to offer continued and informed support to their STAs because they were involved in their training and knew the outcomes of the course. This involvement helped shape the STA course into what teachers wanted or expected from a trained classroom assistant. This moulded the STAs in a *support role* (see: Chapter 8).

STA course provider M

The STA course team at STA course provider M enrolled candidates who had the required qualifications, but some candidates who did not have all the desired qualifications were given the opportunity to enrol onto the STA course, too. This

only applied to a small number of candidates¹ of the total who enrolled, but it had a significant effect on their deployment after their STA training (see: chapter 8). No other institution provided this opportunity.

The STA course leader structured the STA course using the STA competences [see: Appendix 2]. The aim of the course was to develop basic teaching skills in mathematics and English. Six modules were created, which covered the main areas, listed in table 7.4.

Table 7.4: STA course provider M - STA course criteria

Criteria	Content
Entry requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students had to be employed as a classroom assistant, work voluntarily in a school or seeking employment as a classroom assistant. • They also needed 2 GCSEs: Maths and English. • Must be 21 years of age or over.
Modules	<p>6 modules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Primary school 2. The mathematical world of the child 3. Resource based learning 4. Language and the child 5. Children's learning and child development 6. The assessment of children's learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each module had 10 x 2.5 hours lectures. • Modules 1 – 3 were taught in the 1st semester. • Modules 4 – 6 were taught in the 2nd semester.
Practical experience	<p>15 days (serial practice) 2 x 5 days (Block practice)</p>
Assessment	<p>Assignments Competency based</p>

(Adapted from STA course provider M - STA handbook (STA course provider M 1994))

Each module was taught for a period of 10 weeks; in block sessions. The organisation and structure of the STA modules was similar to that of the B.Ed/BA with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) modules at this institution. Despite their similarities, STA and B.Ed students were not taught together to avoid suggestions

¹ 15 candidates out of 40, who had one or less GCSE grade C or equivalent, were allowed to enrol

that the STA programme was similar or equivalent to initial teacher training.

The STA modules were taught as separate subjects, so individual attention could be allocated to each area. These subjects were delivered using seminars, lectures and workshops, dependent on the lesson objective or the lecturer. Each session was allocated the same amount of time, 2.5 hours per session; similarly, each module was given the same time. Despite the DfEE placing much more emphasis on the teaching and learning of basic skills in mathematics and English than on any other aspects of the STA training.

At STA course provider M, mathematics and English were not taught alongside each other, as suggested by the DfEE/TTA. They were taught in separate semesters. The mathematics and English content covered:

Table 7.5: STA course provider M - Maths and English teaching

Subject	Content
Mathematics Curriculum at KS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • differentiated mathematics activities in number, shape and space, and measurement, • recording mathematics achievement • to be familiar with/and make appropriate mathematics resources.
English Curriculum at KS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hearing children read, • reading/story telling to children, • supporting reading, • supporting writing, • supporting talk and the use of language in creative play.

(Adapted from the STA course provider M - STA handbook (STA course provider M 1994))

Although, much had been covered over the period of time provided for each module in mathematics and English, there was a finite limit to what could be covered in 10 weeks. The STA course leader believed the aim was to provide the STAs with experience in these areas, but not the level of knowledge that might be expected from a teacher (STA course provider M 1994). Therefore, several basic skills or even a whole concept could be covered in one session.

All student STAs were given school-based tasks, which were completed in their school of employment/attachment school under the direction of their class teacher, rather than external school. It was assumed that this would be better for the school and the student STA because the school would receive money for training the student STA and in turn, the student would have an assessor who she knew very well. All students received at least 25 days practical experience in schools as part of their STA training; those students who were an existing classroom assistant would receive more time in school. This experience consisted of 15 days serial practice and 2 x 5 days block practice. STA course provider M was the only STA provider to organise their STAs practice in this way.

It was a similar structure to the first year of teacher training; serial and block practice. Although this school experience format and aspects of the programme had been adapted from ITT by the STA team at STA course provider M, it was clear that there were significant differences between the STA and initial teacher training programmes. STAs had a basic understanding of strategies for supporting mathematics and English, but not to teach them. The objective of the course was to turn STAs into *para-professionals* in the classroom, and not professionals to enable them to become teachers.

STA course provider LM

The third STA course examined was STA course provider LM. Candidates had to have the entry qualifications listed in table 7.6. The only difference between this institution and the others is that it accepted candidates of 18 years of age and over, rather than 21 years and over. The structure of this STA course was modular based,

but it was unlike the others. It was taught consecutively rather than concurrently. This enabled the focus of the module to be taught in detail alongside mathematics, English and school-based experience. This supported the STAs in understanding their training as a development process. Details of which can be seen in table 7.6.

Table 7.6: STA course provider LM - STA course criteria.

Criteria	Content
Entry requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students had to be employed as a classroom assistant. • They also needed 2 GCSEs: Maths and English. • Must be 18 years of age or over
Modules	<p>5 modules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Primary curriculum 2. Organising for learning 3. Assessment and record keeping 4. Individual difference 5. Team work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 1 had 6 x 3 hrs sessions and was taught in Wk. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. • Module 2 had 6 x 3 hrs sessions and was taught in Wk. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 • Module 3 had 6 x 3 hrs sessions and was taught in Wk. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18. • Module 4 had 6 x 3 hrs sessions and was taught in Wk. 19, 20, 21, 22, 22, 23 and 24 • Module 5 had 4 x 3 hrs sessions and was taught in Wk. 25, 26, 27 and 28.
Practical experience	56 x ½ half days (serial practice)
Assessment	<p>Assignments Competency based</p>

(Adapted from STA course provider LM - STA handbook 1995)

Initially, the STA course did not appear to have an English and mathematics module. The mathematics and English content was integrated into the other modules. When this course was analysed for mathematics and English content the time allocated to mathematics and English were similar to that in STA course provider M and STA course provider C STA courses. The course had one taught session of three hours duration each week; English teaching was allocated 24 hours, whilst 21 hours was allocated to mathematics teaching. This STA course did, in fact, cover much more than either the STA course provider M or STA course provider C STA courses in

these two subjects. The mathematics and English modules covered can be seen in table 7.7.

Table 7.7: STA course provider LM - Maths and English content

Subject	Content
Mathematics Curriculum at KS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • counting number through time, money and measurement, • place value, • volume and capacity, • shape, • calculators, • sorting, • data handling and • problem solving
English Curriculum at KS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching reading, • understanding the importance of literature through stories and poems, • awareness of reading schemes, • approaches in reading with children (including miscue analysis), • teaching children to: draft, spell and use punctuation, and • approaches in handwriting.

(Adapted from STA course provider LM - STA handbook 1995)

STA course provider LM provided its STAs with the knowledge and purpose of specific teaching tasks in mathematics and English. For instance, STAs were taught and expected to use miscue analysis; a language assessment specifically used by teachers. It was expected that STAs would take an active part in assessment of mathematics and English. In this instance STAs were given skills and responsibilities in mathematics and English, similar to those which were normally expected of a teacher. STAs were being trained to take on some responsibilities that were normally the province of teachers.

Another distinctive feature of the STA course at STA course provider LM, was the school-based experience. STAs were provided with two types of experience: guided experience and supervised experience. In the guided experience, schools with STA student/s at STA course provider LM were encouraged to take an active role in the STA training. The STA course provider appointed these schools and they provided training for up to twenty STAs who came to the school once a week for half a day.

These schools were termed training schools. At these training schools student STAs were expected to support children and complete a school-based task set by STA course provider LM. These school-based tasks varied from observing a child to planning and implementing an activity for a group of children, under the supervision of an experienced teacher. The disadvantage to this type of training is that the STAs carried out their task at the same time, which often meant feedback after the activity from the teacher was not always possible due to the large number of students and lack of time. The advantage was that STAs carried out their school-based task for that week in that week (e.g. school based task for week one would be completed in week one), so their educational practice record was up-to date.

Lecturers on the STA course at STA course provider LM believed that the training they offered was necessary for assistants in the modern primary classroom. Lecturers at two local colleges, LP College and LAR College shared this opinion, where the STA course leader sought additional support. These colleges taught nursery nurses (previously the only trained classroom assistants). Tutors from these colleges were used to train STAs, together with lecturers from STA course provider LM. These tutors would have considerable knowledge of preparing adults to be deployed in schools, and their understanding of how students with GCSEs or equivalent educational qualifications might best be developed was invaluable. In particular, they were aware of how nursery nurse deployment has had to change [see chapter 3] to facilitate the implementation of the National Curriculum. The STA course provider LM vision for its STAs was for them to look upon themselves as *professionals*, not helpers in the classroom.

STA course provider LE

The candidates for the STA course at STA course provider LE had the necessary entry requirements, although one candidate completed an entry exam in mathematics because she did not have a qualification in that subject. On receiving a good grade, she was allowed to enrol on the STA course. Students were also required to have an attachment to a school before enrolling onto the STA course (either through employment or consistent voluntary work). This would show their enthusiasm and commitment to become a trained classroom assistant. The STA course at STA course provider LE was modular based. The details of which can be seen in table 7.8:

Table 7.8: STA course provide LE - STA course criteria.

Criteria	Content
Entry requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students had to be employed as a classroom assistant or work voluntarily in a school. • They also needed 2 GCSEs: Maths and English. • Must be 21 years of age or over
Modules	3 modules: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mathematics 2. English 3. Educational Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 1 & 2 had 2.25 hrs per week • Modules 3 had 1.25 hrs per week
Practical experience	3 weeks (block practice) 97.5 hrs (serial practice)
Assessment	Assignments Competency based

(Adapted from STA course provider LE - STA handbook 1995)

This course was also designed using the STA competences and had the same main aim, as the others. Unlike the other three STA courses, this one only had three modules, but the content in each module was more specific. They were long modules, which lasted the whole year (28 weeks) and were taught in block sessions. They were delivered using a variety of teaching methods, including seminars, lectures and workshops; depending on the lesson objective or the lecturer. On occasions, STAs

were taught alongside the first year B.Ed students. The DfEE (1994) had recommended this, although STA course provider LE was the only institution that adopted the practice.

The emphasis on the STA course was on mathematics and English. The mathematics and English modules covered:

Table 7.9: STA course provider LE - Maths and English content

Subject	Content
Mathematics Curriculum at KS 1 & 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foundation of number (including: order, pattern, cardinal numbers, ordinal numbers and place value), • four rules of number, and • teaching skills in: using calculators, problem solving, shape, measurement, • producing mathematical games, also, • setting up a number area, • assessing mathematics in baseline assessments and SATs.
English Curriculum At KS 1 & 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching reading, • discussing reading issues, • knowledge of the types of literature, • early stages of writing (including emergent writing), • teaching the developing writer, • creating a writing environment, • approaches in: handwriting, spelling, story telling, poetry, drafting and editing.

(Adapted from STA course provider LE - STA handbook 1995)

These two subjects both had 2.25 hours per week allocated to them, whilst educational practice had 1.5 hours per week. The mathematics and the English teaching and learning amounted to a total time of 56.25 hours for each subject. This was much more than STA course provider M, STA course provider C or STA course provider LM had provided on their STA courses. STA course provider M allocated 25 hours per subject; STA course provider C allocated 21 hours for mathematics and 27 hours for English and STA course provider LM incorporated mathematics and English with others areas, so the allocated time was 70 hours between the two subjects. The STA team at STA course provider LE had given their STAs more than double the amount of time on mathematics and English than other institutions. Even

ITE required 150 hours to be allocated to English and mathematics (Circular 14/93), which was only 94 hours more for each subject. Although ITE has more allocated time to mathematics and English than the STA programme; it must be noted that the duration of initial teacher education courses is normally four years while the STA course is only a one year part-time course. Therefore, the STA course at STA course provider LE appeared to be a diluted version of ITE.

This perception was strengthened by an analysis of the module content. It was apparent that course content concentrated on specific teaching tasks, rather than strategies on how to support children. Evidence of this was found in the STA course Preparatory Booklet (STA course provider LE 1995/6). This stated that STAs:

are taught methods of teaching reading and writing, methods of assessing achievement in reading and writing, and assessing children's achievement in: 1. operating number. 2. application of number. 3. numeracy across the curriculum.

STAs trained at STA course provider LE claimed that they believed their course had provided them with a specialism in mathematics and English. It also provided STAs with knowledge on the KS 1 and the KS 2 curriculum. The STA course had developed the STA training provided by the TTA STA criteria.

Furthermore, the STA course at STA course provider LE provided their STAs with a similar school-based experience to STA course provider LM and more. There were provided two types of experience: guided experience and supervised experience [see: page 141] and in the second half of the spring term, STAs were released to another school for a block practice (all lectures were cancelled for 3 weeks). This practice enabled teachers to receive experience of other STAs, and STAs to receive experience of training from another teacher. It, also, meant that the STAs at STA

course provider LE received experience of three schools.

STA course provider LE did acknowledge the extra school-based training and mathematics and English input. This STA course was worth 72 CATS credits at National Level One, opposed to the other STA courses which were 60 CATS credits or less. These additional credits were justified due to the amount of work, which was involved in passing this course; it was very intense and had much more content. This STA course exceeded the other STA courses. Instead, it closely resembled the design of a *diluted teacher training course* since the STAs were provided with the opportunity to develop a *specialism* (see: chapter 8).

Conclusion

Although each STA course provider based its programme on the same criteria each developed a unique programme. No two were identical in structure; modules differed from course to course in name, structure, organisation, and sometimes content. It was evident that the officials at the DfEE had encouraged STA course providers to establish different types of STA courses. This offered STA course providers the flexibility to design their own STA course and establish good practice. It also created the opportunity for further development of the STA training by sharing good course design practice. This had a significant affect on the outcomes of the STA courses, each of which appeared to be preparing STAs to fulfil a different role in their schools:

- In an attempt to design a training course, which was suitable for classroom assistants, the STA team at STA course provider C sought support from teachers and kept in regular contact with the schools involved in the STA training. The success of this STA course relied upon regular contact with schools, especially since there was a hostile reaction to the initiative when it was first announced. STA course providers who co-operated with schools found the teachers more

supportive of the STA course, and in turn this aided the STAs to become recognised as trained classroom assistants in their school. The teachers and STA team moulded their STAs in a *'support role'*.

- STA team at STA course provider M wanted their STAs to have knowledge of teaching, but not at the level of knowledge that might be expected from a teacher. The STA modules provided STAs with an insight into the teaching of mathematics and English. The aim was to train STAs to become *'para-professionals'*.
- The STA course leader at STA course provider LM also sought support for the success of the STA course from two local FE colleges (LP College and LAR College), who had experience of training classroom assistants and nursery nurses. Nursery nurse tutors from these colleges taught on the STA course, alongside HE lecturers from STA course provider LM. This provided the STAs with lecturers who had a variety of knowledge and experience with teaching adults. They also had an awareness of how STAs could be deployed in the primary classroom. They believed STAs were *'professionals'* in the classroom, who could carry out some teacher tasks, such as assessments.
- The STA course at STA course provider LE was based on an interpretation of the STA criteria that might lead to classroom assistants being deployed to do work previously carried out by teachers. Student STAs were expected to plan their support with their class teacher; to account for the purpose of the activity, become involved in assessments including baseline assessments and SATs, and understand how children learn. These STAs were trained to become *'specialists'*. STAs trained like this raises questions about teacher professionalism.

Thus, four types of STAs were emerging from the interpretation of the TTA STA criteria by course providers. This would undoubtedly have an affect on STA deployment. Therefore, it is necessary to look further into the TTA criteria to understand how and why this occurred. One aspect of the TTA criteria, which all courses used and changed, was the STA competences.

Chapter 8.

Competences: ITT and STA

The use of competences in England was introduced in Education on a large scale in Britain in 1986, with the implementation of national vocational qualifications (NVQ). NVQs were used to improve training and skills of British workers and school leavers which was perceived to be poor when compared to others workers in developed countries (Hodkinson and Issitt 1995). With unemployment increasing steadily in the 1980s this problem needed to be addressed. The development of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQs) was one of many strategies used. It was to provide 'on-the-job' competence or 'the ability to perform work activities to the standard required in the workplace' (NCVQ 1988).

The idea of competency based education spread to other forms of education and training, including ITT. This was perhaps inevitable. The governments' of the 1970s and 1980s had heavily criticised teachers and ITT. Events such as the William Tyndale affair [chapter 2] and criticism of the education curriculum [chapter 2 and 3] seemed to call into question the efficiency of the system and quality of teacher training. The Teacher Training Agency (TTA), which took responsibility for initial teacher training (ITT) in 1993, immediately began to develop a competency-based approach to ITT (DFEE, Circulars 9/92 and 14/93). The need for better performance and quality encouraged the integration of competences in education. A response to support the use of competency-based education came from the Hillgate group (1987) and Lawlor

(1990). They argued that the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to transmit it to others were the qualities required for teaching. School-based training with no HE input should be the desired ITT, where transmission of skills by experienced teachers would provide adequate training for student teachers.

However, the spread of competency-based education was not favoured by all in the education system, for example, Hyland (1993) believed that competency-based education posed a serious threat to any form of education, and this approach needed to be challenged. He makes reference to five criticisms, which emphasise on the loss of knowledge, in place of performance, such as:

- There is much confusion over what kind of knowledge is related to competence, and how exactly it is so related. Performance is given central position and knowledge is allowed to enter the picture only on condition that it is directly relevant to competent practice. Therefore, competences mistakenly give performance pride of place in evaluating competence and seriously underestimate the role of knowledge and understanding.
- Even if we allow that for competent performances the relevant knowledge will typically be of a 'knowing how' or the 'practical kind' the descriptions are one-dimensional. For example, learning how to swim or speak a foreign language are typical cases of capacities developed through practice. Dealing with problems in science or examining moral questions demand a level of understanding and experience, which require long term fostering and development.
- There is a tendency on the part of competence proponents to manipulate the concept of knowledge. This minimises the extent to which theoretical knowledge is required to generate practice, it also implies that there are some routine activities which need little or no underpinning knowledge for their performance. Indeed in the case of NVQ, they have a range of levels, level 1 being described as routine activities and level 4 as technical activities.
- The use of competences assumes that knowledge can be constructed and deconstructed as required in order to service the assessment of competence. Instead of a coherent account, competences possess

stipulated categories, such as 'outcome' or 'process', which are without much explanation. Relevant knowledge is picked out at will to serve as supplementary evidence of performance.

- Advocates of competency-based education are guilty of mistaking and confusing the assessment of competence with competence itself; there is also a conflation of the performance criteria, which determine competence with performance itself. It is most clearly demonstrated in the tendency to reduce all talk of knowledge, skills, and competence with the overuse of 'evidence'. The search for evidence to support competence is a central concern. We begin to recognise and place knowledge in its rightful place when we come to regard it as a source of evidence, along with performance evidence. (Hyland 1993: 115-119)

Despite these criticisms, the government under guidance from the TTA announced in Circular 14/93 that all ITT, including special entry schemes, such as the 'articled' and 'licensed' teacher schemes, was to become competency based, which:

[provided]the criteria for the standards of knowledge, understanding and skills that student teachers had to demonstrate in order to be awarded qualified teacher status (Helsby 1999: 152)

These new criteria had given much responsibility to schools, much more than previously. It also meant that central government, under the TTA, controlled the content of ITT. The implications of these developments were serious for HEIs, as school based approaches were favoured more than academic understanding. The key responsibilities for the training of student teachers have been transferred to schools from HEIs.

Teacher training has moved towards a new partnership in which teachers, rather than HEIs, had more control over training. Experienced teachers are now expected to be involved not only in the training of the students but in planning and evaluating courses, selecting the students, supervising and assessing their practise in the classroom. It can be construed that given all the extra work for teachers, certain aspects of teacher

training are becoming marginalised under the new proposals. It can be seen as opening the door to an apprenticeship model of ITT (Bell 1999). Furthermore, Davies and Ferguson (1998) argued that competency-based education is providing a challenge to teacher professionalism. They have identified five ways in which this will occur, such as:

- Teachers who would pass on bad practice could train students.
- Good teachers may not make good teacher trainers; in particular, mentors were not trained to perform their role. *It was expected they would instinctively know what was expected.*
- Whole mentoring increases the professionalism for experienced teachers, *but professionalism for the student teachers and NQTs may be undermined by the narrowness of one school-based experience*
- The present experienced teachers may find their own professionalism has increased, *but when those they mentor become mentors themselves, professionalism may become watered down to the transmission of competences*
- Teachers in their study believed that it was inadequate to reduce teaching to a list of competences. *The Government, through the TTA, had missed out the whole importance in teachers' development and thus had undermined their professionalism, making teachers merely competent rather than fully rounded professionals.*

(Davies and Ferguson 1998: 83)

Hyland (1993) and Davies and Ferguson (1998) were not alone in their criticisms that competency-based education was providing a challenge to teacher professionalism. It was also supported by the ATL (1995). The ATL (1995) argued that competency-based education is inadequate in preparing adults for teaching, stating:

We remain unconvinced that there is sufficient understanding of, or expertise in, the use of competences or teacher profiles as a basis of professional development. (ATL letter 1995)

According to the ATL (1995) teachers work is very complex, and therefore, a list of competences, which need to be ticked, or a brief statement required, when achieved,

does not justify their training or experience. The ATL (1995) argued that there were three main concerns with the use of competences:

- Fuller rationale required: the government has not provided a clear identification of the competences
- Levels of competence: there needs to be a greater shared understanding if consistent assessment and standards are to be maintained.
- Professional development: there is not sufficient understanding or expertise in the use of competences.

It can be argued that some jobs, like those in education, are difficult to fit into this type of structure. Teachers work in an environment in which they interact with children and adults. They have values and views, which underpin the understanding of this interaction. These interactions and values affect their judgements and it is difficult to measure their actions against a number of ideological outcomes. Eraut (1996), also, argued that the dangers of competency based education in teaching was:

If, once trained, people consider their competence as sufficient and ignore the need for further development, the mere competence is not enough (Eraut 1996: 181)

Therefore, the efficiency of competences in ITT courses is under scrutiny as to whether it is an adequate method of training professional teachers.

STA and ITT competences

In March 1993 criteria for designing STA courses was sent to all HEIs and FEIs in England. The criteria revealed the structure of the STA courses and provided 25 STA competences, which needed to be achieved in order to award students with the STA qualification. These STA competences looked similar to the ITT competences from Circular 14/93. Teaching unions, such as the NUT (1994) and ATL (1995), were concerned that this criteria was implying that assistants can carry out the same tasks as

teachers, with less responsibility and that this might encourage schools to use STAs in substitution of qualified teachers.

The NUT (1994) advised its members not to participate in the STA initiative and the ATL (1995) did the same. The NUT (1994) believed that the STA courses were a *diluted teacher-training course* (NUT 1994), similar to the one year course to train adults to teach 5 - 8 years olds ('mums' army') which had been proposed less than twelve months previous. This one-year proposal was rejected, but teaching unions (NUT 1994; ATL 1995) believed that the STA initiative was the same proposal in disguise. They expressed this view in a letter to the Secretary of State for Education (NUT 1994; ATL 1995), but the TTA did not change the STA competences.

