COLASITE NAISIUNTA EALAINE IS DEARTHA
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ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION AS INFLUENCED

BY SOCIAL CLASS BACKGROUND

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INTRODUCTION

In 1969 Irelands education system realised its most dramatic change ever. Under the personal initiative of the dynamic young Minister for Education Donogh O'Malley all schooling up the Intermediate Level was to be free. The backbone of introducing this legislation was the belief that free education could provide greater equality of opportunity for the less fortunate, therefore education could become the major vehicle for social mobility, by providing the opportunity for open and fair competition where ones talents and abilities are developed and graded. Hence the education system is seen as a merit-ocracy, where you earn what you attain and deserve it. However there are many sociologists who argue that family and social class backgrounds are more strongly related to educational and occupational attainments rather that talent and ability.

Characteristics such as attendance, behaviour and application in school are the major attributes of individuals and their families attitudes to education. In an attempt to understand how such attitudes are formed and influenced by ones family and social class background. I have made a case study of the Ballymun Area of North County Dublin which is predominantly a working class area with few exceptions. I became very familiar with the area through teaching practice during third and fourth years of my degree. Many girls have poor attendance records and this is coupled with a high drop out rate. During the time I have spent in Ballymun it has become all too evident that education has become a lesser priority within the community losing out to many problems of social and economics origin which the young pupils and their families of Ballymun have to face. I became very aware

of these problems through my contact with both parents and students and in meeting my community peers and groups to analyse how family and social class background is related to forming attitudes I first had to study selected literature on social class which is the result of both social and economic factors.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL CLASS

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Origin of the Term Social Class

In the course of the first three decades of the nineteenth century the term class gradually replaced 'estates', 'ranks', and 'orders' as the major word used to denote divisions within society. (1). The change of vocabulary reflected the diminishing significance of rank ascribed or inherited qualities in general and the growing importance of possessions and income among the determinants of the social position of someone. 'Taken over by social theory from its original context of political debate', class refer to rate categories of population , (*1*) distinct from other categories in respect of wealth and related social position, (2) deriving their distinctive status mainly from their location in the production and the distribution of social wealth, (3) sharing accordingly in distinctive interests either opposing or complimenting other group interests, and (*4*) consequently displaying a tendency to group - distinctive political, cultural and social attitudes and behaviour. (2).

At a very early stage of the debate, class was given an economic meaning . This can strongly be related to the influence of David Ricardo who identified the social category of labourers with the economic category of labour, understood as one of the main factors of capitalist production. (3). Others such as William Thompson (1824) and Thomas Hodgskin (1825) who were political economists

of the "Ricardain Socialist" School developed Ricardo's suggestions into a comprehensive economic theory of class divisions which Karl Marx later adopted and elaborated upon. (4).

Social and Scientific Theories of Class

The many usage's of class in social-scientific theory and research are invariably influenced by Marx's magisterial vision of class division as simultaneously the principle source of social dynamics and the main principle of its interpretation. (5).

He believed that all history is a history of class struggle, that social change occurs through class revolutions that the conflict between capitalist and workers arising from the capitalist's form of production are bound to lead to proletarian revolution and to a new socialist form of production. The latter idea however shows no historical evidence of ever having fulfilled itself. The October Revolution in Russia was a timid attempt in a state which was not really a capitalist economy and any attempts in truly capitalist countries with a large industrial population have failed.

While a society does not necessarily run by the function of class divisions by mainly economic factors an equalitarian society that is one in which wealth, power and prestige would be distributed equally does not seen possible. This is a form of social inequality and social inequality as suggested by Michael Haralambos as one of its features social stratification. By this is meant the division of society into 'a hierarchy of social classes/division' in a capitalist country. (6).

There are too many different economic positions in the hierarchy today to agree with the Marxian 'binary' version (7). Some sociologists have suggested that social class has been replaced by the idea of a continuous hierarchy of unequal positions. 'Where there was once classes, whose members had a consciousness of kind, a common way of life and shared interests, there is now an unbroken continuum of occupational status which command varying degrees of prestige and economic reward'. Thus it is suggested that a hierarchy of social groups has been replaced by one of the individuals. (8). But it is arguable that certain positions share similar economic reward and also social or/and cultural life experiences.

Max Weber, Anthony Giddens, Frank Parkins
More recent studies of a class in a Capitalist Society

The work of the German Sociologist Max Weber (1864 - 1920) represents one of the most important developments in stratification theory. Weber revised Marx's theory of class in three important respects. First having accepted Marx's notion of class within a network of economic relations he however saw no link to these relations the determining role in respect of the articulations of society on it sociocultural and political grounds. 'Status groups and political groupings are categories in there own right, parallel to but not necessarily overlapping with economically determined classes and subject to their own constitutive rules and developmental logic'. (9). In short Weber denied that economic divisions were necessarily mirrored in the cultural and political articulation of the society. Having already related class and economic factors he then relates it to the market specifically to the changes of being able to buy or acquire marketable goods.

In contrast to Marx he argues that interests vary with respect to different goods and market chances. Consequently they divide the population exposed to the market in more than one way each individual belonging in principle to a lot of classes who need not overlap. The concept of housing classes recently developed upon by J. Rex is good example of economic classes in relation to one commodity. (10). The importance attached by the individual to each of the classes they belong to is not therefore determined beforehand. It may change depending on the structure of the market situation. Weber unlike Marx suggested that no single theory can pinpoint the classes or explain their relationships. As P. Furbank suggests that class terms such as 'upper class' or 'middle class' are not nouns but more like 'impressionistic epithets'. (11). That if 'middle class housing' as a phrase is used a convincing vision flashes before our mental eye; polished door knockers flowered gardens, the Irish times or a large drive-in. However if this is followed up as a viable sociological or architectural description it files to pieces, the vision dissolves'. (12).

Like Marx and Weber most modern sociologists use economic factors as the basic criteria for differentiating social classes. A more recent study of class in a capitalist society is provided by the British Sociologist Anthony Giddens. He identifies three major classes in advanced capitalist society. They are an upper class based on the 'ownership of property in the means of production' a middle class based on the 'possession of educational or technical qualifications' and a lower or working class based on the possession of manual labour-power. These classes are distinguished by their differing relationship to the forces of production and by their particular strategies for obtaining economic reward in a capitalist economy. (13). However social class involves more than simply a collection of individuals who share a similar economic reward and more recent

studies of social class have subdivided classes into various levels terms of occupational categories. A typical classification is given below.