The STA competences and ITT competences are listed in Table 8.1. This table shows both the main and the number of subsidiary competences in each area of competence:

Table 8.1: A contrast between STA and ITT competences

STA competences	Subsidiary competences	ITT competences	Subsidiary competences
Curriculum content, planning and assessment	8	Curriculum content, planning and assessment	10
Teaching strategies	13	Teaching strategies	15
Role of the STA	4	Further professional development	8

(Adapted from the DfEE letter (1994) inviting institutions to bid for STA courses and Circular 14/93)
At first glance the two sets of competences look similar; both have the competence "curriculum content, planning and assessment" as well as "teaching strategies". So it is understandable both the NUT and ATL may have believed the competences to be the

same. In each of these competences, the teacher competences contain two more subsidiary competences, than those for the STAs (see table 8.2). This is not a vast difference considering the duties both sets of adults undertake. With the above evidence to take into consideration it is necessary to pose the question - Is there a difference between the sets of competences?

Table 8.2 shows the extent of the similarity between the ITT and the STA competences and also indicates their differences.

Table 8.2: STA and ITT subsidiary competences (first area)

STA subsidiary competences	ITT subsidiary competences
Under the teacher's direction STAs should be able to:	Newly qualified teachers should be able to:
Demonstrate familiarity with the purpose and scope of the relevant requirements of the primary curriculum	Demonstrate understanding of the purposes, scope, structure and balance of the primary curriculum
	Ensure continuity and progression within the work of their own class and with the classes to and from which their pupils transfer
To take every opportunity to develop pupils' language, reading, numeracy and related skills	Exploit, in all their teaching, opportunities to develop pupils' language, reading, numeracy, information handling and other skills.
demonstrate knowledge and basic understanding of the primary curriculum at the level which will assist effective teaching of the basic skills	demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the primary curriculum which they have studied, at the level which will support effective teaching in these subjects
To use that knowledge and understanding in supporting work with pupils and in helping to assess their progress in the basic skills	Use that knowledge and understanding to plan lessons, teach and assess pupils in the core subjects of the NC and those other subjects of the primary curriculum covered in their course; NQTs may need some guidance and support in some of these subjects
To assist in recording systematically the progress of the individual pupils	Test, assess and record systematically the progress of the individual pupils
To monitor pupils' performance and report to the teacher	Judge how well each pupil performs against appropriate criteria and standards identifying individual pupils' attainment, with reference to relevant NC requirements
To assist in using results in further support work with pupils	Use such testing and assessment in their planning and teaching
To give oral and written feedback to pupils on their attainment and progress	Provide oral and written feedback to pupils on the processes and outcomes of their learning
	Prepare and present reports on pupils' progress to parents

(Adapted from the DfEE letter (1994) inviting institutions to bid for STA courses and Circular 14/93)

The significant difference between these two sets of competences is found in the prefix, which states ‘under the teacher’s direction’ for STAs and ‘NQTs should be able to’ for teachers. This implies that the teachers would be expected to carry out these competences independently, whereas STAs would need to be supervised. Nevertheless, most of the STA and ITT competences looked similar, for example:

- *To take every opportunity to develop pupils’ language, reading, numeracy and related skills (STA competence taken from DfEE letter (March 1994).*
- *Exploit, in all their teaching, opportunities to develop pupils’ language, reading, numeracy, information handling and other skills (ITT competences taken from Circular 14/93)*

When comparing the two competences it is easy to understand how STA course providers may have adapted their STA courses from teacher training courses. Even the use of the prefix in the STA competences was broad and could be interpreted as a teacher competence. In other competences, the inclusion of words, such as *assist, support or work* and the omission of words of key words, such as *teach, test, assess and judge* in the STA competences appeared to redefine the outcomes expected of the student, but significant similarities remained. For example:

- *To monitor pupils’ performance and report to the teacher (STA competence taken from DfEE letter (March 1994).*
- *Judge how well each pupil performs against appropriate criteria and standards identifying individual pupils’ attainment, with reference to relevant NC requirements (ITT competences taken from Circular 14/93)*

The second area of competence ‘teaching strategies’ is illustrated in table 8.3.

Table 8.3: STA and ITT subsidiary competences (second area)

STA competences	ITT competences
Under the teacher's direction STAs should be able to:	Newly qualified teachers should be able to:
To work with teachers to identify and respond appropriately to individual differences between pupils	identify and respond appropriately to relevant individual differences between pupils
To show awareness of how pupils learn and of the various factors which affect the process	To show awareness of how pupils learn and of the various factors which affect the process
To assist the teacher in setting appropriate and demanding expectations of pupils	To set appropriate and demanding expectations of pupils
	Devise a variety and range of learning goals and tasks and monitor and assess them
To support clearly set out expectations of pupil behaviour and assist in securing appropriate standards of discipline.	Establish clear expectations of pupil behaviour in the classroom and secure appropriate standards of discipline
To help to create and maintain a purposeful, orderly and supportive environment for their pupils	Create and maintain a purposeful, orderly and supportive environment for their pupils
Maintain pupils interest and motivation	Maintain pupils interest and motivation
Present learning tasks and curriculum content in a clear and stimulating manner	Present learning tasks and curriculum content in a clear and stimulating manner
To work with pupils individually or collectively and to contribute to decisions about the most appropriate learning goals and teaching strategies	Teach whole classes, groups and individuals, and determine the most appropriate teaching goals and classroom contexts for using these and other teaching strategies
Use a range of teaching techniques and, in consultation with the teacher, to consider when and how to deploy them	Use a range of teaching techniques and judge when and how to deploy them
	Employ varying forms of curriculum organisation and monitor their effectiveness
Communicate clearly and effectively with pupils through questioning, instructing, explaining and feedback	Communicate clearly and effectively with pupils through questioning, instructing, explaining and feedback
Manage effectively and economically their own and their pupils' time	Manage effectively and economically their own and their pupils' time
Make constructive use of information technology and other resources for learning	Make constructive use of information technology and other resources for learning
To help train pupils in the individual and collaborative study skills necessary for effective learning	Train pupils in the individual and collaborative study skills necessary for effective learning

(Adapted from the DfEE letter (1994) inviting institutions to bid for STA courses and Circular 14/93)

The overlap that was identified in the first area of competence can be found in the second area to a greater degree this time, since some ITT and STA competences were exactly the same:

- *present learning tasks and curriculum content in a clear and stimulating manner. (STA competence taken from DfEE letter (March 1994)).*

- *present learning tasks and curriculum content in a clear and stimulating manner (ITT competence taken from Circular 14/93)*

Another example of identical competences in STA and ITT training was:

- *Make constructive use of computers and other classroom resources for learning. (STA competence taken from DfEE letter (March 1994).*
- *Make constructive use of computers and other classroom resources for learning (ITT competence taken from Circular 14/93).*

Thus it can be argued that some STA competences were shorter versions of the ITT competences, while others were identical.

The third area of competence was 'the role of the STA' for STAs and 'further professional development' for teachers, which is illustrated in table 8.4:

Table 8.4: STA and ITT subsidiary competences (third area)

STA competences	ITT competences
STAs should be able to demonstrate a range of competences related to the exercise of their role under the direction of the teacher. These competences will need to be acquired or developed in a context of understanding:	NQTs should have acquired in initial training the necessary foundation to develop:
The relevant requirements of the primary curriculum	A working knowledge of their contractual, legal, administrative and pastoral responsibilities as teachers
The place of the school in educating primary pupils and in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments of pupils	A readiness to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
The role of the teacher	The ability to recognise diversity of talent including that of gifted pupils
Their own support in relation to teachers, other support staff and agencies, and pupils	Effective working relationships with professional colleagues (including support staff) and parents
	The ability to evaluate pupils' learning and recognise the effects on that learning of teachers' expectations and actions
	The ability to identify and provide for special educational needs and specific learning difficulties
	Their professional knowledge, understanding and skill through further training and development
	Vision, imagination and critical awareness in educating pupils

(Adapted from the DfEE letter (1994) inviting institutions to bid for STA courses and Circular 14/93)

Two subsidiary competences are the same for both the STA and teacher, such as

'promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils' and 'effective working relationships with staff, agencies, and pupils', although the others are different. The main difference between these two sets of competences lies within their scope or range. In this instance, the ITT competence promotes further career development and responsibility for pupil progress, whereas the STA competence promotes her support in relation to others within the school.

It is evident that the sets of competences are very similar. This is not coincidental. It was noted, in the previous section, that employers and specialists in the specified occupation are often involved in identifying relevant competences. In this instance, the TTA, the agency that produced the ITT competences, produced the STA competences. Both these agencies obviously perceived that teachers and STAs were/should be carrying out similar roles in the classroom. This indicates that teaching unions concerns on the STA initiative were not unfounded, as it was evident on analysing the STA and ITT competences that the STA was designed as a 'diluted teacher training course'. This occurred because STA course providers were recommended by the DfEE to develop the TTA STA competences. However, the real concern is the quality and level at which STA students achieved the competences, especially since the influence of those competences would affect their future STA deployment and work.

STA competences

Each of the four institutions expected their students to reach an appropriate level of competence for their work as STAs. They achieved this in different ways: for example, STA course provider C re-worded the competences, with the co-operation of teachers in

local primary schools. The competences were altered in such a way that teachers would perceive the competences were more appropriate to the training of classroom assistants. STA course provider M revised the TTA STA competences. They removed those words, which were pertained to teacher activities, such as record or assess. STA course provider LM sought support from nursery nurse lecturers from local FEIs in an attempt to produce competences, which were expected of trained classroom assistants, and not those that may exceed expectations. STA course provider LE made the competences more specific by identifying skills and tasks. The competences and their interpretation would shape STA training and be part of the process of structuring students into the STA role.

STA course provider C

The STA competences at this institution were altered from the original DfEE (1994) STA competences. The STA course had eight areas of competence; each had several subsidiary competences. This can be seen in table 8.5.

Table 8.5: STA course provider C - areas of STA competence and subsidiary competences

1. Understands the relevant requirements of the primary curriculum	
i.	Demonstrates a basic familiarity with the purpose, breadth and balance of the curriculum as experienced in one school
ii.	Demonstrates an awareness of where the responsibility lies for the organisation and implementation of the curriculum in one school
iii.	Demonstrates a basic understanding if the terminology and structure of the NC
2. Awareness of how children learn	
i.	Gives clear audible instructions
ii.	Uses appropriate language and vocabulary
iii.	Communicates effectively through questioning, instructing, explaining and responding
iv.	Observes and records children's involvement in learning activities
v.	Gives appropriate feedback to teacher on individual children's learning
vi.	Gives appropriate feedback to children on their progress and effort
vii.	Treats all children fairly and considerately
viii.	Maintains pupils' interest individually and in groups
ix.	Responds appropriately to individual differences
x.	Has a clear idea of the purpose of each learning activity
xi.	Presents learning activities in a stimulating manner

xii.	Creates and maintains an orderly environment
3. Effective use of resources	
i.	Selects appropriate resources with advice from the class teacher
ii.	Designs and makes learning materials which are effective in supporting children's learning in maths and English
iii.	Makes constructive use of computers to support pupils' learning in maths and English
4. Understands the role of the school in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children	
i.	Identifies the opportunities one school creates for the promotion of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils
ii.	Uses opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils
iii.	Uses resources that reflect the positive value of diversity
5. Supports children's learning in maths	
i.	Demonstrates a basic knowledge of the NC KS 1 requirements for number
ii.	Uses that knowledge to support children's learning in number
iii.	Understands the range of opportunities that exist for developing children's number skills
iv.	Able to support children in other areas of maths
6. Supports children's learning in English	
i.	Demonstrates a basic knowledge of the NC understands the importance of talk for learning
ii.	Demonstrates a basic knowledge of the process by which children learn to read
iii.	Uses this knowledge to support children's reading
iv.	Uses this knowledge to support children's reading
v.	Demonstrates a basic knowledge of how children become writers
vi.	Uses this knowledge of support children's writing
vii.	Uses a wide range of opportunities to develop children's oracy and literacy
7. Under the direction of the class teacher helps to monitor pupils progress	
i.	Uses knowledge gained to appropriately report to teachers on children's performance in number
ii.	Uses knowledge gained to appropriately report to teachers on children's performance in reading and writing
iii.	Gives pupils appropriate feedback on their performance
8. Understand the role of the STA	
i.	Understand the difference between the role and responsibilities of the STA and the role and responsibilities of the class teacher
ii.	Understand the need for confidentiality when handling sensitive information
iii.	Able to accept guidance and advice from other teachers
iv.	Able to evaluate own performance and suggest ideas for improvement
v.	Able to maintain effective working relationships with other adults in the school
vi.	Able to manage time effectively and economically
vii.	Demonstrates a knowledge of school policies and awareness of own role in supporting them

(Adapted from STA course provider C - STA course guidelines (1995))

Competences 2, 3, 5 and 6 were part of the TTA (1994) STA competence – Teaching strategies. Competences were broken down so they were more specific. Words

associated with teacher activities, such as, plan, assess, teach were removed and phases such as, 'demonstrates a basic familiarity', 'demonstrates an awareness of', 'demonstrates a basic understanding' were included. It was also evident that general skills expected of adults who work with children were listed as part of the subsidiary competences, e.g. 'gives clear and audible instructions' and 'gives appropriate feedback'. Wording of the competences made a considerable difference, especially when it came to specific tasks, for instance, 'has a clear idea of the purpose of each learning activity' gives the impression the STA does not have to prepare, plan or assess the children. The only requirement was that she knew why she was applying this activity. This did make a difference to how teachers perceived STAs, according to all STAs and teachers who were interviewed in the Cheshire schools. All STAs claimed that teachers were very supportive towards them and their training.

It must be noted, however, that the success of the STA course at STA course provider C was largely due to the close links established with head teachers and teacher mentors for STAs from the start of their STA course. The STA team at STA course provider C had a cluster group of head teachers that advised them on school-based issues and it was the cluster head teachers that put forward their assistants or informed a local school of the STA course. The constant mediation between school and HE created a set of STA competences that were acceptable to the teachers involved in the programme and which did not appear to be training STAs to go beyond the boundary of classroom assistant.

The contact between schools and the STA course provider also encouraged the STA course leader to include an area of competences on 'the role of the STA as STAs and

teachers were unsure of the STA role. This competence was produced to clarify this situation. Teachers and STAs did claim that this competence had helped them to understand the expectations of STAs. It also encouraged STAs to reflect on their role, as to how they could improve or develop themselves. It encouraged them to be reflective supporters who recognised the boundaries between their role and that of the teacher.

STA course provider M

This STA course had the original STA areas of competence present, for example, curriculum content and planning, teaching strategies, and assessment and record keeping. This can be seen on table 8.6.

Table 8.6: STA course provider M - STA competences

Curriculum Content and Planning	
i.	In conjunction with the teacher, is able to engage in the short term planning of pupils' tasks.
ii.	Can demonstrate familiarity with the mathematics and English requirements of the National Curriculum at KS 1.
iii.	Can assist with the maintenance of a suitable environment for the care of plants and animals in the KS 1 classroom.
iv.	In consultation with the class teacher, prepare appropriate resources to support a designated activity in science.
v.	In consultation with the class teacher, prepare resources for young children to use when engaged in painting and drawing.
vi.	In consultation with the class teacher, be able to set up and use a computer system
vii.	Assemble a suitable record of resources which should be found in the KS 1 classroom and translate this into a database.
viii.	Under the guidance of the class teacher, prepare small group activities to be undertaken by children in the local environment or for an educational visit.
ix.	Has participated in college based activities evaluating the appropriateness of a range of reading books
x.	Can support the class teacher in creating a representational play area in the KS 1 classroom
xi.	Can select appropriate resources for a mathematical activity as set by the teacher
xii.	Can produce (under the teacher's direction) worksheets/workcards and other resources for mathematical teaching, to a satisfactory standard
xiii.	Is aware of the role of an STA in supporting the teacher's curriculum planning at KS 1
Learning and Teaching Strategies	
i.	Under the teacher's direction, is aware of, and is responsive to, individual differences.
ii.	Is aware of different aspects of how home background influences pupil behaviour and attainment in school.
iii.	Has some basic understanding of how children learn
iv.	Can assist the teacher in implementing a range of teaching techniques

v.	Can assist the teacher in implementing a range of organisational strategies
vi.	Under the teacher's direction can present and supervise a learning task effectively
vii.	Can assist the teacher in stimulating and maintaining pupil interest and motivation
viii.	Under the teacher's direction, is able to work effectively with groups and individual pupils
ix.	Under the teacher's direction can manage own and pupils' time effectively
x.	In Conjunction with the teacher, can demand appropriate pupil behaviour
xi.	Can demonstrate a sensitivity to children's individual spoken language competencies
xii.	Can demonstrate the ability to support effectively children's talk, ideas and decision making, whilst supervising a practical activity
xiii.	Can supervise and support a group of children in a structured play activity
xiv.	Can read and tell stories to groups of children
xv.	Knows how to create language learning activities/games from a big book
xvi.	Knows how to use appropriate strategies when hearing individual children read
xvii.	Can demonstrate the use of appropriate strategies to support children's early attempts at writing
xviii.	Is aware of different stages of cognitive, social, moral and physical development
xix.	Is aware of the importance of play for young children's general development
xx.	Can, under the direction of the teacher, encourage children to operate in group situations
xxi.	Can encourage positive attitudes in school, under the direction of the teacher
xxii.	Can assist the teacher to identify which children need assistance with different tasks
xxiii.	Can support the teaching of children with SEN
xxiv.	Under the direction of the teacher, is able to provide opportunities for developing a range of motor skills
xxv.	Can conduct a practical mathematics session
xxvi.	Can create an effective mathematics display in accordance with the class teacher's instructions
xxvii.	Can operate a computer and use software, as directed by the teacher
xxviii.	Can use a four function calculator
xxix.	Can use reprographic equipment
xxx.	Can show initiative when carrying out a directed task e.g. ask appropriate supplementary questions to direct the children's thinking
xxxi.	Can use a range of mathematical terms
xxxii.	Can demonstrate an awareness of different forms of questioning i.e. 'closed' and 'open' questions

Assessment and Record Keeping	
i.	Is aware of the need for and purpose of assessment and record keeping in the primary school
ii.	Is aware of the National Curriculum assessment requirements at KS 1
iii.	Under the teacher's direction, is able to record systematically, aspects of pupil attainment and progress
iv.	Under the teacher's direction is able to give some oral and written feedback to pupils
v.	Has a knowledge of SATs at KS 1
vi.	Has demonstrated familiarity with KS 1 SATs through workshop exercises

General Developments and Comments	
i.	Is aware of the need for a professional attitude when working in a primary school
ii.	Is aware of the confidential aspects of an assistant's work and the need for discretion in appropriate circumstances
iii.	Maintains appropriate attitudes and appearance
iv.	Maintains clear and well organised documentation
v.	Has demonstrated the ability to work as part of a team
vi.	Shows an aptitude and enthusiasm for classroom work

(Adapted from STA course provider M - STA course guidelines (1994))

The subsidiary competences on this STA course were different from the DfEE STA competences. Firstly, the subsidiary competences focused on basic skills like ‘Can use a four function calculator’ or ‘Can use reprographic equipment’. Secondly, the inclusion of phrases, such as ‘in conjunction with the class teacher’, ‘can assist’, ‘in consultation with the class teacher’, ‘under the guidance of the class teacher’, ‘has participated in’, ‘can support’, ‘is aware of’ or ‘under the teacher’s direction’ altered the emphasis of the competence and limited STA autonomy, for example:

2.c.4 To give oral and written feedback to pupils on their attainment and progress (DfEE/TTA)

In comparison, the STA course provider M competence (STA course provider M 1994) was:

2.c.4 Under the teacher’s direction is able to give some oral and written feedback to pupils (LJMU)

Teachers in the pilot study expressed the view that the inclusion of *written feedback* was an indication that STAs were being expected to cross the boundary from assistant to teacher. Teachers in the pilot study claimed that STAs should only provide oral, not written feedback. These teachers argued that written feedback was formal assessment, and this was part of a teacher’s function. This was indicative of the opposition to the STA scheme. Some teachers were critical of every aspect of the scheme. In particular, two STAs from STA course provider M (STA M6 and M8) had witnessed strong opposition towards their training. STA M6 had to change schools during her training and STA M8 STA qualification was not recognised in the school. This highlights the extent to which some teachers saw the STA initiative as a challenge to teacher professional status.

Finally, it was noticeable that STA course provider M had more than twice the number of STA competences than was contained in the DfEE (1994) guidelines. This was because the STA team believed that the original competences were too broad in content, for example:

7. a. 2 to take every opportunity to develop pupils' language, reading, numeracy and related skills (STA competence taken from DfEE letter (March 1994)).

This competence was broken down into 8 competences:

- *Can demonstrate familiarity with the Mathematics and English requirements of the National Curriculum at KS 1.*
- *In consultation with the class teacher, prepare resources for young children to use when engaged in painting and drawing.*
- *In consultation with the class teacher, be able to set up a computer system.*
- *Can select materials to support story telling and poetry at KS 1.*
- *Has participated in college based activities evaluating the appropriateness of a range of reading books.*
- *Can support the class teacher in creating a representational play area in the KS 1 classroom.*
- *Can select appropriate resources for a mathematical activity as set by the teacher.*
- *Can produce (under the teacher's direction) worksheets/wordcards and other resources for mathematical teaching, to a satisfactory standard.*

(Taken from STA course provider M - STA course guidelines 1994)

STA course provider M had not increased the requirements expected of or extended the knowledge base by doing this; the intention was to help both STAs and then teachers by writing specific subsidiary competences. The revised competences clarified the tasks STAs completed throughout their training and would be expected to complete in their deployment. The final competence is of particular interest. It clearly states that STAs were to produce worksheets to a satisfactory standard. This is a teacher task. Therefore,

even though STA course provider M wanted STAs to be directed by a teacher, there was an element in the STA training of expecting STAs to undertake functions normally assumed to be within the provenance of teachers. These STAs were being trained to perform para-professional functions in relation to teachers.

STA course provider LM

The main competences were divided up into six areas, each with subsidiary competences. This STA course had the shortest list of competences, which, like the others had been developed from the original DfEE STA competences. This can be seen in table 8.7:

Table 8.7: STA course provider LM - STA areas of competences and subsidiary competences

1. Assist in the teaching of and support children's learning in mathematics
1. Demonstrate an awareness of the National Curriculum guidelines for mathematics
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the opportunities for developing mathematics through practical activities in the classroom
3. Demonstrate an awareness of different ways in which children can classify and record data
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the central concept of place value in developing children's understanding of mathematics
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the use of appropriate language in developing children's mathematical learning
6. Demonstrate the use of IT to support children's learning and understanding in mathematics

2. Assist in the teaching of and support children's learning in English
1. Demonstrate an awareness of the National Curriculum guidelines for English
2. Demonstrate an awareness of curriculum areas as a context into which reading and the teaching of reading may be integrated
3. Demonstrate an awareness of the variety of strategies used in the teaching of reading
4. Demonstrate an awareness of the variety of strategies used to promote oracy, acknowledging children's differing experience
5. Demonstrate the use of IT to support children's learning and understanding in English across the curriculum
6. Demonstrate the ability to use a variety of strategies and support techniques in developing children's writing

3. Support the planning, assessment, recording and reporting of children's progress
1. Demonstrate observation skills using a variety of techniques
2. Demonstrate effective planning under the guidance of the class teacher
3. Demonstrate ways of supporting assessment and reporting children's progress to the class teacher
4. Demonstrate systematic recording of a child's progress in mathematics and English using a variety of strategies

4. Maintain the classroom climate, routine and accepted patterns of behaviour
1. Demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which a child's self esteem may be developed in the classroom situation
2. Demonstrate effective management of different size groups of children
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of classroom and school routines
4. Demonstrate a knowledge of selection, organisation and use of resources

5. Maintain the standards appropriate to a professional working in the school context and as a member of a team
1. Demonstrate an awareness of the scope of the Primary Curriculum including themes and dimensions
2. Demonstrate effective working relationships with other adults in a school
3. Demonstrate consistency, reliability and enthusiasm

6. Question, reflect and evaluate his/her approach to learning
1. Demonstrate the management of time effectively
2. Demonstrate the ability to manage his/her own work
3. Demonstrate the ability to modify performance based on reflection or feedback
4. Demonstrate an interest in new or different approaches and ideas

(Adapted from the STA competences, Lancashire Consortium (1995))

These competences indicate that STAs at STA course provider LM have elements of 'teacher' responsibilities in the classroom, especially when the prefixes of the competences are to "assist in teaching", question, reflect and evaluate his/her approach "and" support (with) the planning, and assessment. In particular, competence 3: Support the planning, assessment, recording and reporting of children's progress, contained three competences, which could have been expected of a teacher:

- 3.1 Demonstrate observation skills using a variety of techniques
- 3.3 Demonstrate effective planning [under the guidance of the class teacher]
- 3.4 Demonstrate systematic recording of a child's progress in mathematics and English using a variety of strategies

Another competence, which could have evoked a reaction from teachers, is:

- 4.2 Demonstrate effective management of different size groups of children

The word 'group' is quite broad and could mean a small group of up to 4, or a large group, which could reach to the whole class. Unclear definitions meant that teachers could use these STAs how they deemed fit. The inclusion of such phrases as 'using a variety of strategies', 'demonstrate effective planning' and 'demonstrate an

understanding of/knowledge of' also gives the impression that the STA competences are for a professional working in the classroom, which is the sixth competence. This training provided for STAs at STA course provider LM was blurring the boundaries between STA and teacher functions and responsibilities.

STA course provider LE

The fourth STA course provider had specific intentions and there was no blurring of boundaries. The STA course leader, like the other course leaders, had altered the DfEE (1994) STA competences. Details of the areas of competence and subsidiary competences can be seen in table 8.8.

Table 8.8: STA course provider LE - STA competences

1.1 Ability to establish positive relationships with children when supporting their learning	
A skilled STA should:	
i.	Listen to children's responses
ii.	Give positive feedback to children
iii.	Acknowledge and encourage children's ideas and contributions to activities
iv.	Understand when and when not to intervene in children's tasks
v.	Understand why it is important to participate in activity alongside children
vi.	Use a variety of strategies to promote learning
1.2 Awareness of how pupils learn and the various factors that affect the process	
A skilled STA should:	
a. Demonstrate:	
i.	An awareness of equal opportunity in respect of gender, special needs and cultural background
ii.	Awareness of the need for a comfortable and secure learning environment
iii.	Knowledge of relevant school policies in number, reading and writing
b. Be able to:	
i.	Explain clearly the nature and purpose of activities presented to children
ii.	Allow appropriate time for completion of a task and follow up discussion
iii.	Manage children in a way that lets them be fully involved in learning
iv.	Encourage children to explain their action associated with learning tasks
v.	Prepare and provide suitable aids to enhance learning
vi.	Adapt activities to cater for the characteristics of young learners
vii.	Encourage collaborative work in a group

1.3r: Knowledge and understanding of the place of literacy in the primary curriculum at a level that will support the learning of basic skills of reading
A skilled STA should:
a. identify and develop language through practical activities
i. Understand and enhance the language opportunities in practical activities
ii. Plan some practical activities based on a book which supports speaking and listening, reading and writing
b. support reading strategies
i. Enable children to participate in shared and guided reading experience
ii. Understand the different strategies that children can use when reading
iii. Hear children read and know how to encourage them to use a multi-cueing system of word identification
iv. Enable children to use phonics as part of a multi-cueing system and recognise the place of rhymes in developing phonemic awareness
c. observe and record reading behaviour
i. Recognise 'playing at reading' as emergent reading behaviour
ii. Observe children in reading and note their reading behaviour
d. understand use of text
i. Understand the differences between reading and telling stories
ii. Understand how the school's reading scheme is used
iii. Understand how the use of structural devices in non-fictional books help the child to organise information

1.3w: Knowledge and understanding of the place of literacy in the primary curriculum at a level that will support the learning of basic skills of writing
A skilled STA should:
a. support children learning writing skills
i. Help children to develop skills in handwriting
ii. Help children to develop skills in spelling
iii. Assist children in developing their drafting and editing skills
b. work with children to develop their writing
i. Encourage children to structure their writing
ii. Act as a scribe in shared writing activity
c. support the teacher in providing a wide learning environment for children's writing
i. Use a concept keyboard and/or wordprocessor to help children write
ii. Help to develop a writing area
iii. Help to set up a role play area to encourage writing development
d. understand writing behaviours
i. Understand the elements involved in developing children's handwriting skills
ii. Recognise the stages children go through from showing emergent writing to confidence in writing
iii. Understand the ranges of writing that children are expected to undertake in school
iv. Understand that purpose and audience are important in writing
v. Recognise the different stages of the writing process

1.4r: Knowledge and understanding of the place of numeracy in the primary curriculum at a level that will support the learning of basic skills of mathematics
A skilled STA should:
a. use opportunities for promoting number
i. Understand the mathematical opportunities in practical activities found in the classroom
ii. Recognise the place of play in early learning of numbers
iii. Use rhymes etc. to introduce and reinforce number concepts
iv. Use everyday routines to promote incidental learning of number

b. support children learning mathematics	
i.	Use and introduce relevant mathematical vocabulary
ii.	Encourage discussion of mathematical ideas among children
iii.	Recognise application of available materials to mathematics tasks
iv.	Encourage children to reason logically on the basis of their practical experience
c. understand mathematical processes	
i.	Understand how children progress in developing concepts of number
ii.	Understand the problem solving process and how it can be applied in classroom activities
iii.	Recognise that children need to have experience in practical and mental mathematics as well as pencil and paper activities
iv.	Understand that number concepts can be applied in other areas of mathematics and across the curriculum

2.1: Understanding the process of planning and skill in the effective implementation of work planned by the teacher	
A skilled STA should:	
a. in the process of planning:	
i.	Understand the teacher's intentions for learning for a particular task
ii.	Plan the provision of appropriate resources to accompany an activity
iii.	Plan and identify questions appropriate to the intended learning
iv.	Be familiar with appropriate National Curriculum statements linked to the learning experiences
v.	Produce plans after taking advice from the teacher to meet teacher's learning intentions
b. use skills during implementation of a task to:	
i.	Introduce and explain, in a clear manner, the nature and purpose of activities presented to children
ii.	Maintain children's interest and attention
iii.	Respond to individual needs and differences in a group in consultation with the teacher
iv.	Explain, demonstrate and discuss where appropriate
v.	Draw a session to a satisfying close

2.2: Understanding and skill in the process of evaluation of learning experiences	
A skilled STA should:	
i.	Engage in reflection with the mentor on suitability and match planned tasks
ii.	Engage in participant observation, identifying positive and negative aspects of implementation of a task
iii.	Discuss with the teacher/mentor the suitability of planned learning aids used in a task
iv.	Reflect on the suitability of a learning experience used with a particular group of children and draw implications for its future use
v.	Discuss whether planned tasks meet the teacher's identified learning intention
vi.	Adapt activities in the light of previous implementation
vii.	Collect and examine end products of tasks, where appropriate, and discuss with the teacher whether they match intended learning outcomes

3.1: Ability to assist the teacher in monitoring the pupil's learning and recording pupil's progress	
A skilled STA should:	
a. in monitoring learning:	
i.	Be able to identify verbal responses as evidence of the achievement and progress of individuals within a group
ii.	Identify, with the help of the teacher, the evidence to be collected for monitoring learning
iii.	Collect appropriate examples of end products as evidence of learning

b. in recording pupil's progress	
i.	Give verbal feedback to children on their progress
ii.	Report verbally to the teacher on a child's achievements during a task
iii.	Be familiar with a teacher's methods of recording learning in reading, writing and number
iv.	Record progress on a record prepared by the teacher
v.	Prepare a record sheet to note children's achievements during a learning experience

4.1: Adopting a professional approach to working within a team	
A skilled STA should:	
a. know about	
i.	School policies on safety, discipline and equal opportunities
ii.	Rules and routines operating in any classroom s/he is working in
b. demonstrate the ability to	
i.	Show enthusiasm when working with other team members and children
ii.	Contribute to discussion in team meetings
iii.	Offer teamwork skills e.g. Collaboration, tolerance of others' views
iv.	Be consistent with the team's practice when interacting with children
c. in daily practice	
i.	Discuss with the teacher before a session the work to be implemented
ii.	Refer to the teacher for advice and guidance when necessary
iii.	Respond appropriately when presented with difficulties

5.1: Using and working with children on information technology	
A skilled STA should:	
a. demonstrate an ability to	
i.	Use a wordprocessing package for personal use
ii.	Use a calculator for arithmetic during everyday problem solving situations
iii.	Write a simple program for a programmable toy
b. have experience of using the following with children	
i.	A calculator
ii.	A program that helps children's writing (including use of a concept keyboard if available)
iii.	A program that helps children's mathematical learning at Key Stage 1
iv.	A programmable toy such as Roamer or Pixie
c. should be aware of	
i.	The use of IT in the outside world
ii.	The programme of study for IT at Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum

(Adapted from STA course provider LE - Course Guidelines 1995 -96)

On examining the STA course provider LE main and subsidiary competences on the STA course it is evident that there was a vast difference between these STA subsidiary competences and those for other STA courses':

- *Knows how to use appropriate strategies when hearing individual children read (taken from the STA course provider M - STA competences)*
- *Demonstrates a basic knowledge of the process by which children learn to read (taken from the STA course provider C - STA competences 1995)*

- *Hear children read and know how to encourage them to use a multi-cueing system of word identification (taken from STA course provider LE - STA competences)*

The three examples explain the same concept, yet the STA competences at STA course provider LE expects the STA to carry out a task normally expected of a teacher. In this instance, the STA competence was a progression of the STA competences from the other STA courses. Even the original DfEE STA competences were not so specific.

They had achieved this progression by:

- Firstly, the wording was not 'toned down', like the other STA course competences, for example, phrases such as 'under the guidance of a teacher' were not used, instead the phrase ' a skilled STA should be able to' was used, instead. This indicated that the STA did not have to be directed by a teacher because the STA would have the knowledge and understanding to carry out certain teacher tasks.
- Secondly, the tasks were usually skill based, such as applying learning strategies.
- Thirdly, more specific tasks like, 'the multi-cueing system of word identification' and 'producing plans after advice from the teacher on learning intentions' were expected. These involve functions normally expected of a teacher, which suggested STA course provider LE believed that STAs should be undertaking teacher activities.

It was evident that the STA competences at STA course provider LE provided STAs with the opportunity to experience and carry out skills. The STA course was enabling their STAs to specialise in specific areas, such as reading. In doing so, the training provided for STAs at STA course provider LE was moving close to or crossing the boundary between what might be expected of a STA and what teachers would normally do.

Conclusion

Competency-based education on the STA courses had produced a varying degree of competence. On analysing the STA competences on the four STA courses it is clear that each course provider was training a different type of STA:

- STA course provider C was training STAs as reflective practitioners, who could support the teacher in her teaching, but not be expected to take on the role of a teacher.
- The STAs trained at STA course provider M were being utilised in the same way as those from STA course provider C but with an element of teacher responsibility, in particular the use of STAs in planning. Therefore, they were not used as teachers, but had responsibilities beyond that of an assistant, similar to a para-professional
- The STAs at STA course provider LM were encouraged to be actively involved in planning and assessment. It was also unclear how many children they would be expected to work with. The role was a blurring of that expected of a teacher.
- The STAs at STA course provider LE were expected to perform certain tasks, which would only be expected of a teacher. They were specific tasks in the areas of importance – mathematics and English. They were being used almost like a specialist.

The STA competences had shaped the four STA courses with different outcomes for their STAs. Similarities existed, such as, mathematics and English input, and the involvement in assessment and planning. The differences were in the scope of the competences; some were ill defined, like that of STA course provider M, whereas others were clear and concise, like that of STA course provider LE. Although, teachers and assistants may carry out similar tasks on occasions, they do not perform the same tasks at the same level. STA course provider LE was indicating that this was not necessarily so. This raised questions about the nature of STAs in schools, especially since two institutions had blurred the boundaries between an STA's work and that of a teacher.

Chapter 9.

STA Deployment: From supporter to specialist.

All STAs before training on the STA course carried out certain tasks, which were common to all assistants in schools. They supported teachers with administrative duties like photocopying, preparation of resources, changing library books, put up displays and general cleaning duties within the classroom. These tasks were menial with no responsibilities, but they were the traditional duties expected of assistants. Throughout the 1960/70s in the need to raise standards in education assistants, were seen by some, as a possible resource not used to its full potential (TES 1964; CACE 1967; Duthie and Kennedy 1975). It was during the early 1980s when extra provision was made for SEN in the 1981 Education Act that assistants began to help small groups of children in the classroom, especially in language activities. This help ranged from practical activities, such as hearing children read, phonic activities and language development games. This provision supported the involvement of assistants in educating children.

Training for these tasks came from numerous sources. On-the-job training from teachers was the most popular with the teacher's knowledge and expertise of certain tasks being passed onto their assistants. Taught college courses offered assistants further knowledge, which included numerous child care courses as well as the nursery nursing qualifications. Although, dissatisfaction of the content of these courses from teachers and assistants had been reported for sometime (Clift et al 1980; Woolf and Bassett 1988; Moyles and Suschitzky 1994). The main criticism of these courses was that they did not provide educational input. The STA initiative was introduced as a

means of supporting assistants in schools with basic skills in mathematics and English and includes up-to-date methods for working with small groups of children. The STAs that had trained at each of the institutions in the STA research had been provided with this new knowledge and so acquired different skills than before. This led to STAs developing different expectations about their role and Heads and teachers also having similarly changed expectations.

STAs, perhaps, may have anticipated that the new expectations in their schools would be similar to those, which they derived from their training. Their expectations, however, differed from institution to institution.

- Teachers closely monitored the STA course at STA course provider C. STAs were used to support the teacher's teaching by taking groups of children and reinforcing concepts or skills. These STAs did participate in planning but it was in conjunction with the class teacher and usually informal. They also participated in assessments and evaluations and were expected to look closely at the children's learning and their teaching of activities in a reflective way to improve learning and teaching. These STAs were *reflective supporters* because, while their training gave them some teaching skills they were carried out within a tight framework of teacher control.
- The STAs at STA course provider M were trained in a diluted version of the original STA criteria (DfEE 1993). The structure of competences was almost identical. The course also provided its STAs with the second highest award (60 CATS credits). The outcome of the course was not to provide a 'teacher-on-the-cheap' but it did give the impression that they were expected to undertake some tasks, which were also carried out by teachers, such as, planning activities and assessing their outcomes. The STA training was that of a *para-professional*. STAs were, by the end of their training, able to carry out some limited elements of the teacher's role.
- The STAs at STA course provider LM were expected to plan and teach most of their activities, and share some of the responsibility in teacher assessments and formal assessments, such as

SATs. These were activities expected of a *professional*. STAs were able to share in some teaching tasks.

- The STAs trained at STA course provider LE were expected to plan and teach their own activities. This meant that they shared the teaching responsibility. They also shared some responsibility in teacher assessments and formal assessments, such as SATs. STAs may have been deployed in this way because their STA course provided them with an intense course in teaching mathematics and English to KS 1 children. It provided them with skills in specific subjects like a subject *specialist* in aspects of their work and be able to independently carry out tasks normally expected of a teacher.

To examine how far this was achieved it is necessary to analyse the deployment of STAs in their four roles:

- The Reflective supporter (STAs trained at STA course provider C)
- The Para-professional (STAs trained at STA course provider M)
- The Professional (STAs trained at STA course provider LM)
- The Specialist (STAs trained at STA course provider LE)

The Reflective Supporter

There were five STAs (C1, C2, C3, C4 and C5) who were trained in this way. These STAs found that some of their previous tasks, such as, photocopying, cleaning paint pots, preparing tables, were given to other assistants, parent helpers, or shared between the STA and the teacher. All class teachers from this sample were very supportive of the STA initiative and their STA. They had been kept informed of the STA training through the mentor meetings held at STA course provider C and both groups, the mentors and lecturers, had developed the framework for the STA role together.

Two STAs, STA C2 and C4 were deployed in small country schools, where the KS1

class teacher had children of three different age ranges – Reception to Year 2. These STAs worked closely with the class teacher and organised the children for learning. The class teacher would normally work with the Year 1/2 children and the STA would work with the Reception children. This usually meant that the STA was working with relatively large groups of up to 12 children. However, the class teacher planned all the activities but because of the close working relationship between the STA and the teacher, planning meetings were held on a weekly basis so they could organise tasks for children. STAs were not expected to have the responsibility of undertaking any planning, but to become involved in the organisation of the planning. STAs, also, did not have the responsibility of teaching new concepts as the class teacher always introduced them; the STA would reinforce the concept, instead. Therefore, these STAs did participate in planning and teaching of the children's activities, but did not have the responsibility. They were deployed like a 'Reflective Supporter'.

STA C5 had a similar deployment as the previous STAs. She, too, helped with the organisation of tasks as she worked with a teacher who had 38 children in her class. However, her deployment was slightly different in the fact that she had a shared role of being the school secretary (mornings) and Year 2 classroom assistant (afternoons). The STA believed that her former role sometimes interfered with her latter role because on occasions she was required to work in the office more than her contractual hours. Due to these circumstances her role was not as developed as the previous STAs, but was leading to the role of 'Reflective Supporter'.

STA C3 was expected to contribute in planning and teaching like STA C2, C4 and

C5, but with one exception. Her head teacher and class teacher, who had responsibility for early years, believed that she could combine her past experiences of a play group leader with her STA training, to plan pre-school sessions for the new starters¹. This STA, under the guidance of her head teacher and the early years co-ordinator prepared and planned six sessions (including practical and written activities) for pre-school children. These sessions were used to welcome the pre-school children to the school in July, as they started full time school in the September. This STA was teaching these sessions. She planned and prepared (produced worksheets, collected resources) the activities, as well as assessed the children. Therefore, this STA was used like a 'reflective supporter' most of the time but her head teacher and the early years co-ordinator were gradually extending her duties.

STA C1 worked in a large primary school, which had a double intake. The STA worked with 9 teachers throughout the week, yet worked every afternoon between 1 – 2.30 p.m. with the same children – the Reception class. This STA claimed that:

Some teachers tell me what to do, whereas others expect me to get involved in the planning of the activities (STA C1)

It was difficult for this STA to get involved in planning the childrens' activities because she moved around the school frequently (she could visit up to four classes in one day), apart from the time she spent with the Reception class. When working in the Reception class, the STA worked with groups of up to 10 children in language and art activities. The STA's activities were directed by the teacher, but discussed on a daily basis, leaving the STA to provide additional input or extension activities to supplement the teacher activity.

¹ The STA had been at the school for 8 years, yet her previous experience was not used until the STA training.

The Reception teacher also had the responsibility of being KS1 co-ordinator, which required her to liaise with the head teacher, colleagues and on occasion take part in IN-SET (in-service training). This extra responsibility sometimes meant that she needed to have non-contact time or teaching coverage if she had been absent through IN-SET. The teacher preferred her STA to teach in her absence and the STA had taught her whole class three times in three months of up to 1 – 3 hours on each occasion.

This STA also worked closely with the head teacher, who required her to teach a reading recovery programme to 12 children. This STA planned, taught and assessed these children, and discussed her weekly activities with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). This STA was highly regarded by the head teacher, and he claimed to have used staff meetings to make teachers aware of how STAs should be used in school. The head teacher as well as the KS1 co-ordinator were extending the STA's role from a 'reflective supporter' to a 'specialist'.

Each STA was deployed differently, but on examining the STAs who were trained as *Reflective Supporters*, it was apparent that they had certain key characteristics, which were:

- Work with large groups of up to 12 children.
- Support children in practical and written activities
- All STA tasks were directed by a teacher
- STAs were expected to contribute own knowledge and skills to tasks with children, on occasion expected to plan sessions.
- To discuss the teacher's weekly/termly/yearly topics in advance.
- Make oral contributions to the teacher's planning, if necessary.

- Display work they had carried out with children (these were usually their own ideas, which they had carried out with the children).
- Contribute to teacher assessments on children.
- Contribute to the teaching and learning of maths and English.

Three STAs (C2, C4 and C5) were used as a reflective supporter. These STAs did not enter teacher boundaries because there was a strong teacher influence in their STA training to maintain these STAs were trained in a supportive way. Two STAs (C1 and C3) had a blurring of roles because they had adopted the role of a reflective supporter in some (C1) or most (C3) of their deployment, as well as that of a teacher in other areas of their deployment. However, it varied accordingly; STA C3 was liaising in conjunction with and working under the guidance of the head teacher and class teacher, whereas STA C1 was given the responsibility of being used as a teacher. The head teachers and class teachers with management responsibility had extended the role of their STA, perhaps, to enhance their professionalism or as a cost-effective solution.

The para-professional

There were eight of these STAs. Two STAs, M2 and M6, had gained full time employment through their training on the STA course in different schools. They both worked with a Reception class supporting small groups of up to 6 children. They regularly planned simple practical and written activities for the children they worked with. These may include speaking and listening games or number work. They were expected to put up displays, which they were able to create from the activities they planned with the children. As well as planning activities, these STAs contributed to children's assessments, including national assessments, like SATs. The teachers allowed their STAs to participate in such an activity because they believed that their

STA was capable of carrying out the activity as well as themselves.