TABLE 1

A Typical Classification of classes into various levels of occupational categories.

MIDDLE CLASS	Higher professional managerial / administrative Lower professional managerial / administrative Routine white collar and minor supervisory
WORKING CLASS	Skilled Manual Semi Skilled Manual Unskilled Manual

SOURCE: Taken from Haralambos, Sociology, p. 48.

This use of occupational classification of social class is justified by Frank Parkins who claims that "the backbone of the class structure, and indeed the entire reward system of modern western society, is the occupational structure". Thus the rewards attached to occupations form the basis of the system of social inequality in capitalist society. (14).

Social Class in Ireland

The main criteria used to define social class in Ireland are strongly based on the results of Anthony Giddens work and on the data provided by the 1973 Household Budget Survey. (15). However there are a number of factors unique to Ireland. 'Firstly is the significance, indeed at one stage the dominance of the

petit bourgeoisie is distinctive'. (16). As late as 1971 almost one third of occupied males were self employed or in family businesses with the likelihood of inheritance. Most of these were in agriculture with over 80 per cent of the labour force worked in such family owned employment.

By combining 'employment status and occupation, and through the ability to differentiate among farmers on the basis of farm size, 14 categories, were developed, analogous to economic class categories'. (17). However, even when broadly defined to include nearly all employers or wage labour, only, two per cent of house holds fall into the large proprietor category and when farmers are excluded the numbers fall by half. The use of the household budget data has also meant that the significance of the bourgeoisie as many employers line abroad indeed 'by 1973 over half of the fixed assets of all Irish - registered industrial and service companies were in fact owned by foreign companies'. (18).

The following economic class categories have been developed:

1.	Large Proprieties: Owners who are employed in industry, construction, the provision of professional and technical services, as well as wholesale and retail services. All farmers with more than 100 acres who employ labour have been included (representing 2.2 per cent of all households).

2.	Small Proprietors: The primary income source is from ownership of whole-sale, retail, or industrial enterprises in which labour is not employed. Self-employed artisans and service workers are included, as

are manual workers who are employers of other manual workers (4.0 per cent of all households).

3. Large Farmers: Those with holdings of 100 or more acres but who do not employ labour and farmers with 50 to 100 acres who do use hired labour (4.3 per cent of all households).

4. Medium Farmers: Those with holdings of 50 to 100 acres who are not employers (5.9 per cent of all households).

5. Small Farmers: Have holdings of 30 to 50 acres or have less than 30 acres but are employers (5.9 per cent of all households).

6. Marginal Farmers: With less that 30 acres and without employers (7.4 per cent of all households).

7. Higher Professional: A category that included both self-employed and employed professionals, as well as senior executive and administrative employees (4.5 per cent of all household's).

8. Lower Professionals: Households headed by individuals in professions that are less restrictive in the required credentials and also junior administrative and managerial employees. (3.7 per cent of all households)

9. Interiermidiate and Routine Non-Manual Workers: Junior ranks of non-manual workers in industry, commercial life, and public administration,

as well as qualified technicians, all employees (11.0 per cent of all households).

10.   Skilled Manual workers: Households heads with clearly defined occupational skills, attested to through an apprenticeship or through some other form of training (12.7 per cent of all households).

11.   Service Workers: Non-manual workers who have skills roughly equivalent to those of semi-skilled manual workers, examples being, postmen, bus conductors, rounds men and caretakers (7.8 per cent of all households).

13.   Unskilled Manual Workers: Those with undifferentiated labour power (14.7 per cent of all households).

SOURCE: Taken from Rottman and Hannon, <u>Distribution of Income</u>, p. 25.

On the basis of the Household Budget Inquiry the information showed that 92 per cent of households fall into one of these categories while the remainder are households which do not participate actively in the economy and are termed 'as residual households'. (19) and should be treated as category 14. However Rottman and Hannon do state that these 14 categories are specific to explaining the distribution of income and are not adequate in representing Irish economic class structure for all purposes. In social structural terms, four main structures are central. A bourgeoisie (Category 1) in the classic sense; a petite bourgeoisie (2-6). a middle class of non-manual employees; subdivided into farmers and non-farmers (7-9) and a working class (10-13).

Economic Reward associated with Working Conditions

While inequality of income distribution makes a significant difference between the market situation of different socio-economic classes as the table below which illustrates working conditions also provide fringe benefits which result in added economic rewards which are not revealed in the gross weekly earning. They include company pension schemes, paid sick leave , use of company cars, meals and entertainment. They increase in value as occupational earnings rise. One study estimates that they add a further eleven per cent to the salaries of junior management and a further thirty one per cent to the salaries of higher executives. (20).

TABLE 2

A comparison of the average gross weekly earnings including overtime of male manual and non-manual workers over twenty one in full time employment in Great Britain.

	1970	1974	1978	1980	1982	1984
Manual	£26.8	£43.6	£78.4	£111.7	£133.8	£152.7
Non-Manual	£35.8	£54.4	£99.9	£141.3	£178.8	£209.0

SOURCE: Social Trends, 1977, P.102, and New Earnings Survey, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1984) Taken from Haralambos. Sociology Themes and Perspectives, P. 51.

A survey of the terms and conditions of employment of six occupational groups in various manufacturing industries made in 1968 by Dorothy Wedderbum and Christine Craig which shows differences in fringe benefits or manual/non-manual employees can be identified in the table below.

TABLE 3

Selected differences in terms and conditions of employment.

	Percentage of establishments in which the condition applies					
	Opera-tives	Fore-men	Clerical workers	Tech-nicians	Middle managers	Senior managers
Holiday: 15 days +	38	72	74	77	84	88
Choice of holiday time	35	54	76	76	84	88
Normal working 40+ hours per week	97	94	9	23	27	22
Sick pay – employers' scheme	57	94	98	97	98	98
Pension – employers' scheme	67	94	90	94	96	96
Time off with pay for personal reasons	29	84	83	86	91	93
Pay deductions for any lateness	90	20	8	11	1	0
Warning followed by dismissal for persistent lateness	84	66	78	71	48	41
No clocking on or booking n	2	46	48	45	81	94

SOURCE: Taken from D. Wedderbum, Workplace Inequalities, P. 593, and the Department of Employment and Productivity Survey 1969, quoted in M. Haralambos, Sociology, p. 52.

Many sociologists have argued that the social class involves more than a similar market situation and similar life changes to some degree a social class will for a social group although there are cross class categories such as politics. While Weber made a point of availability of 'market commodities' to all classes he states that there are certain goods which are necessary for survival of say for example the family unit while other commodities become luxuries for the lower economic classes yet remain the average for those on higher incomes. (20). Housing may be used as an example here both as a commodity on the market but also helps classes to come aware of group identity through the type of value of housing, the area location, the activities provided within the area and generally everyday life experiences and hence a commitment to common interests for example community welfare or safety matters.

Then the question of how one finds oneself as part of a particular class arises. Michael Haralambos made an example of the 'Hindu caste system' in which whatever caste of which their where five main categories you were born into you remained and there was little or no chance of aspiring upwards. This was known as a 'closed system;. (21) However by comparison social class the system of stratification in a capitalist industrial society provides an example of an open system as Haralambos commented...

> "Some sociologists claim that an individuals class position is largely achieved. It results from his personal qualities and abilities and the use he makes of them rather than ascribed characteristics such as the status of his parents for his skin colour. By comparison with the castre system, the rate of social mobility in class systems is high". (22).

However while an individuals class position can be self-achieved by self motivation and hard work an individuals family or partner economic class can

make his socially less or more mobile. As Haralambos makes reference to Rousseau's belief that "biologically based inequalities were less relevant than socially created inequalities" and they are indeed the major basis for systems of social stratification. (23). Therefore family or parental class position can enhance or reduce the life chance of their children obtaining those things defined as desirable and avoiding those which are not.

But explanations are there to confirm why people at the lower end of the scale for example Marx's proletariat have never revealed and improved their position economically? Luckac 'false consciousness' theory which distinguished 'consciousness of class" from 'class consciousness' helped to articulated the failure. (24). The first was the empirically ascertainable share of ideas and motives of the class members arising from the experience accessible within their daily business of life, while the second could be acquired only through a birds eye survey of the total situation of the society and a rational study of the totality of the information related to the social system.

In luckac's view there was no automatic passage from the first to the second - the information necessary to construct ideal - typical 'class consciousness' was not available within the individual experience constrained by the tasks of daily survival . The empirical consciousness of class displayed a tendency therefore to remain a 'false consciousness', misguided and mislead as it were by the narrow horizons of individual experiences unless assisted by a scientific analysis filtered into the minds of workers throughout their political organisations. (25).

Lukacs therefore sees Marx's struggle of proletariat from its objective situation (class in itself) to the acquisition of consciousness of their situation and eventual

abolition of capitalist mode of production by political by political strategy (Class for itself) far from being an automatic process of a capitalist economy and quite ideological.

Dealing with the 'tasks of daily survival' are strongly related to coping with income inequalities for those at the lower socio-economic status. (26). Class inequality in Ireland leaves large sections of the population at a disadvantage both in the labour market and also socially and culturally, 'the best way to approach class inequality is via income distribution since the variations in income are largely explicable in terms of class and family cycle' (27). The main source for income distribution being the household budget survey which is carried out on a seven yearly basis (1966, 1973, 1980, 1987). So what can tell us about income inequality in Ireland?

> ... 'In brief that income is distributed highly unequally and that the intervention of the state wile ameliorative, is very confined, and most effective in the case of cash transfers (social welfare) and least effective in education".
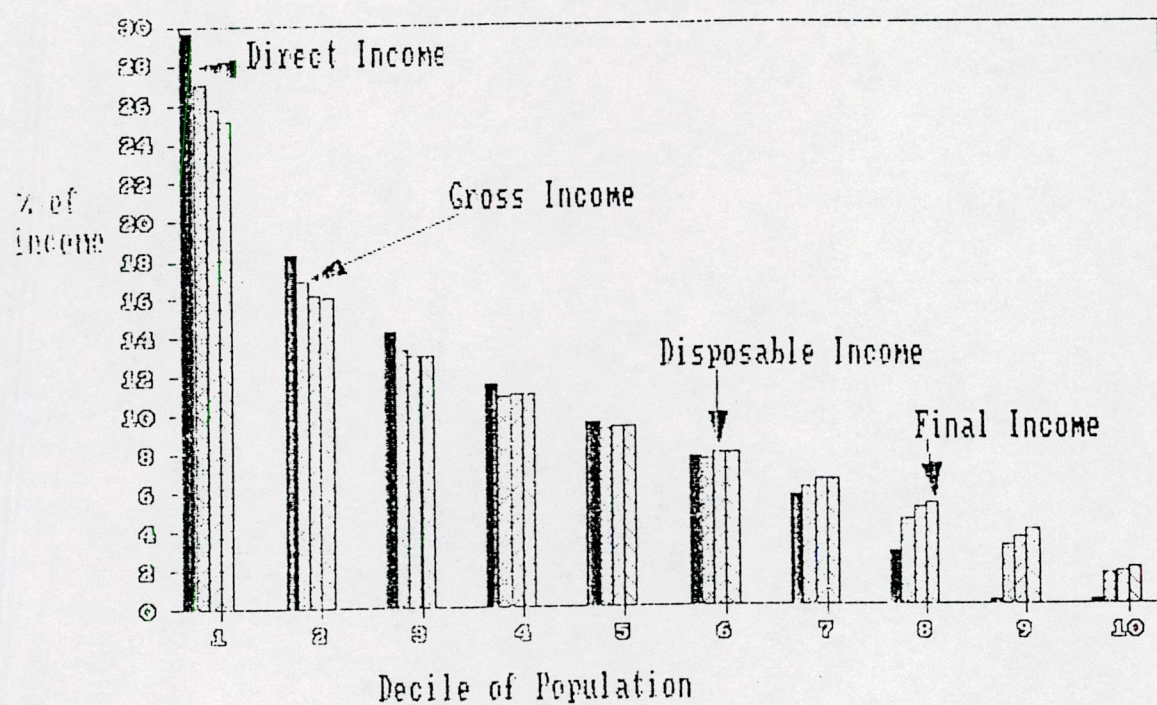
TABLE 4