STA M5 had originally been a general assistant (GA), but as a STA, was given four hours a week to support children, as well as her GA tasks. Despite the limited amount of time of her new duties, her class teacher used her to deliver language activities to a small group of children with special educational needs. The teacher directed her activities, but claimed that her STA had planned extension activities or activities to reinforce a concept she had taught. The STA, also, helped the teacher to assess the progress of these children she worked with, through verbal evaluations. The class teacher was very supportive of her STA and hoped that the STA's role may develop further into that of the 'para-professional' as she gained more confidence working with children.

STA M4 was, prior to the STA training, employed to work with one child, who had been statemented. This responsibility was still applicable after the STA training, but the class teacher gave her the responsibility of working with three more children. She regularly provided verbal input in planning activities for these children, and on occasions, had taken the children outside the classroom to do different work from the others, usually 'speaking and listening' or 'sentence structure' activities. CT M4 was a newly appointed teacher to the school and was very keen to develop his STA to carry out the type of tasks she had experienced in her STA training.

STA M3 and M7 found their roles were limited from that of the other STAs from STA course provider M. The limitation, however, was not caused through the class teachers, but the STAs themselves. Both STA M3 and STA M7 claimed that they did not want any extra responsibility through their STA training, although their head

teachers and class teachers were keen for their STAs to contribute more than they did at present. Ironically, STA M7 received a pay rise and a permanent contract on gaining the STA qualification, although she completed the same tasks as before.

STA M8 discovered that her training had caused more problems, than rewards. Teachers were opposed to the STA initiative because of teaching union opposition. This STA found that her duties had been reduced by three of the class teachers she worked with. Her tasks with these teachers were mainly administrative, such as, photocopying, repairing books, library duty.

Finally, STA M1 worked with small groups of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) at KS 1 and 2 providing extra support in English and mathematics (the part time SENCO teacher was supporting the same children at a different time). The STA and SENCO discussed their planning for these children together and both made written plans of their activities, but only the SENCO carried out the formal assessments. This STA had her own area, like a classroom, in the hall, with a wipeboard, display area and resources. The STA believed the STA training had increased her responsibilities, but the head teacher claimed that with, or without the STA training, she would have been given these duties. She even covered two teachers' non-contact time. This STA did not work with any class teachers and so the head teacher had extended her role beyond that of a 'para-professional'.

Each STA was deployed differently, but on examining the STAs who were trained as *Para-Professionals*, it was apparent that they had certain key characteristics, which were:

- Work with small groups of children (up to 6 children).
- Discuss the teacher's weekly planning.
- Discuss the teacher's termly/yearly topics in advance.
- Make oral contributions to the teacher's planning, if necessary.
- Display work they had carried out with children (these were usually their own ideas, which they had carried out with the children).
- Contribute to the teaching and learning of maths and English.
- Occasionally carry out teacher responsibilities, such as, planning and teaching activities to groups of children, which included the planning of worksheets/cards and games.
- Contribute to assessment of KS 1 SATs

It was apparent that two STAs (STA M2 and M6) had taken on the role that their STA training had provided them with. Two STAs (STA M4 and M5) were emerging as *para-professionals*. Two STAs had rejected the role that they had derived from STA course provider M (STA M3 and M7) under opposition from the teaching professionals they worked with. The head teachers in both schools gave the impression that their STAs deployment could change whether the STAs approved or not. Whilst, two STAs (M1 and M8) were not used as para-professionals. Teacher opposition had affected one STA (STA M8) and another STA (M1) had found that her role had developed beyond that of a *para-professional* and had elements of teacher status. This STA was the only one whose duties were directed by the head teacher and not a class teacher. Again, like with STA C1, a teacher with management responsibilities had extended the role of their STA.

The professional

There were four STAs trained as a professional (L2 L3 L5 and L8). STA L3 worked with three classes throughout the week, but spent most of her time with a Year 3 class. The head teacher was very keen for the STA to use her new skills because the

school had many children with poor language skills. Therefore, from 9.30 – 10.00 a.m., every day she worked with 6 children teaching them a reading recovery programme – Fuzzbuzz. The part time SENCO taught the same programme to the Year 2 children with SEN. The STA was also expected to plan and teach some of her own activities throughout the week with small groups of children, mainly children with SEN. Her activities were reviewed and discussed at the weekly KS2 meeting, which the STA attended. The STA only taught language skills because the school needed more support in teaching language to children as 75% of children on roll had ethnic and linguistic minorities.

STA L8 was an ex-pupil at the school, so teaching staff were aware of her skills. This STA had been hockey captain at the school and was very athletic; in fact, she was already coaching after school lessons prior to her training. This school was also an independent school, whose head teachers generally tend to look for expertise in staff, rather than status for improving standards. The STA training enhanced her involvement in teaching even further. After completing her qualification her class teacher, who was head of the infant department, encouraged her to teach one maths and one English whole class sessions per week. This gave the impression that the STA was used as a teacher, but the class only had 12 pupils. It was half the size or less than most classes in mainstream primary schools. Twelve months after completing the STA training this STA enrolled on an ITT course, as she perceived she was carrying out some teacher duties already.

STA L5 had a master's degree in geography, and decided to attend the STA course to decide whether or not she wanted to go into teaching as a career. Her school of

employment was in fact her training school for the STA course. The head teacher explained to the researcher that she had willingly accepted the role of STA trainer in the hope that she could find potential employees. After STA L5 qualified she asked to train as a licensed teacher. This meant that she would be able to teach, whilst training to become a teacher. This STA shared responsibility of a Year 2 class. As a licensed teacher she would be paid less than a teacher with qualified teacher status, so monetary gains was an advantage, so too, was the fact that she had a specialism in geography.

STA L2, prior to the STA training, was a bilingual nursery nurse. Her previous skills of interpretation of children's responses was still essential, but now she was able to assess the children, and support children in small groups, rather than individually. This STA's duties were planned and directed by her class teachers, although she could plan her own extension activity. She was deployed in this way due to her class teacher's requests, and on the insistence of the head teacher. This head teacher had very strong views on the STA training at STA course provider LM. She was very knowledgeable about the course because in the pilot year she had been asked to evaluate the STA course. She was alarmed by how many STAs were planning activities and teaching, especially those STAs teaching reading recovery programmes. She believed that STAs were being exploited.

All of the STAs who were trained at STA course provider LM had seen their role develop or were used as trained, only one (STA L2) had not. As a 'professional' the key characteristics were:

- Had copies of the teacher's planning for the week/term in advance.
- Work with groups of children of 6 or more.

- On a regular basis plan some of their activities.
- Contribute to the teaching and learning of maths and English.
- Contribute to assessing children with teacher assessments and formal assessments from the LEA or national testing.

Two STAs (L3 and L8) fitted into this category. One STA (STA L2) found her role was controlled due to teacher opposition to the STA role, which she had derived from her training institution. Whilst one STA (STA L5) found her role had enhanced from that of a professional, however, this was perhaps inevitable as she had a masters degree in geography. Of interest in this category, was that two STAs (STA L8 and STA L5) after their STA training entered ITT.

The Specialist

There were four specialists (L1, L4, L6 and L7). These specialists were provided with more knowledge, skills and school based practice than the other STAs. Two STAs, STA L1 and L6, had the BTEC nursery nurse qualification². HT L1, HT L6 and the STA's class teachers claimed that these STAs had received three years training in supporting children, so they should be given some responsibilities expected of a teacher. They had whole class responsibility on a regular basis, but overall planning of their activities was carried out or overseen by a teacher. These STAs worked within both KS 1 & 2, teaching groups of children (usually up to 8).

STA L1 worked with the infant teachers from Reception to Year 2. The former being the class she spent most of her time. In the infant classrooms she was used like a 'reflective supporter', where the class teacher directed her activities. The STA also worked closely with the head teacher and three times a week taught the children with

² STA (L1) was also studying for a degree part time.

SEN in Year 3/4. She taught mathematics in one session and language in the other two sessions. She produced written plans of her activities with the children with SEN, similar to those expected of a teacher, which the SENCO monitored. Her head teacher encouraged the STA to plan and teach activities and confirmed this in the 'School Support Policy Document', it stated:

Nursery nurses who have obtained Specialist Teaching Assistant (STA) status can teach basic language and mathematics skills.

The head teacher was also responsible for providing the STA with the opportunity of teaching mathematics in 'The Club', which was an after school club to help children who were experiencing difficulties in mathematics. The STA believed it was her head teacher that was continuing to develop her role as a 'specialist' not her class teachers.

STA L6 worked mainly with Year 2 as a NNEB nursery nurse. After gaining her STA qualification her responsibilities and hours increased. For instance, she was given the responsibility of discussing sensitive issues during circle time. In other schools, a head teacher or deputy may have carried out this task because it can cover sensitive issues. However, the class teacher, who was the deputy head, believed that her experience and training she had received fostering children for over 10 years may have provided her with better skills to deal with these issues than himself. The head teacher agreed. Unfortunately, this skill had not been noticed before her STA training, or somehow her STA training had legitimised the STA to use her past experience. Other previous training the STA had gained was also used more effectively since the assistant gained the STA qualification. Two afternoons a week, the STA organised and planned a pre-school group. This not only introduced potential pupils to the school; it also generated money for the school, as parents paid two pounds a session. In the mornings the STA worked in Year 2, but the other two

afternoons the STA worked in Year 4 where she planned and taught language to children with SEN. She was encouraged by the head teacher to record all her activities and produce written evaluations in a file. This file was monitored periodically by the head teacher and deputy head teacher (the STA's class teacher).

STA L7 had worked as a voluntary worker in her present school before her STA training, after she had completed the course; she was offered a paid part time job as a classroom assistant. She supported small groups of children with mathematics and English. This STA was deployed in one class - the Reception class, rather than visit several classes. The STA found that she became more involved in classroom organisation and the teachers planning. She planned some of her own activities, under the guidance of the teacher. Her class teacher wanted to encourage and support the STA further to fulfil her STA role. This STA was not used as a 'specialist', but her involvement in planning from the interim to the final data collection had developed. She was evaluating children in teacher assessments and had supported the teacher in SATs. If this development continued her role may contain more of the 'specialist' elements.

STA L4 was a general assistant before her STA training and on completion of the STA training her duties were extended from outside to inside the classroom. She started to work with groups of children (up to six children). She supported them in mathematics and English skills only because the STA training covered these two subjects. Her class teachers planned all her activities, but the STA contributed to extension activities and organised how she taught the activity. Unfortunately, the STA could not contribute more than what she was doing because her deployment

was sporadic. She supported five classes over five mornings (she would often visit two classes in one morning). Although this STA was not used like a 'specialist', her role in the school had developed from what it was previously.

Thus, the STAs in this typology had certain key characteristics of which two STAs (STA L1 and L6) experienced all of them and the other STAs (STA L4 and L7) experience some of them. The characteristics were:

- Meet with their class teacher on a weekly basis to discuss planning for the week.
- Discuss termly/yearly topics in advance.
- Plan most of their own activities with children
- Work with groups of 6 up to the whole class.
- Have their own planning files.
- Teach maths and English.
- Assess children on SATs, as well as teacher assessments
- Attend staff meetings.

The two STAs (L1 and L6) that had all the above characteristics were used more like a teacher. It was also apparent that the head teacher controlled their deployment or a class teacher with management responsibility who insisted on the STA being used in this way. These STAs have crossed over the boundary of those duties expected of a classroom assistant into what might be expected of a teacher.

Discussion and conclusions

The STA training in each of the four institutions had provided a role for STAs, which heavily influenced STA deployment. The STAs and their teachers recognised the elements of the relevant models and their particular model was a starting point for STA deployment, such as tasks and expectations. There were variations in the extent

to which each STA performed all the duties that might be expected of her role according to the relevant model. On examining these roles it was apparent that not only did these different typologies encourage assistants to undertake tasks expected of teachers, but teaching professionals in schools allowed it, too. This raises implications of how each adult perceives themselves in relation to their work in the classroom, for example, head teacher's perception of the STA's role within the school; the class teacher's perception of the STAs' role within the classroom; and STA's perception of their role in relation to other assistants.

Head teachers' perceptions of the STA's role had a significant impact on STAs. Six STAs (C1, C3, M1, L1, L3, and L6) worked closely with their head teacher for part of their deployment, or all of their deployment (M1). In turn the head teachers provided STAs with opportunities to undertake duties expected of a teacher. They provided their STA with specific teaching duties, such as: teaching reading recovery programmes (C1 and L3); planning, teaching and evaluating mathematics/language lessons for children with SEN (M1, L1 and L6); planning and teaching pre-school sessions (C3 and L6) to large groups of children with the assistance of an NNEB; or planning and teaching mathematics/language to a whole class regularly (L5). These head teachers perceived that STAs could teach and be used in similar ways to a teacher. They had, therefore, extended the STA's role. STA L1 and L6, who were 'specialists', were in fact carrying out duties expected of them from their course. Although, four STAs (M1, C1, C3, and L5) had moved from their original role of 'reflective supporter' (C1 and C3), 'para-professional' (M1) or 'professional' (L5) to 'specialist'.

Class teachers' perceptions of the STA role affected the STAs considerably, but in three very different ways. Firstly, some teachers deployed their STA similar to their STA role, such as CT C2, C4, C5, M2 and M6. These teachers were satisfied with the course content and continued to provide their STAs with the opportunities they had on their course. Secondly, some teachers did not deploy their STA in accordance with their training because they claimed that the training provided them with skills expected of a teacher. It also caused a conflict in the classroom as two adults perceived themselves as teaching - the teacher and the STA. These class teachers were uncomfortable with the STA qualification, and so chose not to use the STA's new knowledge (M8, L1, L2, L4, and L7). In particular, two 'specialists' (L4 and L7) and two 'professionals' (L1³ and L2) were used like 'reflective supporters', whilst one 'para-professional' was used like the 'traditional' role, and there had been no change in her duties since gaining the STA qualification. Thirdly, some class teachers wanted to extend their STAs role, such as: CT L6 required his STA to plan some of her activities and then write up evaluations on her activities. Furthermore, CT L8 required her STA to teach one mathematics and one language session per week to her class; and CT C1 reported that on three occasions her STA had taught her class whilst she, the class teacher, was absent for half a day. These three class teachers all shared a common interest - they all had management responsibilities. CT L6 was a deputy head teacher, and CT L8 and C1 were 'Head of the Infant Department'. These teachers did not feel threatened by their STA's deployment, but claimed it enhanced their status, helped support their teaching and relieved them to carry out other tasks.

Whilst some STAs were provided with more opportunities in school than their STA

role, some STAs were experiencing the opposite. STA M8 believed that her deployment had stayed the same as before their STA qualification. This STA had experienced job dissatisfaction because she had seen no improvement in her deployment despite her new training or she believed she was used the same as other trained or experienced assistants in the school, who did not have the STA qualification. Meanwhile, STAs L2, L4, L7 had seen their tasks enhanced although they were not carrying out tasks expected of their STA role. These STAs were not so much dissatisfied with their new role, but disillusioned with STA outcomes from their respective courses.

It was apparent that the head teacher and class teacher perceptions of the STA role had much impact on their STAs deployment. However, in some cases, other factors as well as the STA training may have made a contribution to their deployment, such as:

- *The STA's previous experiences.* STA C3 had previously been a play group leader, so her experience with pre-school children was used in the teaching and learning of the reception children).
- *The STA's previous child-care qualifications.* Seven of the classroom assistants were nursery nurses (five had the BTEC qualification - STA L1, L2, L3, L6 and L8 and two had the NNEB qualification - STA C2 and C4).
- *STAs working with large classes or mixed year classes.* STA M2, M7, C2, C4, C5, L1, L2 and L8 found that they were able to carry out their STA role because teacher's relied on them teaching children to provide adequate coverage of the curriculum.

It was apparent that these factors were recognised in conjunction with the STA training. The STA training had allowed STAs to teach and distinguished STAs from other types of assistants who would only support children. In conclusion, in schools where the STA's role had gone beyond the trained STA role, the STAs were working

closely with teachers who had management responsibilities, such as, head teachers or deputies, or heads of department. Therefore 'managers' were extending the STA role. Those STAs who worked solely with class teachers found their responsibilities were limited, which suggests that teachers regarded the STA as a challenge to teacher professional status.

Chapter 10.

STAs and Teacher Professionalism: Support or threat?

The previous chapters have indicated that there were four somewhat different approaches to STA training in this study, which produced four roles for STAs. After gaining the STA qualification, those STAs who worked closely with teachers without management responsibilities found their roles were limited or they were more likely to be deployed as a 'reflective supporter'. Those STAs who worked closely with teachers who had management responsibilities saw their roles enhanced or were treated as a 'specialist'. In some instances, the STA training had legitimised the enhancement of the STA's role, which usually provided them with the opportunity to carry out tasks that previously had been the preserve of teachers. These STAs were used as substitutes for a qualified teacher and, therefore, were generating a challenge to teacher professionalism.

The impact of STAs on teacher's professional status

In the first three chapters of this thesis the professional status of teachers was examined. It would be fair to say that there is still a debate about whether teaching is a profession, but since the abolition of the Board of Education (1926) teacher's autonomy over the curriculum had lead teachers to perceive themselves as professionals. From the late 1960s, the Black paper writers initiated the start of a long process in which teachers were accused of not meeting the needs of society (Ball 1990) [see: chapter 2 and 3]. Teachers work, in particular, was subject to scrutiny; for example, Callaghan (1976), DES (1983), and DES (1985). The educational policies of the 1980s and 1990s only undermined teachers' status further

and gave more control to central government (1987 Teacher's Pay and Conditions Act, 1988 ERA, and 1993 Education Act), especially 1988 ERA, with the introduction of the National Curriculum. Teachers believed that both their status and public opinion about teacher professionalism had changed (Ball and Goodson 1992; McCulloch et al 2000; Helsby 1999). In addition, the then Conservative government was introducing new entry routes for ITT [see: chapter 3]. Teacher's perceptions of these changes must have affected how they viewed any government initiative in education at that time, but especially those, which may affect their daily routine in the classroom, like STAs.

Critical reactions to STAs could have been encouraged through government legislation. HT C1 claimed that:

*Teachers' morale had already been affected considerably through prior government legislation
(C1 HT)*

He suggested that many teachers in the school were sceptical of government initiatives because of the affect STAs had on teacher's status. Lack of motivation for the STA initiative was caused by previous educational legislation. Teachers assumed any new initiative would have implications for them, usually in a negative light. These teachers were not unenthusiastic about the STA initiative, but were uncertain of government intentions.

Such uncertainty was reflected in this study. Class teacher L7, claimed she knew of STAs who were being used as teachers and she suspected that the STA course was the 'mums' army' proposal. HT L2 had evaluated the STA course at STA course provider LM and found STAs carrying out teacher tasks, such as assessment. Consequently, this head teacher would not allow anymore of her assistants to attend

the STA course. She had strong views towards this type of deployment of STAs. She stated:

The children and others must not see at any time a teacher being instructed by an assistant or them to be working alongside each other [e.g. similar roles]. It reduces quality and standard of teacher professionalism (L2 HT)

Those teachers that worked closely with their STA and limited their involvement in teaching had a positive reaction towards their STA. They perceived STAs as enhancing their teaching. CT C3 claimed:

I believe the STA course is a new initiative, it should not be associated with the mums' army. Teaching practitioners should learn from the initiative. We can share new ideas to enhance our teaching. Teachers can learn from STAs. (C3 CT)

This class teacher was fortunate. Her STA had twenty years experience of working with children from 3 - 7 years of age (including six years experience as a play group leader). The class teacher believed the STA training had improved the STA's performance and helped her STA to put her experience in to perspective. Other teachers also praised STAs saying:

She is an extra pair of hands and eyes in the classroom and . . . (the SEN child) has received better quality support from her since the STA training. (M4 CT)

Before the STA training, this STA worked with a statemented child only. Since gaining her STA qualification she has worked with a child with SEN, and three others who have learning difficulties. The class teacher believed the support the STA gave was of better quality, for example, if a child was unsure of an answer to a question the STA would provide prompts and talk her through it. Before the STA training, the STA told the child the answer. He believed his assistant did this because she wanted to please him and help the child find the correct answer. This did not help the teacher to assess whether the child knew what to do, or not. The STA training helped the

assistant understand the need for children to learn for themselves.

CT M6 praised her STA because she was more able in the tasks she carried out; for example, she was able to use her own initiative:

I plan her [STA] activities, although we do discuss them before hand. If she wishes to do anything to improve, or enhance the activity she can do (M6 CT)

This STA provided pre/extension activities for the children she worked with on a regular basis. She also had ideas for the whole class, which fitted in with the current topic. If her activities were suitable, the teacher would let the STA complete them with a small group (3 - 4 children) at a time. The STA's class teacher firmly believed that teachers and their STAs, or other trained assistants, should work as a team to provide a better quality of education for the children in the class. Teachers found STAs particularly useful in practical, investigative and group work, which previously had been very difficult to carry out.

This new knowledge and ability in the STAs performance could easily lead to STAs who were trained as a 'reflective supporter' or 'para-professional' to find their role enhanced to that of a 'professional' or even a 'specialist'. For example, one STA trained as a 'reflective supporter' and started to teach a reading recovery programme to children with SEN. Her head teacher claimed:

Everything she needs to know is in the teacher's handbook. She doesn't need to be monitored (HT C1)

Whilst a 'para-professional' (STA M1) had extended from working through a SEN programme to planning and teaching her own activities to children with SEN. These professionals had enhanced their STAs status in such a way that other teaching professionals may consider them to be an intrusion, not a support in the classroom.

Teachers with management responsibilities were allowing this to occur whilst it was clear other teachers were in disagreement with this deployment. Further implications to confirm whether STAs were construed as an intrusion or a support to teachers will be examined in the forthcoming sections, which are:

- **The implications of the STA policy.** Government legislation in the late 1980s/early 1990s had made teachers suspicious of government initiatives; the STA policy was one such initiative.
- **The implications of the STA training.** Each of the four institutions in the study had developed the STA role into their STA typology, but clear boundaries between teacher and STA were not always apparent.
- **The implications of STA deployment.** Once deployed in schools, teachers and head teachers limited or enhanced their STA's role, factors associated with this change need to be examined.
- **Financial implications of the deployment of STAs.** STAs, if willing to carry out more responsibilities could be exploited, for instance, expected to work for the same status and pay as before they gained their new knowledge. This occurred on several occasions.

Implications of the STA Policy

The concern that STAs could become substitutes for teachers was originally generated by the STA policy. The STA initiative was introduced within months of the universally rejected mums' army proposal and teachers were unsure whether the STA initiative was the mums' army proposal in disguise. Lack of support for the STA initiative grew, for example:

I was very sceptical of the STA initiative. There was a lot of media hype beforehand about cheap educators. (C2 Cta)

This teacher indicated that propaganda had formed her first impression, rather than reading about the STA initiative herself. She later remarked:

I feel the STA course has developed from the first to the second cohort. Course providers are in contact with the schools more, and are encouraging teachers to advise STAs about good practice (C2 Cta)

It was only after she had personal experience of the STA initiative herself that her views changed. Unfortunately, with minimal places available for classroom assistants to attend STA courses, some teachers' views, especially those that have not experienced the STA training, may still be sceptical of the initiative. This teacher believed the key ingredient for success of the STA initiative was involving schools, and encouraging teachers to offer their support to STAs, like the 'reflective supporter' STA typology.