Income Distribution, 1973
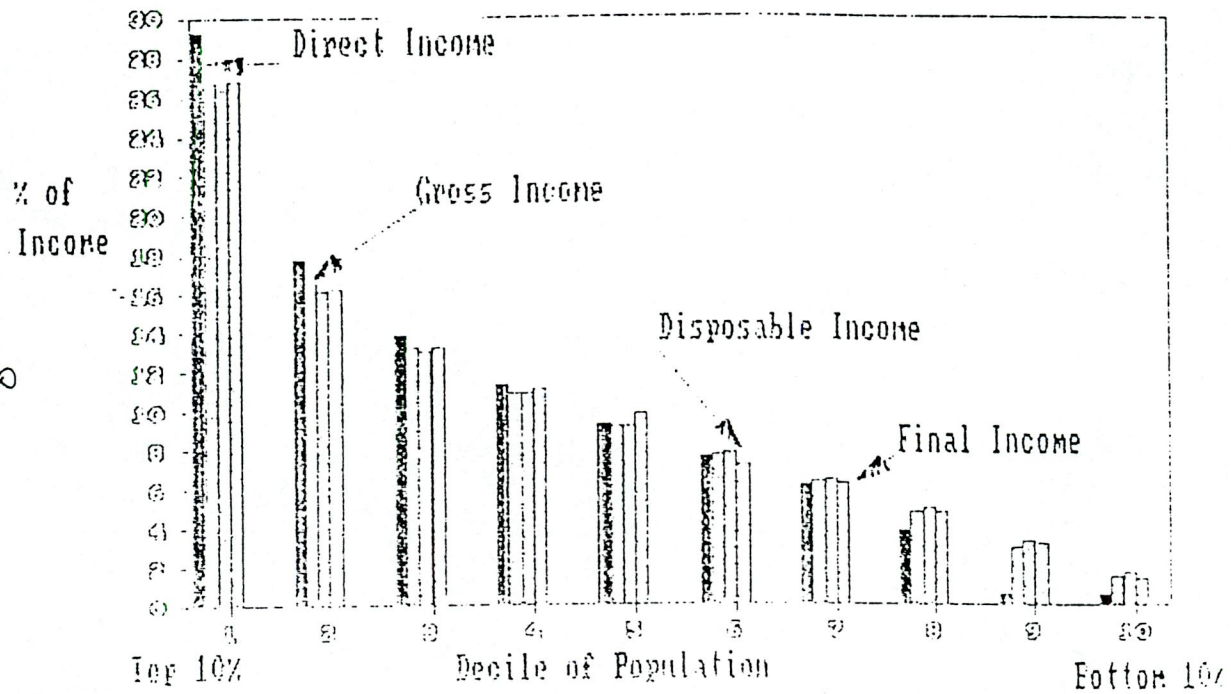
SOURCE: The Household Budget Survey which was used by J. Raftery
"Disadvantage" P, 14.

TABLE 5

Distribution are income in Ireland 1980

SOURCE: The Household Budget Survey which was used by J. Raferty "Disadvantage", P.14

The share of these different incomes by decile of the population in 1973 and 1980 is shown in the table 4 and 5. To follow this, the following definitions must be explained:

Direct income: refers to all market income earned by individuals in whatever form.

Gross income refers to Direct Income plus Cash Transfers.

Disposable income refers to Gross Income less Direct Taxation.

Final Income refers to Disposable Income and the values of subsidies received less indirect taxes.

While Raftery states that the data he has used is quite dated he points out however that the similarity of the two years is striking suggesting that little has changed since.

The top ten percent of the population received almost thirty per cent of income, however, defined, while the bottom fifty per cent received only around twenty per cent.

The distribution of final income is very little different from that of disposable income, showing that indirect taxes and publicly provided services together have little effect on inequality. The conclusion to be drawn from the data presented so far is that cash transfers in the form of Social Welfare to have the impact on inequality. (29). A more detailed account of the effects at particular programmes is provided in Table 6 which shows that cash transfer payments are the most redistributive. Of the services which are publicly provided, health care is used fairly equally across the income groups but with education being shared out

most unequally with the top fifth of households capturing 31% of the value compared to 9% by the poorest fifth.

TABLE 6

Distribution of Public Social Expenditure To Income Groups

Gross Income Quintile	% of Public Expenditure on			
	Education	Health	Housing	Social Welfare
Top 20%	30.6	24.5	6.6	9.2
4th 20%	24.6	20.6	11.4	10.2
3rd 20%	20.3	18.8	20.0	12.6
2nd 20%	15.3	18.3	20.6	23.0
Bottom 20%	9.1	17.8	41.4	45.0

SOURCE: Data provided by Dr. Rottman. D. Hannan and P.O'Connoll, An Evaluation of Welfare State Policies, paper read to European Centre for Work and Society Conference, 1984, which was quoted by J. Rafferty "Disadvantage",   p. 15

The reasons that public expenditure on education is so unequally distributed are two fold:

- first because participation in post compulsory education is high for the higher income groups right up to third level by however drop off sharply for lower income groups.

- Secondly the cost per place is much higher at a post compulsory age/level and rises the further one goes through the system.

The evidence to support and highlight this may be seen in Table 7. It would seem clear that levels of attainment are closely related to social class. As the table shows those leaving post primary school to go one to third level came overwhelmingly from the top classes: over 50% of boys from Upper non Manual backgrounds go on to third level, compared to just under 30% for Lower Non Manual , 14% for skilled Manual and 8% for Semi skilled and unskilled.

TABLE 7

Educational Level of Social Class Male School Leavers 1980 - 1982
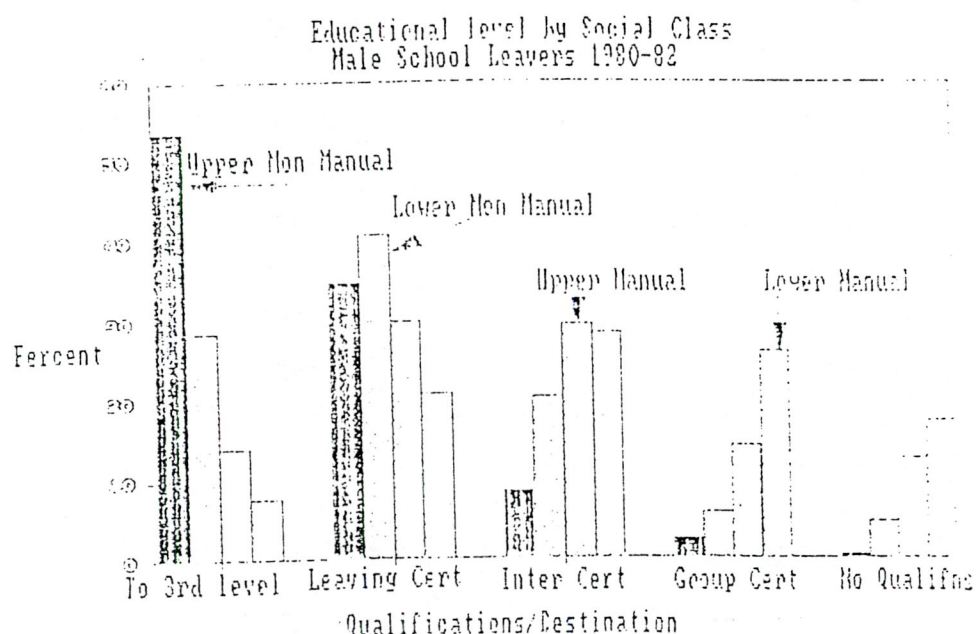
SOURCE: Data used by J. Raferty "Disadvantage", p.18

The Table shows that some 10% of male Irish school children leave school without any qualifications. The percentage learning without any qualification vanes sharply by fathers class, with a drop-out / failure rate of 17% compared to under 1% for sons of upper on manufactures. The value for Leaving Certificate achievement by social class is similarly class structured so that roughly twice as many children from non-manual parents is some eight times more likely to reach third level than children from semi and unskilled manual families.

So clearly social class background the social class being the product of 'a dual process, economic and social' the socio-economic status of parents, the attitudes and values she/he learns from them and other peers and friends within the community will have a major role to play in the outcome of the individual in particular to he or his experience and attainment in the education system. (29). The possession of educational qualifications or technical skills is common to many middle class occupations or individual considered middle class. Therefore it can be said that if the education system provides the means to acquire these qualifications or skills, education is one of the most stable processes by which an individual can become socially mobile, that is the possibility to transfer from one social class to another.

The next chapter is a case study of the Ballymun area located in North County Dublin. It looks at the most dominant social and economic factors for the purpose of understanding the effects that social class background will have on an individuals outcome in particular to her/his attitude to education.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

1. John Kuper, <u>The Social Science Encyclopaedia</u> (N.Y: Routledge and Kegan Paul PLC, 1985) p.110.

2. Ibid., p. 110

3. Ibid., p. 110

4. Ibid., p. 110

5. P.N. Furbank, <u>Unholy Pleasure: The idea of Social Class</u>. (Oxford University Press, 1985) p.7

6. Micheal Haralambos and R. M. Heald, <u>Sociology Themes and Perspectives </u>(London: Bell and Hyman, 1985 second edition) p. 24,25.

7. Furbank, <u>Unholy Pleasure</u>, p.7.

8. Haralambos, <u>Sociology</u>, p. 25

9. Kuper, <u>Social Science Encyclopaedia</u>, p. 111

10. Ibid., p. 112.

11. Furbank, <u>Unholy Pleasure,</u> p. 5

12. Ibid., P. 5.

13. Haralambos, <u>Sociology,</u> P. 47, 48.

14. Ibid., P. 48

15. Rottman and Hannon, <u>The Distribution of Income in the Republic of Ireland - A study of Social Class and Family cycle Inequalities</u> (Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute, 1991). p. 22,23.

16. Ibid., p. 23.

17. Ibid., p. 23

18. Ibid. p. 24

19. Ibid., p. 25.

20. Haralambos, Sociology, p. 44

21. Ibid., p. 25

22. Ibid. p. 26

23. Ibid., p. 27

24, Kuper, Social Science Encyclopaedia, P.111.

25. Ibid., p. 111

26. Ibid., p.111

27. J. Rafferty, "Disadvantage: Its nature and extent in Relation to Education in Disadvantage Learning and Young People, edited by T. Crooks and D. Stokes, (Dublin: Cirrocumuli Development Unit, 1987), P. 13.

28. Ibid., P. 13

29. Rottman and Hannon, A study of Social Class and Family Cycle inequalities, P. 16.

CHAPTER 2

BALLYMUN COMMUNITY

The stratification of individuals or families into categories of social classes in relation to market economises by way of their possession of property or wealth, educational skills or manual labour power is inevitable because of the inequalities of the distribution of income, power and wealth as is suggested in Talcot Parson's argument. (1). In societies with a highly specialised division of labour such as industrialised societies some numbers will specialise in organising and planning while others will follow their directives. Hence "the professional and the manual: worker, the advantage and the disadvantage" as J. Raferty points out Inequality is the move basis concept underlying disadvantage. (2).

The following chapter shows that Ballymun is a disadvantaged area particularly in relation to the labour market but also socially and culturally.

The Physical Environment

Ballymun is a high rise development built by Dublin Corporation in the mid-60's to alleviate a major housing crisis in the city. Its 2,8000 flats and 2,000 houses are situated in north Dublin, two miles from Dublin Airport. Few of the 20,000 residents own their own homes, the vast majority being local authority tenants. In 1987 a task force was formed without the aim of developing an integrated housing policy for the immediate and long term future of Ballymun recognising that

..."There is no doubt that poorly planned housing and physical environment aggravates poverty and it is equally true that poverty on a wide scale leads to a deterioration of housing and of the physical environment no matter how well it is planned".

ILLUSTRATION 1

Ballymun High Rise Towers

The principles underlying the most advanced strategies for the renewal or rundown, high-rise estates were described by a leading French housing expert as

> ..."seeking to identify the root cause of decay of the fabric of large high rise estates, the reduce the extent of that decay by tracking the problems of unemployment , poverty, school drop out, the participation in community and in security; enlisting residents in efforts to improve their estates and instilling a spirit of self help to replace traditional forms of community detain and involving local authorities in a specific contributory role with community role with community organisations".

(4). Ballymun clearly falls into the category of estate which needs such an approach.