Teachers' concerns were intensified when the STA qualification could affect standards on ITT entry. The government wanted to use the STA qualification as a stepping stone into ITE, for example:

(The STA qualification could) also form part of the accreditation of prior learning for those students who wished subsequently to pursue a B.Ed qualification (Circular 14/93, para. 33)

This seems to indicate the STA qualification could be used instead of the statutory two A levels for entry requirements onto a B.Ed/BA with QTS. This might enable students to join the profession with inappropriate academic and intellectual requirements for teaching. The STA initiative did have certain similarities to ITT. In particular, all STA competences were designed around 25 STA competences suggested by the DfEE/TTA (1994). These competences were similar to ITT competences, and were to be assessed similarly as those expected of teachers. The wording of STA and ITT competences was almost identical [see: chapter 8]. The

inference drawn from this was that the government perceived that there was little difference between an STA and an ITT qualified teacher working with young children. This had long-term effects on the STA initiative; for example, a majority of STAs said that they knew of head teachers who had refused to support the initiative.

Even the word *teacher* in the title of STA suggests the government wanted the STA to provide a similar role to a teacher, but perhaps without responsibility for planning and assessing. One class teacher (L7) referred to STAs as *teachers on the cheap*.

Whilst one head teacher noted:

teacher assistant in the STA title was often confused with the term assistant teacher by STAs (L2 HT)

In fact, some STAs had applied for jobs as assistant teachers, and were quite surprised when they received no reply to their application. The title of the STA courses caused much confusion within schools and amongst STAs. Therefore it seemed appropriate for one head teacher to comment:

The name of the course has to change (C1 HT)

The mere suggestion that STAs could be used similarly to teachers angered teacher unions (NUT 1994; ATL 1994). The ATL (1994) urged the government to review its policy on the STA initiative before STA courses began.

The implications of the STA courses

The STA policy influenced the STA courses, so to ensure a bid was accepted STA course providers designed an STA course which was similar to the DfEE/TTA STA criteria [see chapter 4]. It is interesting to note that in the pilot year eighteen out of the twenty-four successful institutions, were teacher-training institutions. This may have been a calculated move by the government as the lecturers teaching STAs may

teach student teachers. The teaching of these STAs could therefore be similar to teacher training, or STAs could be trained alongside student teachers, like in STA course provider LE (the 'specialist' STA typology). This practice occurred because the government wanted to raise standards in schools (DfEE 1993), and training STAs to teach basic skills in maths and English, was part of that process.

The criteria encouraged diversity in approaches (Ofsted 1995). Indeed, of each of the four institutions examined, each had different expectations of their STAs but these were derived from the same criteria. The STA course leader at STA course provider C met with the STAs' mentors (usually their class teacher) to discuss their progress and every half term had mentor meetings at the college for teachers to express their views or concerns about the STA course. The STA course at STA course provider C was designed with the help and support of the teachers involved in the STA training. This contact assured a STA training course which STA, class teacher and institution were satisfied with and placed an emphasis on the STA as a reflective practitioner. The STA course at STA course provider M required all STA duties to be directed by the teacher, but encouraged STAs to use their initiative by making games or worksheets to teach a skill. The implications of this are unclear, as once a STA is deployed in schools, it could be construed that the STA can prepare an extension activity or perhaps plan and teach an activity. The interpretation would therefore be dependent on the STA and her teacher. The STA course at STA course provider M blurred its support role into that of a 'para-professional'.

The other institutions, STA course providers LM and LE, extended the role of the STA from that of the DfEE/TTA criteria by encouraging and expecting STAs to teach basic skills in mathematics and English to children. These STAs were expected

to prepare, plan and evaluate/assess activities to support children's learning. These courses did not lay a clear boundary between teacher and STA, sometimes the boundary was blurred ('professional'), or in some cases, the STA had crossed into the domain of teaching and being used as a teacher ('specialist'). Therefore, some teaching professionals may have been apprehensive of the STA training because of the latter typologies. In fact, two head teachers, HT C5 and HT L2, had claimed that they would not allow any of their assistants in the future to enrol on a STA training course. These head teachers believed the STA training gave assistants unrealistic expectations, or gave head teachers the opportunity to exploit STAs by encouraging them to work beyond the limits of their roles.

The implications of STA deployment

The role of classroom assistants, and their deployment, whether they are trained or untrained, depends upon what the head teacher requires them to do, and the teachers whom they work with. Trained assistants, like STAs, were expected to support children in basic skills in maths and English (DfEE 1993). In fact, a majority of STAs wanted more involvement with children's learning and many teachers and head teachers in the study believed this was possible. However, STA, class teacher and head teacher expectations of the STA role were often in conflict. In particular, one STA from STA course provider M found that they were not deployed like their STA role; the role had not changed despite their new knowledge. STA L2 activities had also been limited to that of a 'reflective supporter'. Her head teacher and class teacher had insisted on this limitation. Another STA (STA M1) found her role had been enhanced once deployed in school. Similarly, STA C1 was used as a 'professional' rather than a 'reflective supporter'. Her head teacher had enhanced her role.

It was apparent that the role of ‘reflective supporter’ was more acceptable than other STA typologies for some teaching professionals, especially class teachers, as they believed the STA was supporting their teaching, for example:

She organises the tasks for the reception children (8) throughout the day (work displayed on the blackboard), whilst I work with the Year 1 children. (C2 CTb)

This STA worked with the eight reception children, following the teacher’s plans for the day. The STA did not plan any activities; she managed the children. STAs, also, enabled their teachers to provide more opportunities for the children in their class, for example:

She will provide before hand input and extension activities to support the children she works with. (L6 CT)

But most importantly,

She uses her initiative and therefore does not demand much of my time. (C2 CTa)

The phrase *using her initiative* referred to the STA preparing a pre/extension activity for the main activity, or change it, if necessary, to suit the children’s needs. These STAs were contributing to teaching, but not used as a teacher, as the class teacher directed all activities.

Some STAs did not have their activities directed by a teacher; instead they were expected to plan their own tasks. These STAs adopted the ‘professional’ or ‘specialist’ role. They were often expected to carry out ‘teacher tasks’, which were tasks only expected of a qualified teacher or previously carried out by a teacher. For instance, STA L3 planned, prepared and evaluated a special educational needs scheme for a small group of children per day, claiming:

I have full control over the fuzz buzz activities with two groups of Year 3 children. (L3 STA)

The Two Year 3 teachers, whom she worked with, did not monitor this STA. In the

year below, Year 2, a part time teacher was employed to support the same reading recovery scheme with two groups of children. This part time teacher did not monitor the STA either, and they did not meet to discuss activities in the scheme. The school was using both adults the same; despite one was a professional and the other was not¹.

It was quite common for STAs to teach SEN programmes, such as fuzzibuzz, and two STAs (M1 and L1) were expected to plan their activities with children with SEN, and submit them to the SENCO. STA L1 head teacher claimed:

She (STA) has a planning file, which the SENCO keeps, but her class teacher and myself have access to it (L1 HT)

This relieved the workload of the teachers, and provided a cost-effective solution, as both schools had a large number of children who needed extra support with basic skills. In this instance, STA L1 and M1 had adopted the 'specialist' role, but only STA L1 had trained in this role, STA M1 had trained as a 'para-professional'. Some STAs even reported that they had whole class responsibility, on occasions, when the teacher had been absent and a supply teacher was unavailable; STA M1 claimed that she covered non-contact time for two teachers every week. Another STA, STA L8, who had trained as a 'professional' claimed that she had whole class responsibility on a regular basis. Her class teacher gave two examples when the STA had planned and prepared an activity, then introduced it and taught to the whole class (20 children). One was a science lesson the other a maths lesson. This class teacher had enhanced her STA's role to adopt the 'specialist' STA typology. Class teacher L8 believed that her actions were justified because she never left the room, the children were very sensible, and her STA was very talented. This STA was planning to leave the school

¹ One head teacher in the main study suggested that his STA was better (cost effective and versatile) than his part time teacher.

in a few months to pursue a teacher-training course and therefore her class teacher believed that she was only completing tasks she would be expected to do as a student teacher in a few months time.

STAs may have been used in the same way as teachers because they were perceived to have a subject specialism through their STA role. CT L1 stated:

Why teach STAs a specialist? Classroom teacher has this already (L1 CT)

She was opposed to her STA's status within the school, and thought she was treated (towards the end of her employment) as a teacher. There were obvious tensions within the school, especially since the head teacher and teacher did not have the same view on STA deployment. The head teacher had acknowledged the STA training by revising the STA policy document on '*Extra support within the school*'. This document stated:

Nursery nurses who have obtained Specialist Teaching Assistant (STA) status can teach basic language and maths skills (L1 school policy document).

Therefore, the STA was only doing what was required of her from the head teacher, the professional, who wrote the policy document.

This teacher was not alone in her view towards STA perceiving they have a specialism; other teachers, who had a STA working with them, made similar comments. CT C1 claimed:

My STA has an expertise in the National Curriculum, which means there are two people in the classroom with National Curriculum knowledge, not one. (C1 CT)

Both teachers had made reference to the *specialism* an STA was perceived to possess. This perceived concept of STAs having a specialism justified STAs carrying out teacher tasks in some schools. In particular, HT C2 even offered the services of

his STA to a neighbouring school for three days, so the school could implement the assessment scheme *Achievement on Entry*. The school had no experience of the assessment scheme, therefore the STA would not only be supporting, but in theory advising teachers of this scheme.

Serious implications for STAs adopting the 'specialist' role were identified when head teachers started to compare STAs to teachers. HT M1 claimed:

I would like to train another STA before the part time SEN teacher retires in 2-3 years time.

[Why ?] . . .so the two STAs could replace the SENCO. (M1 HT)

Another head teacher also insisted his STA should teach not support children, claiming:

My STA is employed 24.5 hours per week. Also, I have a part time teacher employed 2.5 days per week. My STA is more valuable. (L6 HT)

The STA, in this school, was highly regarded by the head teacher, possibly even more than his part-time teacher. The STA was also paid considerable less money for her responsibilities than the teacher. Unfortunately, this is an unsatisfactory arrangement, as the extra commitment did not have any increase in status within the school or remuneration.

Financial implications on STA deployment

Most schools in the research had shown an interest in the STA initiative because of the financial benefits it gave the school, for example, HT M3 claimed:

It was a good initiative. . . it was free. (HT M3)

And another said:

(STA) was interested in the course . . .and at no cost to the school (HT M4)

Head teachers were encouraged to train STAs because they were benefiting from the

new knowledge for the same pay. Recognition of the financial benefits to the school was particularly popular in the Merseyside schools where most head teachers made comments about their payment for training the STA. HT M2 claimed:

All schools on low budgets are motivated to train students in exchange of payment for training. (HT M2)

Head teachers in this area identified the purpose of the STA training as extra income. The head teachers in the other areas were not so focused on the extra monies it provided the school, most regarded it as 'cheap pay for their expertise'.

Head teachers were also favourable of the STA training because of the increased pressure from their teaching staff to employ more support. Several head teachers claimed that teachers were in favour of more assistants, rather than employing more teachers. These schools needed more support, they had large classes, were a double intake school (14 classes in total), or a substantial number of children had learning difficulties (mainly with English). The argument against employing a teacher was that the full time class teachers may only receive relief or support from the floating teacher once, maybe twice a week, this was not sufficient support. Employing three classroom assistants, instead of a teacher (same amount of money) would ensure that each class could receive support from an adult for a full day or more.

The introduction of STAs, especially those adopting the 'professional' and 'specialist' STA typology, can be construed as introducing cheaper adults into schools to carry out teaching tasks. Some head teachers reported that STAs were being employed, instead of teachers. For example:

one teacher and one STA is cheaper than two teachers and splitting the class (L7 HT)

This head teacher had several large classes (36 - 40 children) in his school. He

believed that a trained assistant alongside a qualified teacher would offer good quality education to the children. He did not have the room, or the money to split the large classes. He did not believe STAs should have full control, or be used in substitution of teachers, but explained that through financial restrictions was unable to employ more teachers. His STA was not paid the same as other trained assistants in the school (e.g. nursery nurses). She was paid as an unqualified assistant that was 50p an hour less than that of a nursery nurse.

Two teachers admitted that their STAs had been used as a form of cheap teacher substitute, for example:

STAs . . . are cheap labour (C5 Ctb)

And:

If budgets are tight, STA will be exploited (C4 HT)

This did happen; STAs were being deployed instead as teachers. STAs were given teacher tasks. This gave the impression that teacher's work was a set of rules and regulations, in the form of various schemes or programmes, which anyone with National Curriculum training could follow. Although it is easy to understand how tempting it might be to a head teacher to provide an opportunity for a STA to teach and the STA to accept, it can cause a difficult situation if all staff do not approve. It is a sensitive issue for management. Head teachers need to balance the needs of the school and the expertise available. A regular system of appraisal would address these needs and a job description can be agreed by the head teacher, STA and her class teacher and made available for other teachers to know the STAs expectations. It would also provide an opportunity for the STA and head teacher to discuss remuneration for extra commitment. Unfortunately, most STAs were not included in appraisal and job descriptions were absent or had not been up-dated for some time.

All head teachers insisted that the pay scale for an assistant lay in the remit of the LEA, and as such, a STA was not recognised by the LEAs and so a pay scale had not been created for them. The LEAs argued the opposite. All LEAs realised that different assistants may have additional training, qualifications or experience, so they provided a categorisation for age groups only e.g. under 18 years, 18 - 21 years and over 21 years, thereafter pay supplements were left to the remit of the school. STAs were not aware of this situation, they believed the LEAs were to blame. However, with the rarity of clear pay scales and job descriptions for STAs, identifying the boundaries between teachers and STAs were blurred and some teaching staff reported that STA roles were an intrusion in their classrooms (CT L1, HT L2, HT C5, CT M8, CT M4, CT M5).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that STAs were identified as supporting children, which was due to the new and up-to-date skills found in the STA training. However, this was sometimes over looked as the strong reactions towards the STA policy implications were dominant [see earlier in this chapter: training and name]. In fact, the STA initiative was caught up in bigger issues than its own implications. The climate, in which the STA training was introduced, teachers perceived their own professionalism was being questioned and the STA initiative posed a threat. Teachers had had to cope with too many changes, which affected them directly and had left the teaching profession unattractive for new entrants and even existing professionals. Consequently throughout the 1990s there grew a general concern about a shortage in the teaching profession (DfEE 1998). The STA was a solution to schools for both financial and support reasons, in fact, three head teachers (M1, L6 and L3) used their

STA the same as their floating/part time teacher. This reaction provoked strong opinions; in particular that cheap adults were being used to teach children, instead of dealing with the real issue, which was redefining the teaching profession to attract potential teachers.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

This study has argued that the implementation of government policy from 1993 to 1997 through the introduction of the STA scheme has challenged teachers' professional status. This has occurred through unclear boundaries set by the government in the STA policy. This may have been a deliberate move by the government, in which broad competences were given to STA course providers to allow them to develop the criteria so STAs acquire 'teaching' skills. The similarities to ITT and the level of achievement required for the STA course (up to 72 CATs credits at National Level One) also encouraged HEIs to develop their courses in the way that they did.

The four training institutions, which offered STA courses in the study, each had a different perception of the STA role. The STA policy and their interpretation were not the only influence in designing their STA courses. Some institutions, unsure of how to design a course for classroom assistants, sought advice from other sources. These sources were sought in an attempt to design a course, which would be academic but had realistic expectations; for example, lecturers from STA course provider LM discussed their STA course with lecturers from two local FE colleges, who taught nursery nurses. Furthermore, lecturers at STA course provider C discussed the designing of the STA course with teachers, those professionals who will work closely with the STAs. Whilst, it has been identified that STA course leaders had attempted to design an appropriate course for STAs, it cannot be denied that these methods created a variety of STA training.

Consequently, the STA role varied from institution to institution. Therefore, it would not be unusual for a STA in one school being deployed differently to another, according to her STA training. This provoked strong opinions about the nature of the STA role from some teachers whose STAs had been trained using the 'professional' or the 'specialist' STA typology and this left their STAs not using their new skills [see: chapter 10]. These teachers found the 'reflective supporter' STA typology desirable.

However, despite the diversity in all approaches, there were some similarities. These similarities highlighted that STAs were teaching. It is not uncommon for adults other than teachers, to teach children. Sports coaches/instructors teach children without obtaining a teaching certificate. In fact, according to Moyles and Suschitzky (1994), nursery nurses have taught groups of children for some time. This raises concerns as to why STAs, who are a trained classroom assistant, like NNs, should be regarded as a challenge to teacher professionalism.

The difference between STAs and other assistance received in schools is that STAs started to carry out teacher tasks, for example, three schools (M1, C1 and L8) had used their STA as a surrogate teacher, covering teacher absence. STAs also in a minority of schools (M1, C1, L1, L3 and L6) had taught schemes expected of a qualified teacher. Whilst, one STA (STA L8) had even taught a science lesson to the class. These STAs were doing tasks, which they had not been trained to do. STAs were carrying out tasks normally expected of a qualified teacher. Thus, as a result of both their training and deployment, the boundaries between STA and teacher tasks

had become blurred. This blurring of boundaries created a challenge to teacher professionalism.

STAs, compared with most untrained classroom assistants, were carrying out different duties with more responsibilities. For instance, CT M2 already had a nursery nurse working in the classroom as well as an STA. She allowed the STA to plan written and practical activities in maths and English, whereas the nursery nurse planned craft activities with the children. For those STAs who did not have the nursery nurse qualification, distinctions between STAs and nursery nurses were made. Teachers claimed nursery nurses were more suited to work in the nursery and reception classes, whilst STAs were more suited to work throughout Key Stage One and possibly Key Stage Two (Edwards and Clemson 1997). Teachers believed STAs were more versatile within the whole school (CT L3, CT L6, CT L8).

Head teachers acknowledged the use of the STAs within their school by promoting the STA training to other assistants. One head teacher HT C1 insisted that any newly appointed assistant had to enrol on the STA course, and another head teacher, HT L6, claimed he would only appoint STAs to work as assistants in his school. Head teachers, in most schools in the research, were favourable of the STA training. The reasons are plentiful for this thinking as low paid assistants with new skills provided monetary benefits and the new skills enhanced their assistants understanding of how to support children, which could help raise standards.

Heads were not the only teaching professionals who found the attributes of the STA training favourable; other teachers with management responsibilities extended and

developed their STAs role. In two instances these professionals had used their STA in such a way that the STAs themselves perceived that they were being used as a teacher and opted to enrol on an ITT course the following year (STA L1 and STA L8). These instances, however rare, provoked strong reactions from some teachers within their school or other schools. It is interesting to note that these teachers perceived that some teaching professionals were extending the role of the STA because STAs had trained at a ITT institution, which they believed had legitimised the STA's transition from 'supporter' to 'teacher'.

Therefore, had this been the government's intention for the STA training, especially since the government recommended that HEIs should use the STA course as a means of APL? At the beginning of this chapter the researcher indicated that it was a deliberate move by the government to design the STA course using a list of competences similar to those expected of a qualified teacher. In this case the STA course could be construed as being a diluted teacher training course with the intention of encouraging adults with the potential to teach children to enrol on ITT courses, as the government's concern over teacher shortages (DfEE 1998) could indicate. However, most STAs did not follow this example, and were used to carry out teacher tasks. This evoked a situation where STAs were creating a challenge to teacher professionalism because they were used as 'surrogate teachers'.

Implications

Educational institutions, in an attempt to fulfil government criteria in the STA policy, had created a diversity of courses, which ranged in level and knowledge. This provided STAs with a wide range of choice, although whilst there were few STA

courses at the time of the research, course preference was usually based on geographical suitability. Unfortunately this choice only led to confusion over the expectations of the STA from those closely involved in the initiative. Therefore, the role of the STA, STA tasks, STA training, and pay awards for STAs differed. This led to unnecessary dissatisfaction and confusion for STAs and teachers.

The STA competences were so similar to ITT competences that teaching unions believed it could be the mums' army in disguise. The resistance to the *mums' army* was strong amongst teachers. Laursen (1996) states:

The conservative attacks on professionalism . . . show that if teachers lose or give up the struggle for professionalism the result will be less qualified teachers. . . .(in Kompf (Ed.) 1996, p53)

Even in 1996, four years after the *mums' army* proposal was abandoned, the proposal, and the tension it generated, undoubtedly had an affect on the Specialist Teacher Assistant (STA) initiative, which was introduced less than twelve months later, for example:

The STA initiative is an extension of the mums' army. There is a real need for more teachers and smaller classes, instead of introducing an initiative like this. (HT C5)

The STA initiative could be construed as fulfilling the requirements the head teacher believed were not needed. However, other head teachers, through finite budgets, would disagree as STAs could support teachers with large classes, and were cheaper to employ. Consequently, teaching professionals from the training institution and school had shared responsibility for the development of the STA, and the exploitation of the role.

Recommendations

Based on the STA research the government needs to change aspects of the STA policy, for instance:

- Levels on the STA course need to be the same. One award should be given with the same amount of credits throughout the country. The STAs could be awarded similarly to nursery nurses based on the NVQ criteria, so STAs throughout the country would have the same qualification.
- The STA criterion is based on the STA competences. However, as all four STA course providers had changed the STA competences slightly there were differences in what was taught to STAs. Guidelines to specific goals should be identified so all STAs are taught the same teaching/learning techniques.
- A pay scale for the STA should be identified, like that for the nursery nurse. This will ensure that all STAs are paid the same and the job description for STAs would be the same. At the moment STAs are paid below that of a nursery nurse, although as discovered, some STAs may be given more responsibility.

These three recommendations would provide direction for STAs and teachers over pay awards and the STA role in school, and STA course providers would have a clear understanding of the level of achievement required for the STA qualification.

Finally, in the light of the STA initiative and its implications to teachers there is a need for a redefinition of the teaching profession. As indicated in chapters 2 and 3, the last decade or so has been a difficult one for teachers and complex reform has been at the centre of this era. This culminated in greater accountability of teachers to deliver the National Curriculum and accountability for their performance in this delivery. With pressure to achieve even higher standards the National Curriculum was

not in isolation. The National Literacy Strategy introduced in 1998 and the National Numeracy Strategy introduced in 1999, set out detailed structure for teaching objectives, and national targets. These strategies not only told teachers what to teach, but told them how to teach it and how to organise their time. Poulson (1998) argued that the government strived to make teachers more accountable and this led to a narrower understanding of teachers' professionalism.