Social and Economic Factors and Problems

As unemployment worsened dramatically in the 1980's it devastated the work force in Ballymun. By 1986 the local unemployment rate which was 61% was three times the national figure. 'The restructuring of Irish Industry and the phenomenon of "qualification inflation"' (as competition for jobs drove up the academic and technical requirements for many jobs) placed the work force in Ballymun at a severe disadvantage". (5). Presently the figure for unemployment in Ballymun is 55% which is in sharp contrast to the national figure of 17%. In consequence there is a very low standard of living and high dependency of social welfare benefits/payments. Added to the decay therefore of social and economic well being of the people the physical environment has also deteriorated to such an extent that Ballymun has become an area of low housing

demand with high maintenance and security costs. The number of vacant flats rose from 285 in April to 434 in March 1988.

Added to the high unemployment figure was also the number of single parent families. It has been the policy of Dublin Corporation Housing Department to house a large number of single parents in Ballymun over the past number of years (although this has been reviewed but only quite recently). However as recently as 28.08.84, to 28.09.85, 45% of Dublin's single parents were being housed in Ballymun that is numbers was 456 single parents and they accounted for 43% of housing units allocated in that time in Ballymun.

Like many other estates in Britain and on the continent similar to Ballymun the effects of high and prolonged unemployment had been many. Since 1980 financial hardship has become much more prevalent in the area and new forms of "anti-social" behaviour such as drug addiction and homeless youths have been added to the problems of vandalism and crime.

Crime levels in Ballymun are no better than in other areas of the city,. However, the open nature of the flat blocks and the high number of vacant flats create more opportunities for abuse of the environment or vandalism and in general be a nuisance to the residents.

The high level of social welfare dependency in the area has however been paralleled by "tradition of struggle and self reliance on the part of the minority (6). Community efforts in the mid '80's have led to the establishment of a credit union, a drugs counselling service, a women's refuge , a social welfare advice and research centre, a psychiatric support service, a housing policy task force, a

job centre co-operative, and other initiatives. However there has been little industrial developments in the immediate area.

The Ballymun Job Centre is a highly successful community - based initiative aimed at combating local unemployment through the provision of a professional placement service and support facilities for local enterprise development. In its three year history it has placed over 750 local people in employment and has enabled a number of local job creation groups to also be established.

The high level of unemployment and early school leavers among other socio-economic problems have been the cause of strong drug addiction and alcohol addiction among the community Y.A.P. Ballymun Youth Action Project which was set up five years ago to try to combat this by acting as a counselling and advice centre. The committee however consists of local people as well as professionals which makes Y.A.P. more approachable and the clients feel the counsellors know what they are taking bout. There is a strong addiction to hard drugs like Heroin but also the new "Rave" scene adds to the growing problems among even younger age groups and schoolgoing children from as young as 13 years of age. Ecstasy or E as it is popularly know and Acid or Trips also are easily available both within the city and immediate area. E is very expensive at £25 for one table which poses the inevitable problem of getting money for them as they are psychologically addictive. There are also many young males even among senior school students "carrying" and "dealing" hence this all leads to more delinquency problems involving the Garda Siochana.

Other initiatives such as Ballymun Workshop which encourages older people to go back to work and Community Action Programme which makes contacts for

young people with education agencies are also in operation while there is a wide and extensive adult education programme run in Ballymun Junior Comprehensive at night there is only a smaller number of applicants from the area itself. There is however a new Education Voucher Scheme to help residents of Ballymun apply for the courses both hobby and educational with aid or financial assistance again to help combat the main problems of unemployment and social deviancy.

At present there are over 3,000 people on register with the job centre seeking full-time employment. This figure represents more than 90% of the total unemployed. Table 8 illustrates those on registers by age and sex. Not that over half of these registered are under 25 years of age.

TABLE 8

Ballymun Job Centre Register by Age and Sex

Age Group	Male %	Female %	Total %
15 - 25 years	31	24	55
26-35 years	16	07	23
36-45 years	09	05	14
45 upwards	05	03	08
TOTAL	61	39	100

SOURCE: Data provided by Ballymun Job Centre and used by the Ballymun Working Party, Ballymun Pilot Scheme, P.4.

Table 8 shows the highest educational attainment of those on the register. Over half of them have no formal educational qualification whatsoever of which over a ¼ of them are under 25 years of age. These are the people which the job centre finds hardest to place as the majority of job placements to this date have been for those who have some sort of education.

TABLE 9

Ballymun Job Centre Register By Highest Educational Qualifications

No Formal Qualifications	Group Certificate	Intermediate Certificate	Leaving Certificate	Third Level
52%	12%	19%	16%	1%

SOURCE: Data provided by Ballymun Job Centre and used by the Ballymun Working Party, Ballymun Pilot Programme, P. 4.

Table 10 again drives home the clear relationship between educational attainment and employment by looking at the national figures of those unemployed.

TABLE 10

National Figures for Educational Attainment Related to Unemployment

No Qualification	45%
Intermediate Certificate/Group Certificate	28%
Leaving Certificate	9%
Degree	3%

SOURCE: Irish Department of Labour:
Economic Status of School Leaver 1989.

There is a single post-primary school complex in Ballymun consisting of the junior girls' comprehensive school, the junior boys comprehensive school and the senior co-educational comprehensive school. The two junior schools teach the junior cycle (to the intermediate certificate or junior certificate examination). While the senior school offers the two year senior cycle leading to the leaving certificate examination) and also the one year V.P.T.P. (Vocational Preparation Training Programme). These programmes have been operating in school since 1984 (6). "It forms part of the Department of Education's Social guarantee provision for students leaving school at the end of the compulsory period and for those without adequate preparation for the world of work". (7).

The vast majority of pupils attending the school are resident of Ballymun. Ballymun Comprehensive School is one of the schools designated by the Department of Education to cater for physically disabled students. These pupils, some of whom are from Ballymun, have varying degrees of disabilities including, ambulant and non ambulant conditions.

The school also has a very successful adults education programme teaching basic literacy and numeracy, business and vocational skills and specific courses for the unemployed parents and those seeking a chance at education. A small number of young people from Ballymun attend schools outside Ballymun.

Before entering the school the students sit an entrance exam consisting of English, Irish, Mathematics and Reading Tests, On that basis the classes are set up for September.

Throughout the first year behaviour, progress and application of self is observed. Classes are again re-organised in 2nd year and on the basis of examination results and on the teachers recommendations, However, in the 3rd year no movement is made. Classes are streamed as follows: two bottom remedial / special classes, on top stream and three broad bands. The biggest classes are 30:1 these would be for far more academic subjects while the number is reduced to 20/21:1 average for practical classes, 22 is the average number of pupils in each class.