Barber (1997) argues that conflict between the government and teachers could end if they found a way of collaborating successfully. The introduction of the General Teaching Council in April 2000 was seen as that collaboration. Thompson (1997) argued that such a professional body would act on behalf of teachers to clarify professional values and then disseminate, and defend them. It would provide a means of controlling the profession (entry and code of conduct), offering advice to the government and establish standards. Barber (1997) believes that this will make teachers feel proud of their work, persuade others to be more respectful of it and raise standards. Thompson (1997) concludes that teachers need an autonomous voice, like doctors (The General Medical Council) and lawyers (The Law Society), especially in a period when they may be thought to have been de-skilled.

Barber (1997) argues that teachers need to reconstruct their professionalism, in light of the erosion in the 'English Tradition' of teacher professionalism. He claimed that:

- Teaching needs to become research-based. At present, little research in education actually results in any real change. The reasoning behind this is because teachers simply do not get to know what the research says or its implications. Dissemination is poor and more importantly, there is no obligation on teachers, unlike doctors, to keep in touch with the latest research findings. The government needs to promote specific research areas, such as the impact of IT on

learning. Researchers need to disseminate these findings. Teachers need to be put under pressure to find out about the latest research, as a legal obligation, and supported to find more time for their own learning.

- Teachers need an MOT. This would ensure teachers were involved in research, achieve minimal levels, and ensure they received work in other institutions. This would be achieved through a professional review. This would involve a trained peer reviewing the development of the teacher and their skills over a five-year period. The successful completion of this review would mean the teacher could re-register as a teacher. This would reduce the number of failing teachers, as they would not be allowed to re-register as a teacher.
- Modules in teaching and learning should be available to undergraduates. This would help students to decide whether teaching would be suited to them or not. Graduates after they had completed their degree could join a three-year entry programme. Thus reducing the number of undergraduates or graduates that train to become teachers but do not pursue the profession.
- The introduction of expert teachers would assist in disseminating quality training and support
- Teaching needs to become a permeable profession. Other routes into teaching should be made available for those with relevant expertise. This would include accepting other adults into the classroom to increase support and knowledge, such as graduates, PhD candidates.
- Early retirements should be halted and deals should be offered to teachers to stay in the teaching. For instance, they could work in school part time, relieving them of the full pressures of the classroom so they can concentrate on support for other teachers, such as mentoring.

(Adapted from Barber 1997:219-234)

Barber (1997) argues that these visions are intended to rebuild teachers' sense of purpose and self-respect and prepare it for the challenges ahead. This is the way forward for teachers.

Barber (1997) and Galton (1989) believe that teachers should redefine their profession themselves. They should strive for continual learning in their profession and the BA with QTS should be the first step to teacher training, which will allow them to practise teaching, but not provide them with professional status. Other steps

will need to be provided to enhance their experience and expertise, such as MA, PhD. Professional status will be acknowledged on post-graduate qualifications, especially since school managers are increasingly providing other adults in the classroom with tasks expected of a qualified teacher.

Teachers, therefore, must be prepared to accept a redefinition of their professionalism as it is clear from this research that the introduction of STAs have redefined the role of classroom assistants. However, the degree it was enhanced was dependent on the STA training and the support the STA received in school after training. In the case of the 'professional' and 'specialist' STA typology, STAs and teachers roles were blurred. This typology may not be too unusual; in fact the government want to 'make it easier for teaching assistants to become qualified teachers' (DfEE, 1998: para.138).

The legitimacy of the STA research

The implications of the introduction of STAs in primary classrooms created much interest. Researchers from STA provider institutions as well as teacher agencies and unions were eager to follow the development of the STA initiative. Each group had its own concerns about how the STA roles would be interpreted once deployed in schools. Their interests have lay within the development of the STAs, none have studied the challenges the STA initiative provided for teachers, the adults whom these STAs work closely with in the primary classroom.

Ofsted (1995, 1996 & 1997) collected data from many STAs and teaching professionals in a national sample. Ofsted (1995) gave the impression that initially the first year had been successful, apart from mistakes in recruiting students on to the STA course by STA course providers. Loxley and Swann (1997) study is based on

a deep sympathy for STAs who have received good training, yet may not be given appropriate rewards. Loxley and Swann (1997) have clearly demonstrated on a number of occasions that they want to disseminate information about good STA practice and their own STA course. Moyles and Suschitzky (1997), funded by the ATL, published a study on classroom assistants in Key Stage One classrooms, looking at STAs, as well as other types of classroom assistants. Their study (1997) is critical of STAs and supportive of NNs, even though NNs, in their study, are in effect doing what was expected of STAs. It does not challenge the STA policy, STA practice or the impact such an initiative will have on the teaching profession, which this study has attempted to address.

The previous studies can be criticised for their lack of attention to STA training and the impact it has had on the deployment of STAs and the teachers who manage them.

This present study is unique in that it has addressed these issues and identified that:

- STA course providers have redefined the STA training. *The study identified four STA typology from the STA competences that were set by the DfEE/TTA to design STA courses.*
- The redefinition of STA training created four roles. *These STA roles were then deployed in schools, with contempt or support. The STAs who were supported continued to carry out the STA role first designed by their STA training. Other STAs found their role had altered according to teachers' perceptions of what they wanted their STAs to do.*
- Teachers' perceptions varied considerably. *Managers (teachers with responsibilities, such as head of department) developed the STA role further. Teachers without management responsibilities limited the STA role or expressed a desire for their STAs to adopt the 'para-professional' or 'reflective supporter' roles.*
- The level of depth in the STA training along with the development of the STA training made some STAs roles blurred from that of a qualified assistant to that of a teacher. *In fact,*

back in 1996/97 the 'specialist' STA typology training course provided the same amount of mathematics and English input as ITT.

- The STA training has enhanced the roles of classroom assistants in primary schools, but in doing so, has challenged teacher professionalism. *There is a need for teacher professionalism to be redefined as Galton (1989) and Barber (1997) have claimed [see: 223]*

The previous studies were based on data collected only from a limited number of partners in STA provision for example, Loxley and Swann (1997) only collected data from STAs themselves, not from teachers, head and STA course providers. This present study collected data from all four partners in the STA enterprise. Data was collected not only from the STAs themselves but also from their Heads, classroom teachers and STA course providers. Nevertheless, this study has its limitations:

- Some STAs and teachers were on temporary contracts and therefore there was a high mobility factor. This may have affected the data collected; on four occasions different teachers or head teachers were interviewed in the final data collection from that in the initial data collection.
- Information on other assistants in schools was researched in the literature review (chapters 1 –4), but no data was collected to evaluate what other assistants were doing compared with that of the STA. Therefore, data has not been collected to distinguish whether the STA was an exception in the quality of support they provided to teachers. In the light of the new government on-the-job training schemes for assistants in schools, such as National Literacy Support (NLS) introduced in 1999, it may have been worthwhile assessing.
- Finally, HEI STA course leaders were not interviewed. Their views could have been of value to the research; they could have explained their STA course criteria in more depth. It may have also supported the researcher in collecting the STA documents. These had been extremely difficult to collect, especially at the beginning of the study when the STA scheme was in its early stages.

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Despite these limitations to the research, the research aim and the three research objectives were achieved:

- **Main aim:** *To track the development of STAs during their training and on their return to their primary school*

STAs development in the first year as a qualified STA was examined. These STAs came from four different STA training backgrounds and then applied the skills they had learned to supporting children. This led to mixed perceptions from teaching professionals; some welcomed their new skills others were not so admirable. Job descriptions had not been amended from before their STA training or they were absent. This left classroom teachers to define their own set of tasks for assistants which undoubtedly caused confusion since teacher perceptions of STA support was in some cases different from that of the STA. This led to STAs being dissatisfied with their training because they were not doing what was expected of them, or exploited because they were doing more than expected, without any financial rewards.

- **Research Objective:** *To examine how STA courses have been planned and implemented*

Courses were all planned using the same DfEE/TTA STA competences but their implementation of these competences differed considerably. The course content varied; Edge Hill STAs were receiving far more mathematics and language input than the other STAs, more than three times as much. The level of accreditation varied; the STAs at STA course provider C were awarded 45 CATS credits, whilst STAs at STA course provider LE were awarded 72 CATS credits. School experience varied: STAs at STA course provider M had 15 days serial practice and 2 x 5 days block practice, whereas others had half a day in school each week, such as the STAs at STA course provider LM. These different organisations and training provided four roles for the STA: reflective supporter, para-professional, professional and specialist.

- **Research Objective:** *To analyse the strategies used to appoint, deploy and support STAs in schools*

Most STAs were already appointed in a primary school before the study started, however, those that found employment in schools after gaining their STA qualification, claimed the STA

course had influenced their employers decision to employing them (M2 and L7). After gaining the STA qualification STAs who worked closely with head teachers and teachers with management responsibilities found their role was fused with that of a teacher. These teaching professionals do not consider STAs a threat to their professionalism, but enhancing their teaching. Over the past ten years they have seen a redefinition in their professionalism where they have had to adopt a new role, they believed that STAs should adopt new roles, too. Some STAs have been encouraged to believe they can practise teaching, and expect to be used like a teacher. These STAs felt disillusioned when their roles were limited, after gaining their STA qualification.

- **Research Objective:** *To identify and explore the issues raised by the introduction of STAs in primary schools*

Some teachers, especially those from the Merseyside area, were unsure of how to deploy their STA because of propaganda on the STA scheme. Other teachers in the Lancashire area developed their STA role from that which the STA had derived from its training institution, and on two occasions (L3 and L6) STAs were compared and used the same as a part time teacher - STAs in other areas be viewed similarly. This may be due to the fact that teachers are unaware of how to support these new types of teaching assistants. Therefore, in-service training on how to use classroom assistants is needed for teachers so they can use assistants more effectively, especially since the increased use of classroom assistants in primary schools throughout the 1980/90s. In fact, some of these assistants had become “teacher surrogates”, like the ‘specialists’. These assistants were doing what teachers do, in the way teachers do it, without being the “real” teacher (adult with qualified teacher status).

Evaluation of research approaches

The research approaches, such as the chosen research paradigm, data collection methods and procedure used to carry out the STA research provided answers to the research aims and objectives. However, with hindsight there are some changes the researcher would adapt for future research of a similar nature, these are:

- Recording data - tape recording all interviews would ensure all information from the interview is retrievable. Much data had been lost through note taking, despite the lengthy field notes taken by the researcher.
- Observation could have proved a useful tool, especially if photographic evidence could be proven regarding the nature of the STAs tasks. This would provide vital evidence on how far the STA does carry out 'teacher tasks', rather than the researcher relying on evidence based on the information given by the respondents.

However, there were approaches that were useful for the STA research:

- The use of triangulation of data collection methods supported the researcher to find answers to areas that needed further explanation or areas that were missing in the interviews.
- The use of a structure interview schedule allowed the researcher to ensure the same questions were given to a particular group of respondents.
- Two visits to the school was useful as it allowed the researcher to review the STAs deployment and collect any 'missing' information.

Suggestions for future related work

Despite the limitations to the research, new work was uncovered. There were indications that STAs did carry out tasks expected of a teacher. However, the research did not find out to what extent the tasks and expectations were the same. It would be interesting to compare some of the STAs who followed the 'specialist' STA typology with part time/floating teachers or those teachers who did not have full time whole class responsibility. It would be imperative to discover how far STAs were similar or the same as a teacher.

The research also raised the issue that some teachers were uncertain how to use STAs, especially the schools in the Merseyside area. In-service training on how to use classroom assistants is needed for teachers so they can use assistants more effectively. It would be interesting to examine those teachers who had experience of classroom assistants training and those who did not to discover if they used them comparably.

This study concentrated on the implications related to the STA initiative and its effects on teacher professionalism. Whilst this was an appropriate area to research given the nature of the initiative and the controversy surrounding it at that time the research did not compare STAs with other assistants. It is not clear whether other assistants were doing similar tasks, in particular, a close examination of nursery nurses' roles and how they compare with STAs. It is important to analyse how far the roles and tasks were the same or different to discover whether the STAs only or other assistants carried out tasks once deemed as those of the teacher.

Conclusion

This study has established five original insights related to the STA initiative and its impact on teachers and their perception of themselves as autonomous professionals.

These are:

- STAs perceived themselves as having similar skills as a qualified teacher. *Some STAs enrolled on the STA courses because they wanted to 'teach basic skills in maths and English to KS 1 children' (DfE, circular 14/93). STA course providers were also reported to have believed that this was possible, according to one head teacher (HT L8). Indeed, the 'specialist' and 'professional' STA typology trained STAs to carry out tasks expected of a teacher. Therefore it*

was logical for STAs to perceive that this course would qualify them to teach and to be treated as a teacher in their specialist area.

- *STAs are taking some of the responsibilities expected of a teacher. Some STAs, under the head teacher's approval, were extending their role from teaching, to that of teacher. In particular, two STAs (M1 and C1) who were trained as a 'para-professional' and a 'reflective supporter' respectively, found that their STA roles had changed once deployed in schools to that of a 'professional' or 'specialist'. This culminated in STAs undertaking work that was previously done by teachers, such as STA M1, C1, L1, L3, L5 and L7.*
- *Head teachers' and teachers' with management responsibilities high expectations of STAs. Head teachers and teachers with management responsibilities have used the STA training as a means to justify giving their STA more responsibility, in the form of teaching groups of children, without appropriate supervision, such as HT M1, C1, L1, L3, L5 and L7J.*
- *Teachers' perceptions of STAs. Teachers' perceptions of STAs are mixed. There are those who believe that STAs have enhanced their teaching, but there are some, who strongly believe that STAs have undermined their status, CT L1, L8 are two such teachers.*
- *Financial implications in employing STAs instead of a floating/part time teacher. Although under LMS head teachers have been given greater control over their budget, it has lead to dilemmas over where to spend the money, for instance, head teachers asked staff whether they wanted more support or an extra teacher (HT C1, L7). Staff was left to choose one option when both were needed. In two schools (C1 and L7) a majority of staff agreed to employ more assistants because more of them would benefit from the additional assistance.*

With the further increase of classroom assistants in primary schools 'approximately 20,000 more by 2002' (DfEE 1998). Boundaries for STAs are vital, for the teacher who they work with, and also the STA herself. Without clear boundaries, tensions could affect working relationships that were once secure; especially since the STA initiative will not be the last of its kind. In particular, other innovations for assistants have included the publication of *The progression routes to qualified teacher status for classroom assistants*, (TTA 1999). This provides an account on how their pilot

training scheme for classroom assistants would provide an easier way into teaching. This had been the intention for the trained STAs, yet no HEI offered APL as an option, despite the Conservative government's recommendation for it to take place (Circular 14/93). Unfortunately, as good an idea as it might seem to the then Major Government and the present New Labour government, the consequence of this is that it could affect ITE by creating more routes into teaching, but without careful monitoring of standards of entry. This could create serious problems for the teaching profession, which has already undergone much pressure. The reality of this happening is foreseeable, as there seems to be more assistants in primary schools than ever before (Lee and Mawson 1998). The DfEE Green Paper: *Excellence For All Children* (DfEE 1998) announced that there were over 24,000 full time assistants in primary and secondary schools in England. Furthermore, this seems to be the way forward for the government, in which government schemes, such as the STA, are overtly and covertly challenging teacher professionalism.

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1 to 12.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

The 1988 ERA stated that schooling should be classified in consecutive years and stages, rather than school phases.

Key Stage (KS)	Old description	New description	Age of majority of pupils at the end of the school year
	Reception	Reception*	5
1	Infant 1 (I1)	Year 1 (Y1)	6
	Infant 2 (I2)	Year 2 (Y2)	7
2	Junior 1 (J1)	Year 3 (Y3)	8
	Junior 2 (J2)	Year 4 (Y4)	9
	Junior 3 (J3)	Year 5 (Y5)	10
	Junior 4 (J4)	Year 6 (Y6)	11
3	1 st year seniors	Year 7 (Y7)	12
	2 nd year seniors	Year 8 (Y8)	13
	3 rd year seniors	Year 9 (Y9)	14
4	4 th year seniors	Year 10 (Y10)	15
	5 th year seniors	Year 11 (Y11)	16

*Reception is not covered by the National Curriculum legislation.

Appendix 2

STA competences (DfE, 1994)

6. STAs should be able to demonstrate a range of competences related to the exercise of their role under the direction of the teacher. These competences will need to be acquired or developed in a context of understanding

- the relevant requirements of the primary curriculum
- the place of the school in educating primary pupils and in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- the role of the teacher
- their own support in relation to teachers, other support staff and agencies, and pupils

7. CURRICULUM CONTENT, PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

Under the teacher's direction, STAs should be able:

a. Whole curriculum

- to demonstrate familiarity with the purpose and scope of the relevant requirements of the primary curriculum
- to take every opportunity to develop pupils' language, reading, numeracy and related skills

b. Subject Knowledge and Application

- to demonstrate knowledge and basic understanding of the primary curriculum at a level which will assist effective teaching of the basic skills
- to use that knowledge and understanding in supporting work with pupils and in helping to assess their progress in the basic skills

c. Assessment and Recording of pupils' progress

- to assist in recording systematically the progress of individual pupils.
- to monitor pupils' performance and report to the teacher
- to assist in using results in further support work with pupils.
- to give oral and written feedback to pupils on their attainment and progress

8. LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Under the teacher's direction, STAs should be able:

a. Pupils' Learning

- to work with teachers to identify and respond appropriately to individual differences between pupils.

- to show awareness of how pupils learn and of the various factors which affect the process
- to assist the teacher in setting appropriate and demanding expectations of pupils

b. Teaching Strategies and Techniques

- to support clearly set out expectations of pupil behaviour and assist in securing appropriate standards of discipline
- to help to create and maintain a purposeful, orderly and supportive environment for pupils learning
- to maintain pupils' interests and motivation
- to present learning tasks and curriculum content in a clear and stimulating manner
- to work with pupils individually or collectively and to contribute to decisions about the most appropriate learning goals and teaching strategies
- to use a range of supporting techniques and, in consultation with the teacher, to consider when and how to deploy them
- to communicate clearly and effectively with pupils through questioning, instructing, explaining and feedback
- to manage effectively and economically their own and pupils' time
- to make constructive use of computers and other classroom resources for learning
- to help train pupils in the individual and collaborative study skills necessary for learning

Appendix 3

Competences expected of newly qualified teachers (Circular 14/93)

CURRICULUM CONTENT, PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

a. Whole Curriculum

2.2 Newly qualified teachers should be able to:

- 2.2.1 demonstrate understanding of the purposes, scope, structure and balance of the primary curriculum as a whole;
- 2.2.2 ensure continuity and progression within the work of their own class and with the classes to and from which their pupils transfer;
- 2.2.3 exploit, in all their teaching, opportunities to develop pupils' language, reading, numeracy, information handling and other skills.

b. Subject Knowledge and Application

2.3 Newly qualified teachers should be able to:

- 2.3.1 demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the subjects of the primary curriculum which they have studied, at a level which will support effective teaching in these subjects;
- 2.3.2 use that knowledge and understanding to plan lessons, teach and assess pupils in the core subjects of the National Curriculum and those other subjects of the primary curriculum covered in their course; newly qualified teachers may need some guidance and support in some of these subjects

c. Assessment and Recording of Pupils' Progress

2.4 Newly qualified teachers should be able to:

- 2.4.1 test, assess and record systematically the progress of the individual pupils;
- 2.4.2 judge how well each pupil performs against appropriate criteria and standards identifying individual pupils' attainment, with reference to relevant National Curriculum requirements;
- 2.4.3 use such testing and assessment in their planning and teaching;
- 2.4.4 provide oral and written feedback to pupils on the processes and outcomes of their learning;
- 2.4.5 prepare and present reports on pupils' progress to parents

TEACHING STRATEGIES

a. Pupils' Learning

2.5 Newly qualified teachers should be able to:

- 2.5.1 identify and respond appropriately to relevant individual differences between pupils;
- 2.5.2 show awareness of how pupils learn and of the various factors which affect the process;
- 2.5.3 set appropriate and demanding expectations of their pupils;

- 2.5.4 devise a variety and range of learning goals and tasks and monitor and assess them.

b. Teaching Strategies and Techniques

2.6 Newly qualified teachers should be able to:

- 2.6.1 establish clear expectations of pupil behaviour in the classroom and secure appropriate standards of discipline;
- 2.6.2 create and maintain a purposeful, orderly and supportive environment for their pupils;
- 2.6.3 maintain pupils interest and motivation
- 2.6.4 present learning tasks and curriculum content in a clear and stimulating manner;
- 2.6.5 teach whole classes, groups and individuals, and determine the most appropriate learning goals and classroom contexts for using these and other teaching strategies;
- 2.6.6 use a range of teaching techniques, and judge when and how to deploy them
- 2.6.7 employ varying forms of curriculum organisation, and monitor their effectiveness;
- 2.6.8 communicate clearly and effectively with pupils through questioning, instructing, explaining and feedback;
- 2.6.9 manage effectively and economically their own and their pupils' time;
- 2.6.10 make constructive use of information technology and other resources for learning;
- 2.6.11 train pupils in the individual and collaborative study skills necessary for effective learning

FURTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2.7 Newly qualified teachers should have acquired in initial training the necessary foundation to develop:

- 2.7.1 a working knowledge of their contractual, legal, administrative and pastoral responsibilities as teachers;
- 2.7.2 effective working relationships with professional colleagues (including support staff) and parents;
- 2.7.3 the ability to recognise diversity of talent including that of gifted pupils;
- 2.7.4 the ability to identify and provide for special educational needs and specific learning difficulties;
- 2.7.5 the ability to evaluate pupils' learning, and recognise the effects on that learning of teachers' expectations and actions;
- 2.7.6 a readiness to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
- 2.7.7 their professional knowledge, understanding and skill through further training and development
- 2.7.8 vision, imagination and critical awareness in educating their pupils.

Appendix 4

Methodological Calendar

Year	Month	Action
1995	October November December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate baseline data. • Initiate literature review. • Prepare pre-pilot study questionnaires.
1996	January February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact first round STAs by telephone. • Send out, collect and evaluate pre-pilot questionnaires.
	March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct structured interview schedule for pilot study.
	April May June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select respondents for pilot study. • Schools contacted by letter. • A list of interview dates set up. • Carry out pilot study. Interviewed 8 STAs, 6 head teachers, 1 deputy head teacher, and 5 class teachers. Observed 8 STAs.
	July August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot study structured interview schedule revised for main study. • Contact made with an STA course provider (Catherine Frost).
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAs selected in this new area. • Schools contacted by letter. • A list of interview dates set up.
	October November December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carried out main study in Chester area (initial data collection). Interviewed 5 STAs, head teachers and class teachers.
1997	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact made with another STA course provider.
	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters sent to schools. • A list of interview dates set up.
	March April May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carried out main study in Lancashire area (initial data collection). Interviewed 8 STAs, 8 head teachers and 8 class teachers.
	June July August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate main study findings. • Construct structured interview schedule for final data collection (Follow-up study).
	September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact all main study schools. • A list of interview dates set up.
	October November December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carried out final data collection with all main study respondents (Chester and Lancashire area). Interviewed 10 STAs, 12 head teachers and 11 class teachers.

Appendix 5

Evonne Edwards,
Research Assistant,
Liverpool John Moores University,
I. M. Marsh Campus,
Barkhill Road,
Aigburth,
Liverpool,
L17 6BD.

26th January 1996.

Dear **Kathryn**,

I would like to give you the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation of the STA courses in the North West of England. This is a three-year research project, which will evaluate the various STA courses and filter through to educators and employers.

I am writing to request your assistance in this project. I would like you to fill in the enclosed questionnaire to find out why you enrolled on the LJMU STA course and what your views are regarding the course. Your views are important and they are needed to evaluate the course further.

Please find a self addressed envelope attached, and we would be grateful if the questionnaire was returned by 13th February 1996. If you have any further enquiries please contact:

Evonne Edwards

0151-231-5239

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your help and co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Evonne Edwards
Research Assistant.

Checklist Number _____

SPECIALIST TEACHER ASSISTANT
QUESTIONNAIRE - ROUND TWO

This questionnaire is divided into two sections entitled - YOU and ABOUT THE COURSE, it would be appreciated if you could answer both sections. Indicate your answers with a tick. The contents of this form will remain confidential to the STA research team.

YOU

- 1) Please tick which age range you fit into?

21 - 25 YEARS	
26 - 30 YEARS	
31 - 35 YEARS	
36 - 40 YEARS	
41 - 45 YEARS	
46 YEARS +	

- 2) What were you doing before you started the course?

Employed as a classroom assistant(GO TO 3)	
Unemployed	
Student in full/part time education(GO TO 3)	
Employed in another occupation	
Other, please state below(GO TO 3)	

If answered other

2A) If you were unemployed/employed in another occupation before you started the course, it would be appreciated if you could answer the following questions.

*Your answers are needed to find out if you had any experience or skills in an education environment prior to the course. If any of the questions do not apply to you, or you do not wish to answer, please write *not applicable (N/A)*.*

What was your previous occupation before the course ?

-

Have you ever been employed in education prior to the course?

-

Have you ever been a voluntary worker in schools?

-

Did you look after the family/home ?

-

3) Why did you decide to join the STA course?

* If more than one applies to you please number them ie. 1 being the most relevant, 2 the next most relevant and so on.

To help you aid your own child(ren)	
The course was free	
Wanted to gain a qualification	
Wanted to be of more benefit to the children you aid in school	
Wanted to find out more about school life	
Wanted to change your occupation	
Wanted more in-service training	
Other, please state below	

If answered other

- 4) Had you considered other child care courses (e.g. NNEB, NVQ, BTEC etc) before the STA course ?

YES	
NO	

If YES, which one(s).....

- 5) Had you had close links with your school before the course? (ie. worked in the school, either voluntary or paid, prior to the course)

YES	
NO	GO TO QUESTION 7

- 6) How long had you been at the school ?

0 - 6 months	
7 - 12 months	
1 - 2 years	
3 - 4 years	
5 + years	

7) How did you choose your school?

Employed as an assistant at the school	
The university chose the school	
Nearest to your home	
Old primary school	
Child(ren) enrolled at the school	
Child(ren) who are friends/relatives enrolled at the school	
Other, please state overleaf	

If answered other, to question 7.....

8) Before entering the course, what qualifications had you gained ?

QUALIFICATION	HOW MANY	SUBJECT (S)
C.S.E.		
O LEVEL		
G.C.S.E		
A LEVEL		
BTEC		
DEGREE		
OTHER		
Please state in subject column		

ABOUT THE COURSE

- 9) Would you recommend the STA course at LJMU ?

YES	
NO	

If NO, why ?

- 10) How satisfied were you with the organisation of the STA course at LJMU ?

Very satisfied	
Satisfied	
Dissatisfied	
Very dissatisfied	

- 11) Did you receive enough information about the STA course at LJMU ?

YES	
NO	

If NO, please explain your answer....

12) Were you able to consult lecturers about matters relating to the module he/she was teaching ?

YES	
NO	

If YES, were you able to consult.....

ALL	
SOME	
MOST	

13) Do you think you were given enough guidance and support on the STA course at LJMU ?

YES	
NO	

14) Did you receive feedback on your assignments ?

YES	
NO	

If NO, Do you think you would have benefitted from the feedback.?.....

-

-

-

- 15) Do you feel confident in offering your support to children in primary classrooms in the following areas ?

*Please number the areas eg. 1 being the one you feel most confident with, 2 the next most confident and so on *

Using the computer with children	
Working with children with learning difficulties	
Supporting maths activities	
Reading and telling stories to a group of children	
Supporting language activities (eg. writing, speaking and listening)	
Supporting practical science activities	
Reporting to the teacher about pupil progress	
Working on field trips/school outings	
Supporting other curriculum subjects	

- 16) What were the positive/negative points about the STA course? Please list three answers for each, if possible.

POSITIVE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

NEGATIVE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- 17) Did you find the teacher you were with on your placement supportive ?

YES	
NO	

If NO, please explain your answer

- 18) Did you discuss course work/activities with your teacher on your school experience ?

YES	
NO	

If NO, why ?

- 19) a Did you find the staff at your school placement were aware of the potential of STA in the classroom?

YES	
NO	

If NO, why?

B) Welfare Assistant

Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up study ?

YES	
NO	

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please write any further comments which may not have been covered in the questionnaire on a separate sheet and attach to this form.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION
IN
ASSISTING THE STA RESEARCH TEAM**

Appendix 6

Pilot Study (Merseyside area)

STAs educated at Liverpool John Moores University

School M1: Maintained

Interviewed: STA
HT

Observed: STA

Visited school on 26.03.96 am.

School M2: Maintained

Interviewed: STA
HT
CT

Observed: STA

Visited school on 16.04.96 am.

School M3: Roman Catholic Controlled

Interviewed: STA
HT
CT

Observed: STA

Visited school on 19.04.96 am.

School M4: JMI

Interviewed: STA
HT
CT

Observed: STA

Visited school on 23.04.96 am.

School M5: Maintained

Interviewed: STA
DHT
CT

Observed: STA

Visited school on 24.04.96 am.

School M6: Maintained

Interviewed: STA
HT
CT

Observed: STA

Visited school on 25.04.96 am.

School M7: C of E Aided

Interviewed: STA
HT

Visited school on 30.04.96 am.

School M8: Maintained

Interviewed: STA

Observed: STA

Visited school on 6.06.96 am.

Appendix 8

Main study (Chester area)

STAs educated at Chester Institute of Higher Education

School C1: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)
HT - (IV and FV)
CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 22.10.96 a.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 20.10.97 a.m.

School C2: C of E Aided

STA - (IV and FV)
HT - (IV and FV)
CTa - (IV)
CTb - (FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 23.10.96 a.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 24.10.97 p.m.

School C3: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)
HTa - (IV)
HTb - (FV)
CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 24.10.96 a.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 24.10.97 a.m.

School C4: C of E Controlled

STA - (IV and FV)

HT - (IV and FV)

CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 8.11.96 a.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 21.10.97 a.m.

School C5: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)

HTa - (IV)

HTb - (FV)

CTa - (IV)

CTb - (FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 30.10.96 p.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 7.11.97 p.m.

Appendix 9

Main Study (Lancashire area)

STAs educated at St. Martin's College

School L2: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)

HT - (IV and FV)

CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 10.04.97 @ 2.00 p.m.

Final visit (FV) - 14.11.97 @ 1.30 p.m.

School L3: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)

DT - (IV and FV)

CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV)- 11.04.97 @ 9.30 am.

Final visit (FV) - 25.11.97 @ 10.00 am.

School L5: Maintained

STA - (IV)

HT - (IV)

CT - (IV)

Initial visit (IV) - 15.04.97 @ 3.00 p.m.

School L8: Independant

STA - (IV)

Hta - (IV)

HTb - (FV)

CT - (IV)

Initial visit (IV) - 18.04.97 @ 1.30 p.m.

Final visit (FV) - 17.11.97 @ 9.30 am.

STAs educated at Edge Hill

School L1: Maintained

STA - (IV)
HT - (IV and FV)
CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 10.04.97 @ 9.30 am.
Final visit (FV) - 12.11.97 @ 3.30 p.m.

School L4: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)
HT - (FV)
DT (mentor) - (IV and FV)
CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 15.04.97 @ 9.00 am.
Final visit (FV) - 21.11.97 @ 10.00 am.

School L6: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)
HT - (IV and FV)
DH - (IV)

Initial visit (IV) - 16.04.97 @ 10.30 am.
Final visit (FV) - 10.11.97 @ 11.00 am.

School L7: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)
HT - (IV and FV)
CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 23.04.97 @ 2.00 p.m.
Final visit (FV) - 10.11.97 @ 2.00 p.m.

Appendix 10

Evonne Edwards,
Research Assistant,
Liverpool John Moores University,
Barkhill Road,
Aigburth,
Liverpool, L17 6BD.

2nd April 1997

Dear **Mrs Smith**,

I am writing to request your assistance in a research project, at Liverpool John Moores University, which is evaluating the Specialist Teacher Assistant Initiative in the North West of England.

Your school was suggested to me by Nina Southworth (School Personnel Services Recruitment Officer for Lancashire County Council) as being a good one to include in my sample. I would like to interview yourself, the member of staff whom **Ms Wilson** works under, and **Ms Wilson**. I am proposing to ask questions of yourself about *appointment and support* of an STA, the class teacher about *activities and responsibilities* of an STA, and the STA will be asked about her *contribution to children's learning*. I would be in the school for no longer than half a day, or I could visit the school over a period of time, at *your* convenience.

It is important that I receive feedback about the STA initiative in schools, in order to evaluate the support STAs provide to teaching staff, and the contribution STAs might make to children's learning opportunities.

All responses will be confidential, and your school will be included in the credits of the PhD thesis, The Development and Evaluation of the Specialist Teacher Assistant Initiative in the North West of England, which will be due in July 1998.

I will be ringing you within the next five days to introduce myself and provide any other information you may need, and discuss the research further.

Yours sincerely,

Evonne Edwards, Telephone Number - 0151 231 5239.

**STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH
HEAD TEACHERS**

Questions on appointment

What qualities, skills and experience do you look for in a classroom assistant ?	
Do you have a criteria for employing classroom assistants ? (e.g. have to be a voluntary worker at the school before hand.....)	
Who/what brought the STA course to your attention ?	
What are your views about the STA initiative ?	
How do you think the STA course differs from other courses for classroom assistants, in particular any of the following: BTEC in nursery nursing, NVQ Level 3, NNEB	
The STA courses provided in participating institutions may vary in content. Do you think this is a good idea ? Please explain your answer..	
What qualifications did your classroom assistant have before attending the STA course ? (e.g. NNEB, NVQ etc)	

Appendix 7

Evonne Edwards
Research Assistant
John Moores University
Barkhill Road
Aigburth
Liverpool
L17 6BD

15th March 1996.

Dear Mrs Warbrick,

I am writing to request your assistance in a research project, at Liverpool John Moores University, which is evaluating the Specialist Teacher Assistant course in the North West. I believe, **Ms Teresa Crummey**, one of your classroom assistants, qualified as an STA in 1995. Thus, I would like to visit **Ms Crummey**, and observe her whilst she is working with a child /or children,(if it is possible), but most importantly have a discussion with her, about her role in the primary school.

I would also appreciate your participation in the research. I would like to interview yourself, and the member of staff whom **Ms Crummey** works under, if possible. I am proposing to ask questions to yourself about *appointment and support* of an STA, and to the class teacher about *activities and responsibilities* of an STA. I would be in the school for no longer than half a day, or I could visit the school over a period of time, and a date(s) will be made at *your* convenience.

I will be happy to send you a list of questions, which I am proposing for yourself and your members of staff involved in the research prior to my visit, if it is more convenient.

It is very important that I receive feedback about the support STAs provide from the people that will encounter the STA initiative in the long term, which is yourself and your staff.

I will be ringing you this week to introduce myself and provide any other information you may need, and discuss the research further.

Yours sincerely,

Evonne Edwards
Research Assistant for STA initiative
Telephone Number - 0151 231 5239.

**STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH
HEAD TEACHERS**

Questions on appointment

<p>If you were employing a classroom assistant, what qualities, skills, experience, do you look for ? Why ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA meet your above criteria ? Does he/she have more to offer ?</p>	
<p>What are your views towards the STA initiative?</p>	
<p>How do you think the STA course differs from other courses for classroom assistants (e.g. NNEB)?</p>	
<p>Do you value STAs higher than other assistants (with relevant support qualifications) because they are taught at H.E institutions, and are assessed at level one ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA at your school have a job description ?</p>	
<p>Although there is no pay scale for the STA at the moment, what would you expect it to be ? (NNEB, Welfare Assistant or Other)</p>	
<p>Is the STA monitored, and his/her performance reviewed ?</p>	

Questions on support

<p>Does the STA stay in the same class or visit several classes ?</p>	
<p>What support does the STA provide to the children at Key Stage One ? Please give examples.....</p>	
<p>Do you encourage in-service training amongst your paid classroom assistants ?</p>	
<p>What in-service training would you consider for your STA ? * Do you feel this training should have been provided by the university ?</p>	
<p>If there are further modules held at the university for STAs to undertake would you encourage the STA to do the module ?</p>	
<p>Is there any advice/recommendations you would give me to take back to the university ?</p>	

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
WITH CLASS TEACHER (S)

Deployment and responsibilities

<p>What sort of activities does the STA do in your classroom ? Please give examples.....</p>	
<p>Do you decide what activities are to be done by the STA and tell him/her to do it, or, do you discuss the activities with the STA ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA contribute to the planning of his/her activities, in any way ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA follow activities up, by developing activities for the next session, or displaying their work with children ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA work mainly on a one-to-one basis with children ? If not, does he/she work with groups/pairs ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA discuss with you about the activities she/he has done, sometime throughout the day ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA report to you about pupil progression ?</p>	

<p>What responsibilities does the STA have in the classroom ? (e.g. preparing resources, hearing a group of children read etc.)</p>	
<p>Do you think the STA is more confident in supporting children's learning than what she/he was before the course ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA discuss ideas with you that she/he learned from the STA course at LJMU ?</p>	
<p>Would you recommend other assistants to go onto the STA course at LJMU ? Please explain your answer.</p>	
<p>Do you think the STA supports your teaching ?</p>	
<p>Do you think your STA is an invaluable asset to your classroom ? Please explain your answer.</p>	

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

FOR STA

The contribution of a STA to children's education at K.S.1

<p>Do you prepare resources to support a designated activity ? Examples.....</p>	
<p>Under guidance from the teacher, do you set up and use a computer system with a child/or children ?</p>	
<p>Can you assist the teacher in implementing a range of teaching techniques ? (e.g. practical activities, investigations, games, written work etc.) Please give examples.....</p>	
<p>Can you assist the teacher in implementing a range of organisational strategies ? (e.g. one-to-one, pair, small group etc.) Please give examples</p>	
<p>Can you maintain a child's/or children's interest in an activity you are doing with them ? Please recall an activity.....</p>	
<p>Can you manage your time and the pupil(s) time you are working with effectively ? (e.g. not take too long on an activity)</p>	
<p>Under the direction of the teacher, can you demand appropriate pupil behaviour ?</p>	

<p>Under the guidance from the teacher, have you supported a child with special educational needs ?</p>	
<p>Under the guidance from the teacher, have you ever contributed to a mathematics activity? Please give examples.....</p>	
<p>Under the guidance of the teacher, have you ever contributed to a language activity ? (e.g. reading to children, children reading to you, speaking and listening activity, writing) Please give examples.....</p>	
<p>Do you give feedback to the teacher on an activity you have undertaken ? If so, how often ?</p>	
<p>Do you report to the teacher about pupil progress ?</p>	

Appendix 8

Main study (Chester area)

STAs educated at Chester Institute of Higher Education

School C1: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)

HT - (IV and FV)

CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 22.10.96 a.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 20.10.97 a.m.

School C2: C of E Aided

STA - (IV and FV)

HT - (IV and FV)

CTa - (IV)

CTb - (FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 23.10.96 a.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 24.10.97 p.m.

School C3: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)

HTa - (IV)

HTb - (FV)

CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 24.10.96 a.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 24.10.97 a.m.

School C4: C of E Controlled

STA - (IV and FV)

HT - (IV and FV)

CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 8.11.96 a.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 21.10.97 a.m.

School C5: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)

HTa - (IV)

HTb - (FV)

CTa - (IV)

CTb - (FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 30.10.96 p.m.

Final Visit (FV) - 7.11.97 p.m.

Appendix 9

Main Study (Lancashire area)

STAs educated at St. Martin's College

School L2: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)

HT - (IV and FV)

CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 10.04.97 @ 2.00 p.m.

Final visit (FV) - 14.11.97 @ 1.30 p.m.

School L3: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)

DT - (IV and FV)

CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV)- 11.04.97 @ 9.30 am.

Final visit (FV) - 25.11.97 @ 10.00 am.

School L5: Maintained

STA - (IV)

HT - (IV)

CT - (IV)

Initial visit (IV) - 15.04.97 @ 3.00 p.m.

School L8: Independant

STA - (IV)

Hta - (IV)

HTb - (FV)

CT - (IV)

Initial visit (IV) - 18.04.97 @ 1.30 p.m.

Final visit (FV) - 17.11.97 @ 9.30 am.

STAs educated at Edge Hill

School L1: Maintained

STA - (IV)
HT - (IV and FV)
CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 10.04.97 @ 9.30 am.
Final visit (FV) - 12.11.97 @ 3.30 p.m.

School L4: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)
HT - (FV)
DT (mentor) - (IV and FV)
CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 15.04.97 @ 9.00 am.
Final visit (FV) - 21.11.97 @ 10.00 am.

School L6: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)
HT - (IV and FV)
DH - (IV)

Initial visit (IV) - 16.04.97 @ 10.30 am.
Final visit (FV) - 10.11.97 @ 11.00 am.

School L7: Maintained

STA - (IV and FV)
HT - (IV and FV)
CT - (IV and FV)

Initial visit (IV) - 23.04.97 @ 2.00 p.m.
Final visit (FV) - 10.11.97 @ 2.00 p.m.

Appendix 10

Evonne Edwards,
Research Assistant,
Liverpool John Moores University,
Barkhill Road,
Aigburth,
Liverpool, L17 6BD.

2nd April 1997

Dear Mrs Smith,

I am writing to request your assistance in a research project, at Liverpool John Moores University, which is evaluating the Specialist Teacher Assistant Initiative in the North West of England.

Your school was suggested to me by Nina Southworth (School Personnel Services Recruitment Officer for Lancashire County Council) as being a good one to include in my sample. I would like to interview yourself, the member of staff whom Ms Wilson works under, and Ms Wilson. I am proposing to ask questions of yourself about *appointment and support* of an STA, the class teacher about *activities and responsibilities* of an STA, and the STA will be asked about her *contribution to children's learning*. I would be in the school for no longer than half a day, or I could visit the school over a period of time, at *your* convenience.

It is important that I receive feedback about the STA initiative in schools, in order to evaluate the support STAs provide to teaching staff, and the contribution STAs might make to children's learning opportunities.

All responses will be confidential, and your school will be included in the credits of the PhD thesis, The Development and Evaluation of the Specialist Teacher Assistant Initiative in the North West of England, which will be due in July 1998.

I will be ringing you within the next five days to introduce myself and provide any other information you may need, and discuss the research further.

Yours sincerely,

Evonne Edwards, Telephone Number - 0151 231 5239.

**STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH
HEAD TEACHERS**

Questions on appointment

<p>What qualities, skills and experience do you look for in a classroom assistant ?</p>	
<p>Do you have a criteria for employing classroom assistants ? (e.g. have to be a voluntary worker at the school before hand.....)</p>	
<p>Who/what brought the STA course to your attention ?</p>	
<p>What are your views about the STA initiative ?</p>	
<p>How do you think the STA course differs from other courses for classroom assistants, in particular any of the following: BTEC in nursery nursing, NVQ Level 3, NNEB</p>	
<p>The STA courses provided in participating institutions may vary in content. Do you think this is a good idea ? Please explain your answer..</p>	
<p>What qualifications did your classroom assistant have before attending the STA course ? (e.g. NNEB, NVQ etc)</p>	

<p>What in-service training have your paid classroom assistants undertaken ? Is it school policy to encourage training ?</p> <p>Does the STA at your school have a job description ? If so, what is his/her title ?</p>	
<p>Although there is no pay scale for the STA at the moment, what would you expect it to be ? How much, and what is your reasoning for this?</p>	

Questions on support

<p>Has the STAs duties changed from those prior to the commencement of the STA course ? If so, how ?</p>	
<p>Is the STA viewed differently to other assistants in the school ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA stay in the same class, or visit several classes ? Has the STA a timetable ?</p>	

<p>What support does the STA provide to the children at KS 1 ? Please give examples.....</p>	
<p>The DFEE believe the emphasis of the STA training should be English and maths, would you have included any other training in the STA course ?</p>	
<p>Do you think input on KS 2 is needed in the STA's training ?</p>	
<p>What do you feel about the length of the course ?</p>	
<p>Is there any advice/recommendations you would give me regarding the STA initiative ?</p>	

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
WITH CLASS TEACHERS

Deployment and responsibilities

<p>Could you tell me about yourself ? e.g. experience in schools, qualifications, training courses attended etc.</p>	
<p>What were your views towards the STA initiative in 1994?</p> <p>What are your views now ?</p>	
<p>How do you feel the classroom assistant has improved through the experience, and training gained from the STA course ? (more confident, more able to work in a team, more able to reflect *critical reflection* etc.)</p>	
<p>Have you ever received any in-service training on how to use classroom assistants, prior to the mentor meetings for the STA course ? If not, would this prove useful ?</p>	
<p>How have you supported the STA after gaining the qualification ? (e.g. provided more experience for assistant inside the classroom supporting children)</p>	
<p>What subjects/activities does the STA contribute to in the classroom ? (e.g. mathematics and language because STA has been trained in these areas)</p> <p>Where is her/his input most valuable ?</p>	

<p>What responsibilities does the STA have in the classroom ? (e.g. preparing resources etc.)</p> <p>* Which one(s) are given to him/her because of his/her training ?</p>	
<p>How is the STA deployed in your classroom ? (mainly works with small groups, one-to-one, pairs, or move around the classroom aiding children)</p>	
<p>Do you decide what activities are to be done by the STA, and tell him/her to do it, or, do you discuss the activities with the STA ? If so, how ? (e.g. daily meetings etc.) Please explain any other method you use.....</p>	
<p>Has the STA ever asked to do any activities with a group of children or child ? If so, what were they ? If not, is this because the STA does not want to. Please explain your answer for this.....</p>	

<p>How do you think the STA supports your teaching ? (e.g. prompts children and not tell them the answers</p>	
<p>How often does the STA report to you about pupil progression, activities etc. ?</p>	
<p>Have you ever discussed the STA's progress, since he/she has completed the course, and monitor her/his progression ?</p>	
<p>Would you consider the STA and yourself work as a team in the classroom ? Please show evidence of this.....</p>	