All the classes of 1st and 2nd year have time tabled pastoral care period. There is a special book for each year which comes under the general heading of social and health education produced by the C.D.V.E.C, Curriculum Development Unit.

The first year deals with Heredity and Environment. Unit 1 which deals with the transition to the new school and meeting new people and talking about yourself. It is aimed at helping both teacher and student to find out about themselves. The second year book deals with personal care and hygiene, food selections and eating patterns, drugs, alcohol, smoking, safety, man and disease, therefore, addressing many of the problems they encounter in everyday life at home and in the community. This period helps both teacher and student in coming to terms with many socio-economic caused problems and or conduct or pupils.

Like every school there is a strict discipline policy but it is particularly reinforced in Ballymun. In general classes start exactly on time and school rules are at all times adhered to. There is little if any "play acting" on the corridors and it is not tolerated at all while only supervised access to the library is allowed. This. however, is partly due to the fact that the students are very lively and there has been a tendency to sue in case of accidents and there is one period timetable with the form tutor in which behaviour and performance are reviewed. There is a strict code of uniform and hygiene and in general a lot of respect for everyone, teachers and student, is expected.

Due to the young age of the pupils the duties of class captains are quite minimal. Such tasks as collecting Roll Books. informing the principal or vice principal if they are without a teacher for some reason and relaying important messages of information relating to classes or notes. Fund raising has always been a feature of the pupils item within the school. These are non-uniform days.. Prior to such high unemployment problems, each class used to donate a hamper to local people at Christmas time.

Homework is placed high on a list of educational progatives and is given each night at individual teachers discretion. It is serious matter to fail to produce finished homework on the date specified because as Rutter remarks it is an opportunity for the

> ... "Consolidation of the learning or work introduced in school to homework may also be symbolic importance in emphasising the schools concern for academic progress and its expectation that pupils have the ability and self-discipline, need to work without direct supervision" (8).

Non attendance is treated very seriously and only discrepancy by way of a teacher receiving non-convincing notes for absenteeism is followed through with direct contact with parents. The school is efficiently run with a ream of very strong teachers who have a tough position over pupils who are very lively and exposed to much behavioural deviancy both at home, within the greater community of Ballymun and hence within the school itself.

However in an effort to combat the influences outside the school that pose a threat to the relative success of an individual and motivate to stay on there was another initiative known as the 'BITE' scheme, The Ballymun Initiative for Third level Education. Its main aim is to increase the number of people from the Ballymun area and schools going to third level education. By selecting potential students they give them financial support before the end of 2nd level education which causes some of the pressures that might otherwise be a hindrance.

It also involves students from D.C.U. giving extra supervised tuition and study periods. So therefore by combating problems from an early stage in the education system pupils are encouraged and supported to help them go onto

further education. It also involves liaison with parents to stress the importance of a good education. At present only 1% of all young people in Ballymun actually finish the leaving certificate and go onto further education. (9). So while the system provides the means of acquiring an education, school however "is part of its environment and influences the wider community just as the environmental forces provide constraints and pressures which determine what a school can be like" (10).

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

1. Haralambos, Sociology, p. 31.

2. J. Raftery, "Disadvantage" , p. 8.

3. Ballymun Task force was formed in September, 1987 by the Ballymun Community Coalition, a forum where issues affecting the people of Ballymun are discussed and joint action is planned. There was recognition and joint Action is planned. There was recognition from the beginning of an urgent need for local people, public representatives and statutory officials to work together in order to produce an integrated, workable housing policy. The composition of the Task Force is shown in Appendix 1. Ballymun Task Force, A Programme of Renewed for Ballymun - An Integrated Housing Policy (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1988) P. 11.

4. Ibid., p. 12.

5. The reference here is to a paper written by the Ballymun Community working Party the Composition of which is given in appendix 2. The paper proposes a six year pilot programme to encourage and enable students from the Ballymun Community to enter and complete third - level education programmes. It is based on a partnership between the Ballymun Community and Dublin City University, and proposes a range of economic and cultural interventions in order to achieve its objectives.

    Ballymun Community working Party, Irish American Partnership / Dublin City University / Ballymun Pilot Programme (Dublin: D.C.U.s 1990). p.3.

6. Ibid., p.3.

7. K. Beray, M. McEvoy, R. O'Rourke, Female Choices in VPT Programmes Case Studies from School reviews. Edited by Rose Malone and Hannon O' Brien (Dublin: Cirriculum Development Unit, 198) p. 160.

8. Rutter, Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on children (London Open Books, 1979) p. .

9. Ballymun working Party, Ballymun Pilot Programme , p.7.

10. Rutter, Fifteen Thousand Hours, p. 145

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction To The Present Study

This Chapter looks at the effects that social and economic features of life in Ballymun have had on the parents and the school going population both in relation to their thoughts and feelings towards education and hence their actions - their behaviour, attendance and the possibility of remaining within the system beyond the compulsory age of fifteen. Table 11 illustrates an obvious problem the school has with high drop out rates.

It should be noted that the junior cycle drop out rate of 29% contrasts with the national figure of 8%, while the figure of 64% who drop out during post-primary education contrasts with a national figure of 32%. (1). To date the trend is not improving: The latest figures available indicate that the total drop-out in the 1985 - 1990 cohort is 68%.

These statistics are evidence of an obvious lack of positive perception of remaining within the system among large sections of the community but this is obviously not some premeditated legislation set down by any individual or group in the area it is the results of problems of social and or economic origin, that is factors of influence and pressure outside the school process which however hinder the function for example that all those who enter the school remain there until they have sat the Junior Certificate Examination, at least.

In an aim to identify why there is such a high-drop-out rate from the education system in Ballymun which is the major attribute of individuals and families attitudes to education in the Ballymun Community, I have in the previous chapter looked at the many social and economic problems facing people in the area. However, the overall figures are a combination of many individual students and their families and therefore it is essential that I made case studies of them both.