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
FOR STA

The contribution of a STA to children's education at K.S.1

<p>What are your views towards the STA course you have recently completed ?</p>	
<p>Do you feel the course has improved your ability to support children effectively ?</p> <p>How ?</p>	
<p>Do you feel the course has changed your status within the school ?</p> <p>How ?</p>	
<p>How has your role changed from prior to the STA course, and now ?</p>	
<p>Which subjects do you support children with ?</p> <p>Which do you receive more experience of ?</p> <p>Where do you feel your support is most valuable ?</p>	

<p>Are there any subjects that you do not support, or you do not feel confident in supporting ?</p>	
<p>Under the guidance from the teacher, have you ever contributed to a mathematics activity ? Give examples of the kind of maths activities you support.....</p>	
<p>Under the guidance from the teacher, have you ever contributed to a language activity ? Give examples of the kind of language activities you support.....</p>	
<p>What ability of children are you used to support ? (learning difficulties, gifted children etc)</p>	
<p>Have you ever contributed/discussed ideas for an activity (or activities) with your class teacher ? Please discuss your answer.....</p>	
<p>Can you describe a normal day's timetable for your duties ? (If different every day, describe the past 1/2 days)</p>	

<p>How often does your teacher and yourself communicate about the following:</p> <p>Activities, Topics, Planning for the week ahead, Introduction of skills or concepts</p> <p>* Please include any other areas which may have been omitted in the list above, and are discussed by both of you.</p>	
<p>Would you like to contribute your support to children more than you do at present ? Please explain your answer.....</p>	
<p>Do you discuss your performance with the class teacher or head teacher ? If so, how often ? If not, do you think you would benefit from this ?</p>	
<p>Had you ever attended any training courses , or wanted to attend any courses, before you attended the STA course ?</p> <p>Why did you decide to attend the STA course ?</p>	
<p>What type of course or training would you like to do next ?</p>	

Appendix 11

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS WITH HEAD TEACHERS

Appointment and support

<p>Can you give me a brief outline of your teaching career ? e.g. experience in schools, qualifications, training courses attended etc.</p>	
<p>How many classroom assistants are employed in your school ?</p> <p>How many are STAs ?</p> <p>Why does your school need CAs/STAs ?</p> <p>Who has the responsibility for managing the STA ?</p>	
<p>Do you have a school policy document on classroom assistants ?</p> <p><u>If not</u>, do you think you need one ?</p> <p><u>If so</u>, When was it compiled ? When was it last reviewed ? What changes were made ? Who has the responsibility for writing the document ?</p>	
<p>Does the STA at your school have a job description ? Is it available ?</p> <p>Has it changed within the last twelve months ?</p> <p>Is it properly defined ? e.g. staff and STA know STA's role and duties within the school</p>	

<p>Is the job description for the STA discussed with the teacher(s) she works with ?</p>	
<p>Who directs the STA's duties and provides support for the STA when advice is needed ? e.g. line manager</p>	
<p>Has the STAs duties changed in the last twelve months ? If so, how ?</p>	
<p>Do you set aside money for STA staff training ? If so, how much ? How does this compare with CTs ?</p>	
<p>What sort of training do you feel the STA needs ?</p>	
<p>Does the school offer in-service training for support staff ?</p> <p>Do you have support staff meetings ? If so, how often ?</p> <p>Does the school offer in-service training to teachers on how to use STAs/CAs more efficiently ? <u>If not</u>, why ?</p>	
<p>How do you review the STA performance ?</p>	
<p>Have you recommended a teacher to have the support of an STA in her/his classroom ? If so, why ?</p>	

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
WITH CLASS TEACHERS

Deployment and responsibilities

<p>Can you give me a brief outline of your teaching career ? e.g. experience in schools, qualifications, training courses attended etc.</p> <p>Do you have any responsibilities in the school ? e.g. co-ordinator, head of department etc.</p>	
<p>What were your views about the STA initiative when the government introduced the initiative in 1994 ?</p> <p>What are your views towards the STA initiative now ?</p>	
<p>Were you involved in selecting the STA ? <u>If not</u>, would you be involved in the future of such a procedure ?</p> <p>Did you take part in the process of defining the STA's job description ? If not, who did ?</p> <p>Does she still complete the duties which are described in her job description or do you think her duties are different ? If so, in what way ?</p>	
<p>How does the STA contribute to her activities with children ? e.g. Is she involved with the planning, collecting resources etc.</p>	

<p>Have her duties/responsibilities etc. in your classroom changed in the last twelve months ?</p> <p>If not, why ?</p> <p>If so, how and why ?</p>	
<p>Do you plan for the STA in your timetable ? If so, does the STA have a copy, and who else does ?</p>	
<p>How is the STA involved in your process of planning and evaluation of the children ? e.g. spy in the classroom</p>	
<p>Do you have regular meetings with the STA to discuss planning etc. ? Is there time set aside in your timetable to discuss this ?</p>	
<p>Do you have the STA full time in your classroom ?</p> <p>If so, how do you deploy the STA to the best effect ?</p> <p>If not, how do you think this affects your deployment of the STA ?</p>	
<p>Why do you feel you need a classroom assistant in your classroom ?</p>	

<p>Do you set targets and objectives for the STA ? e.g. to develop the STA further.</p>	
<p>How have you provided further training or support to the STA ?</p> <p>What training do you feel the STA needs ?</p>	
<p>Why do you feel you need a classroom assistant in your classroom ?</p> <p>How is the STA different to other CAs ?</p>	
<p>How do you feel NNEBs and STAs compare to one another ?</p> <p>Do you feel there are conflicts in both their roles in primary schools ?</p>	

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
FOR STA

<p>Has the STA training changed your status within the school ? e.g. pay, job description etc.</p> <p>Do you have a job description which describes the duties you are doing now ?</p> <p>Were you given a “conditions of service” leaflet/booklet ? e.g. entitlements</p> <p>Are you on a temporary or permanent contract ? If on a temporary contract - do you think this affects your duties and status within the school ?</p> <p>Is this situation the same as last year ?</p>	
<p>How have your duties changed from last year to this year ?</p>	
<p>Which subjects do you support with ?</p> <p>Which do you receive more experience of ?</p> <p>Where do you feel your support is most valuable ?</p>	
<p>Have you contributed (e.g. involved in planning, bringing in resources etc.) to any maths and language activities so far this academic year ?</p> <p>If so, what were they ?</p>	

<p>What ability of children are you used to supporting ? (learning difficulties, gifted children etc.)</p> <p>Is this different or similar to your experiences last year ?</p>	
<p>Do you plan your activities for the children with your class teacher ? If so, how ?</p>	
<p>Would you like to contribute your support to children more than you do at present ? Please explain your answer.....</p>	
<p>Do you discuss your performance with the class teacher or head teacher ?</p> <p>If so, how often ?</p> <p>If not, do you think you would benefit from this ?</p>	
<p>Are you allowed in the staff room ?</p> <p>Do you attend staff meetings ? If so, how often ?</p> <p>Do you attend staff training meetings ?</p> <p>When was the last training course you attended ? e.g. school in-service, LEA etc.</p> <p>What further training courses would you like to attend ? If not, why ?</p>	

Appendix 12

DfE/TTA STAs

STA course

Documents consulted

Letter from the DfEE to all institutions inviting them to bid for the Specialist Teacher Assistant Courses. Letter dated 25.03.94.

Entry requirements

- They can communicate clearly and grammatically in spoken English and written standard English
- They have attained in mathematics and English language that standards required to achieve a grade C in the GCSE examination
- They have the personal qualities necessary to work closely and effectively with both teachers and pupils (para. 20)

Length and structure of course

Programmes will need to be flexible, probably arranged on a modular basis, and involving day and block release as appropriate. So that trainees can experience the complete cycle of school activities (para. 15)

Whilst the length of training to achieve the competences will vary from trainee to trainee, according to standard on entry, it is likely that most will require to study for the equivalent of nine hours per week during the twelve month period. It could be less for some entrants if providers are prepared to accredit prior learning. (para. 16)

Content of training

All programmes of training should include the following competence and role related areas:

- i. The relevant requirements of the [primary curriculum]
- ii. The place of the school in educating primary pupils and in promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- iii. Knowledge of the subject base and skills necessary for assisting teaching and supporting learning in reading, writing, numeracy and related skills.
- iv. Knowledge and understanding of successful strategies for teaching and learning in these areas;
- v. The development of children's learning
- vi. Recording and assessing pupils' progress
- vii. Managing pupil behaviour
- viii. Knowledge and use of the range of appropriate teaching and learning resources, including computers
- ix. The respective roles and relationships of teachers, STAs, parents, and support agencies.

[Taken from para. 13]

Amount of contact per week/ non-contact per week

It is likely that most will have to study for the equivalent of nine hours per week during the twelve month period. (para. 16)

Classroom experience

It is equally important that courses of training should give assistants the opportunity to vary their experience, broaden their awareness of teaching and learning, . . . by visiting and training in more than one school.

Arrangements for serving teachers to be involved in tuition

It is essential that teachers should contribute to the training and assessment of STAs. (para. 9)

Communication between STA course provider and school

It is essential that all those who will be providing and contributing to the training, understand the role of STAs and, where necessary, are given appropriate guidance and preparation as tutors and mentors. (para. 11)

Content of competences

There were three STA competences and each competence had subsidiary competences.

Competences	Subsidiary competences
1. STAs should be able to demonstrate a range of competences related to the exercise of their role under the direction of the teacher [para. 6]	4
2. Curriculum content, planning and assessment [para. 7]	8
3. Learning and Teaching Strategies [para. 8]	13

The level of qualification

It is likely that the credit rating would be around 45 credit points at Level one on the system used by most of HE (120 points = university certificate), or about 12 credit points at FE level 3 (para. 19)

Appendix 13

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) STAs

STA course

Year of course

All STAs were from the 1994/95 cohort.

Documents consulted

Course guidelines for the University Certificate of Specialist Teacher Assistant: September 1994 and Specialist Teacher Assistant Record (STAR).

Entry requirements

LJMU STA applicants had to be employed as a classroom assistant, work voluntarily in a school or was seeking employment as a classroom assistant. Also, they needed 2 GCSEs, one in maths, the other in English, at grade C or equivalent, although some students were accepted with less/more, for example:

- P1 STA had required GCSEs and she was an employed full time classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- P2 STA had required GCSEs and she was a part time classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- P3 STA did not have the required (no qualifications), and she was a full time classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- P4 STA did not have the required GCSEs (had other qualifications e.g. RSA typing), but was a part time care assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- P5 STA did not have the required GCSEs (no qualifications), and she was a full time general assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- P6 STA had the required GCSE and she was a voluntary worker in a school before the commencement of the STA course.
- P7 STA had the required GCSEs and she was a full time classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- P8 STA did not have the required GCSEs (no qualifications), and she was a full time welfare assistant before the commencement of the STA course.

Length and structure of course

Part time course with a specific focus on supporting learning in mathematics and English at Key Stage 1. The course duration is 25 weeks.

Content of training

Modules 1, 2 and 6 were taught in semester 1, whilst modules 3, 4 and 5 were taught in semester 2. The modules were:

Modules	Time spent on modules
1. The primary school	2.5 hours for 10 weeks = 25 hours
2. The mathematical world of the child	2.5 hours for 10 weeks = 25 hours
3. Language and the child	2.5 hours for 10 weeks = 25 hours
4. Children's learning and child development	2.5 hours for 10 weeks = 25 hours
5. The assessment of children's learning	2.5 hours for 10 weeks = 25 hours
6. Resource based learning	2.5 hours for 10 weeks = 25 hours

Amount of contact per week/ non-contact per week

7.5 hours direct teaching and up to 20 hours private study per module

Classroom experience

15 days and 2 x 5 day block placements

The experience of those involved in planning the STA course

All lecturers had primary experience and educated student teachers.

Arrangements for serving teachers to be involved in tuition

Deputy head teacher in school P5 had taught on the STA course. Also, teachers who trained STAs in their school based tasks were required to assess the STAs on their STA competences.

Communication between STA course provider and school

1 meeting per year.

Content of competences

Competences were divided into four sections and each section had subsidiary competences. These were:

Competences	Amount of subsidiary competences
Curriculum content and planning	14
Learning and teaching strategies	32
Assessment and Record Keeping	6
General development and comments	6

The profile of competence was a tick sheet with a list of competences under the above sections. The tick sheet would be filled in by the STA's mentor, and STA's added their own comments at the end of each section.

Level of qualification

18 ICS credits at National Level 1 and STAR.

Appendix 14

Chester Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) STAs

CIHE STA course

Year of course

All STAs were from the 1995/96 cohort

Documents consulted

CIHE competences and summary sheet of course contents for 1995/96.

Recruitment

CIHE STA applicants had to be employed as a classroom assistant or working voluntarily in a school. Also, they needed 2 GCSEs, one in maths, the other in English, at grade C or equivalent. Most did have the required GCSEs or equivalent, for example:

- C1 STA did not have the required GCSEs, but had other GCSEs and she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- C2 STA had the NNEB nursery nurse (NN) qualification, and she was an employed NN before the commencement of the STA course.
- C3 STA had the required GCSEs, and she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- C4 STA had the NNEB NN qualification, and she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- C5 STA had the required GCSEs, and she worked voluntarily as a classroom assistant (she was employed at the same school as a part time school secretary) before the commencement of the STA course.

Length and structure of course

Part time course with a specific focus on supporting learning in mathematics and English at Key Stage 1. The course duration is 30 weeks.

Content of training

The STAs had a taught session per week. These sessions culminated towards a unit, but were not necessarily completed as a block of sessions. Unit 1, 2 and 3 were completed sporadically over a 28 week period, whilst unit 4 and 5 were completed in a block of sessions. For example unit 1 consists of sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 22, 28, 29, and 30, unit 2 consists of sessions 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 27, unit 3 consists of sessions 9, 10, 11, 19, 20, 21, and 26, whilst unit 4 consists of sessions 23, 24 and 25, and unit 5 consists of sessions 16, 17, and 18. The units are:

Units	Time spent on modules
Unit 1. The Primary Curriculum	3 hours x 8 sessions = 24 hours
Unit 2. Supporting Children's Learning in English	3 hours x 9 sessions = 27 hours
Unit 3. Supporting Children's Learning in Mathematics	3 hours x 7 sessions = 21 hours
Unit 4. Assessing and Recording	3 hours x 3 sessions = 9 hours
Unit 5. The Role of the STA	3 hours x 3 sessions = 9 hours

Amount of contact per week. non-contact per week

3 hours of direct teaching per week. Amount of independent study unknown.

Classroom experience

One day per week, and during this time STAs completed school based tasks, kept child profiles and filled in a reflective diary of an activity which did not go to plan. In the second half of the STA course STAs exchanged schools with another STA to gather different learning experiences.

The experience of those involved in planning the STA course

All lecturers had primary experience and educated student teachers.

Arrangements for serving teachers to be involved in tuition

Teachers involved in training STAs were invited to lecturer on good practice, but none of the teachers visited in the research in this area had contributed in the STA training in this way. Also, teachers who trained STAs in their school based tasks assessed them on their STA competences.

Communication between STA course provider and school

6 meetings per year, and 1 visit from the STA course provider to see STA in school and speak with teachers involved in STA's training.

Content of competences

There were 8 competences in the CIHE profile of competences and each competence had subsidiary competences. The competences were:

Competences	Subsidiary competences
1. Understands the relevant requirements of the Primary Curriculum	3
2. Awareness of how Children Learn	12
3. Effective Use of Resources	3
4. Understands the role of the School in Promoting the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of the Children.	3
5. Supports Children's Learning in Mathematics	5
6. Supports Children's Learning in English	7
7. Under the Direction of the Class Teacher helps to Monitor Pupil Progress.	3
8. Understand the Role of the STA.	7

The STA's mentor was required to write brief comments on the evidence he/she had gathered on their STA fulfilling each subsidiary competence.

Level of qualification

45 CATS credits at National Level One, plus STAR.

Appendix 15

Edge Hill University College (EHUC) STAs

EHUC course

Year of course

All STAs were from the 1995/96 cohort.

Documents consulted

All the documents consulted were from 1996/97. They included:

Course Booklet 1

Preparatory Booklet

Schools Based Tasks: Workbook 1

Entry requirement

EHUC required STA applicants to be an employed classroom assistant or work voluntarily in a school and have 2 GCSEs, one in maths the other in English, at grade C or equivalent. All the EHUC STAs had the required GCSEs, if not more, apart from one. This STA sat an entry exam for maths (this is the same entry exam used for B.Ed applicants). The EHUC STAs were:

- L1 STA had the required GCSEs (plus BTEC NN), and she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- L4 STA had GCSE English Language, and sat an entry exam for maths, also she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- L6 STA had the required GCSEs (plus BTEC NN), and she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- L7 had the required GCSEs (plus BTEC qualification), and she was a voluntary worker in a school.

Length and structure of course

Part time course with a specific focus on supporting learning in mathematics and English at Key Stage 1 and 2. The course duration is 25 weeks.

Content of training

Each module lasts for the whole duration of the course, 25 weeks. There are three modules. These are:

Modules	Time spent on each module
English	2.25 hours for 25 weeks = 56.25 hours
Mathematics	2.25 hours for 25 weeks = 56.25 hours
Educational Practice ⁴	1.5 hours for 25 weeks = 37.5 hours

⁴ Educational Practice included: assessment and record Keeping, how children learn, and planning support with the teacher.

Amount of contact per week/ non-contact per week

6 hours per week of direct teaching, plus 1 hour and 30 minutes of independent preparation and evaluation.

Classroom experience

3 hours guided experience in a training school. STAs carry out practical tasks under tutorship of a mentor.

1 hour and 30 minutes of supervised classroom practice with a class teacher the STA is employed at/or works with voluntary.

All college sessions are suspended in the second half of the spring term to allow STAs to gain supervised classroom experience in another school.

A reflective diary was kept of the school based tasks. STAs would evaluate and activity they had completed with children. Mentor and STA would sign and date the diary.

The experience of those involved in planning the STA course

All lecturers involved in training STAs have experience of primary teaching and educating student teachers. This STA course also has strong links with Sefton, Wigan and Lancashire LEAs.

Arrangements for serving teachers to be involved in tuition

Each week STAs are given a school based task to complete during their classroom practice. STA mentors on classroom practice are class teachers, or senior teaching professionals, like deputy head teachers, head teachers etc. These adults provide classroom practice for the STAs and assess them on their STA competences.

Communication between STA course provider and school

EHUC appoints training schools to train student STAs. Each training school will have a mentor for the STAs. This person acts as a link between college and school, and communication is frequent. Information from STA course provider is given to mentor in advance.

Content of competences

Content of all STA competences unknown. However in the school based tasks: workbook 1, some competences have been included. These competences are specifically related to activities the STAs have undertaken throughout their training, and are less "open" than other STA course providers competences, for example,

competency 1.1 Use a variety of strategies to promote learning.

competency 1.2 Explain clearly the nature and purpose of activities presented to children.

competency 1.3r Enable children to use phonics as a multi-cuing system and recognise the place of rhymes in developing phonemic awareness. To understand how the school's reading scheme is used, and hear children read and know how to encourage them to use a multi-cuing system of word identification.

Level of qualification

72 CATS credits at National Level One

Appendix 16

University college of St. Martins (UCM) STAs

UCM STA course

Year of course

All STAs were from the 1995/96 cohort

Documents consulted

The documents consulted were from 1996/97. They included:

Course programme

STAR

Entry requirement

UCM required all STA applicants be an employed classroom assistant or work voluntarily in a school and they needed to have the required 2 GCSEs, one in maths the other in English at grade C or equivalent. All UCM STAs had the required qualifications or above, for example:

- L2 STA had the required GCSEs (plus BTEC NN qualification), and she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course
- L3 STA had the required GCSEs (plus the BTEC NN qualification), and she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.
- L5 STA had the required GCSEs (plus an MA in geography), and she was a voluntary worker in a school.
- L8 STA had the required GCSEs (plus BTEC NN qualification), and she was an employed classroom assistant before the commencement of the STA course.

Length and structure of course

Part time course with a specific focus on supporting learning in mathematics and English at Key Stage 1. The course duration is 28 weeks.

Content of training

There were 5 modules taught on the UCM STA course. Each module was taught in block sessions, for example, sessions 1 - 6 were on module 1, sessions 7 - 12 were on module 2 etc. The modules were:

Modules	Time spent on each module
1. The Primary Curriculum	3 hours for 6 weeks = 18 hours
2. Organising for Learning	3 hours for 6 weeks = 18 hours
3. Assessment and Record Keeping	3 hours for 6 weeks = 18 hours
4. Individual Difference	3 hours for 6 weeks = 18 hours
5. Team Work	3 hours for 4 weeks = 12 hours

This framework was different to other institutions. UCM integrated maths and English into all these modules - 27 hours was spent on maths, whilst 30 hours was spent on English.

Amount of contact per week: non-contact per week

3 hours per week of direct teaching, independent preparation and evaluation unknown.

Classroom experience

Half a day per week in a training school appointed by UCM where STAs carried out school based tasks under supervision of a mentor. Also, they spend at least half a day per week in a second school (usually the school that employs them or one that they have worked in voluntarily). All STAs were required to fill in a school attachment diary on school based tasks and collate child profiles.

The experience of those involved in planning the STA course

All lecturers involved in training STAs have experience of primary teaching. Some were lecturers who educated nursery nurses (lecturers were normally based at Preston College or Accrington and Rossendale College) and some educated student teachers (these lecturers were based at UCM)⁵. This STA course also had strong links Lancashire County Council.

Arrangements for serving teachers to be involved in tuition

UCM appoints training schools to mentor student STAs and support them in carrying out school based tasks for their STAR. These mentors are class teachers, or senior teaching professionals, like deputy head teachers, head teachers etc. These adults provide classroom practice for the STAs and assess them on their STA competences.

Communication between STA course provider and school

UCM appoints training schools to train student STAs. Each training school will have a mentor for the STAs. This person acts as a link between college and school, and communication is frequent. Information from STA course provider is given to mentor in advance.

Content of competences

The profile of competence, which has a full list of competences, was unobtainable for the research, but the STAR, which contains the areas of competences was provided by the head teacher from school L7. The areas of competence are:

1. Assist in the teaching of and support of children's learning in mathematics
2. Assist in the teaching of and support children's learning in English
3. Support the planning, assessment, recording and reporting of children's progress.
4. Maintain the classroom climate, routines and accepted patterns of behaviour
5. Maintain the standards appropriate to a professional working in the school context and as a member of a team
6. Question, reflect and evaluate his/her approach to learning.

Level of Qualification

45 CATS credits at National Level One.

⁵ Exact number of lecturers involved in the STA course from each institution unknown.

**APPENDIX
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**ON INSTRUCTION
FROM
THE UNIVERSITY**