TABLE 11

Ballymun Comprehensive School Drop-Out Rates

	1982 - 1987	1983 - 1988	1984 - 1989
No. Entering 1 year	454	366	358
No. sitting Inter/Group Cert.	333	263	259
No. entering senior cycle	194	182	182
No. sitting Leaving Cert.	152	131	130
Drop-out during Junior Cycle	27%	28%	29%
Drop-out after Junior Cycle	41%	31%	30%
Drop-out during Senior Cycle	22%	28%	29%
Total drop-out 1st year to Leaving Cert.:	67%	64%	64%

SOURCE: Data provided by school records and quoted by the Ballymun
Working Party, Ballymun Pilot Programme, P.6.

Three Methods of Research

The first method of research was through the formulation of a questionnaire to be administered to three selected pupils in both the upper and lower stream classes that I have been teaching. The second was to interview the parent(s) of the six girls. The questions asked were generally similar - they were taken from a less rigidly structured questionnaire for the parents. The third and final method was much less formal than the previous two and which involved the whole class of both the upper and lower stream was though my teaching schemes.

Method One

There are many facets of the major social and economic problems which are reflected in the lifestyles and attitudes of individuals and families in Ballymun. The questionnaire was designed to find out what exactly there where for the six case studies and how they affected their attitudes to education. There were four main priorities of the questionnaire which were based on a case study by the Curriculum Development Unit. (2), in which the framework of their questionnaire were based on the following as was my own.

1. Relevance of school
2. Peer relations and self-image
3. Desire to work
4. Parent expectation.

See Questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME:

ADDRESS:

DATE OF BIRTH:

AGE:

1. DO YOU ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY?

A.   all the time ☐

B.   sometimes ☐

C.   not very often ☐

2. DO YOU THINK THAT GOING TO SCHOOL AND SITTING EXAMS IS IMPORTANT AND EXPLAIN WHY?

A: Yes   Why

B. No   Why

3. WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU FIND MOST USEFUL AND WRITE WHY YOU THINK SO?

A

B

C

4. WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU FIND LEAST USEFUL AND WRITE DOWN WHY?

A.

B.

C.

5. WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU FIND MOST DIFFICULT AND WRITE WHY?

A.

B.

C.

6. WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU FIND LEAST DIFFICULT AND WRITE WHY?

A.

B.

C.

7. WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU FIND MOST INTERESTING AND WRITE WHY?

A.

B.

C.

9. WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU FIND THE LEAST INTERESTING AND WRITE WHY?

A.

B.

C.

9. WHAT WOULD YOU MOST OF ALL LIKE TO BE WHEN YOU LEAVE SCHOOL?

10. DO YOU HAVE ANY FRIEND OR RELATIONS WHO DO THIS? WHO?

11. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO BE WHEN YOU LEAVE SCHOOL?

12. HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOURSELF AS A STUDENT IN SCHOOL

A. Weak ☐

B. Average ☐

C. Above Average ☐

D. Excellent ☐

13. WHAT ARE THE GRADES YOU EXPECT TO GET IN THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION?

SUBJECT	LEVEL	GRADE
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		

14. HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET DISCIPLINED IN SCHOOL?

A. Always - I mess a lot in class ☐

B. Sometimes ☐

C. Never - I'm quite and do my work ☐

Have you been on a report card? How many times?

Yes .... Times
No

15. HOW MANY HOURS/MINUTES DO YOU SPEND EACH NIGHT DOING HOMEWORK?

16. DO YOU DO ANY EXTRA STUDY?

A. Yes always ☐

B. No never ☐

C. Sometimes ☐

D. Only if I have an exam/test ☐

17. DO YOU USE THE SCHOOL LIBRARY MUCH?

18. WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR PARENTS WOULD LIKE YOU TO DO?

A. leave school at 15 and get a job ☐

B. do your Junior Cert. Exam and then get a job ☐

C. do your Leaving Cert. Exam and get a job ☐

D. do your Leaving Cert. and go to college ☐

Why?

19. WHEN WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE SCHOOL?

A. as soon as I'm 15 years of age ☐

B. after the Junior Cert. Exam ☐

C. after the Leaving Cert. Exam ☐

D. I intend on going to college/doing a course somewhere ☐

20. IS YOUR FATHER EMPLOYED?

WHAT IS HIS OCCUPATION?

IS YOUR MOTHER EMPLOYED?

WHAT IS HER OCCUPATION?

21. DO YOU HAVE BROTHERS AND SITTERS? LIST THEM HERE AND WRITE WHETHER THEY WORK/SCHOOL/STUDY BESIDE THERE NAME.

BROTHERS NAME/OCCUPATION   SISTERS NAME/OCCUPATION

1........................   ....   1........................   ....

2........................   ....   2........................   ....

3........................   ....   3........................   ....

4........................   ....   4........................   ....

5........................   ....   5........................   ....

PUT AN X BESIDE THEIR NAME IF THEY ARE MARRIED.

22. DO YOU LIVE IN

A.   house   ☐

B.   flats   ☐

C.   other   ☐

23. HOW MANY BEDROOMS ARE THERE AND HOW MANY PEOPLE ACTUALLY LIVE THERE?

Bedrooms   ☐   Number of People   ☐

24. DO YOU HAVE A ROOM OF YOUR OWN?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

WHO DO YOU SHARE WITH?

25. DO YOU HAVE A PART-TIME JOB APART FORM BABY SITTING OUTSIDE SCHOOL?

How much do you get paid?
How many hours a week do you work?

26. WHAT DO YOU DO MOST EVENINGS AFTER SCHOOL?

27. ARE YOU ALLOWED OUT ON WEEK NIGHTS

28. WHAT DO YOU MOST WEEKENDS?

29. WHERE DO YOU GET POCKET MONEY (IF ANY) FROM?

30. WHAT DOES YOUR BEST FRIEND(S) WANT TO DO WHEN THEY LEAVE SCHOOL?

31. DO THEY WANT TO LEAVE SCHOOL?

32. ARE YOU IN ANY GROUPS LIKE GUIDES/DRAMA ETC.?

33. ARE YOU IN ANY ACTIVITIES / GROUPS/ PROJECTS IN YOUR AREA?

NAME THEM:

34. **LIST THREE REASONS WHY YOU LIKE LIVING IN BALLYMUN AND WHY?**

1.

2.

3.

35. **LIST THREE REASON WHY YOU DO NOT LIKE LIVING IN BALLYMUN AND WHY?**

1.

2.

3.

Method Two

The interelatedness of the second method (the interview with parents) it to go first was the case that some of the questions were similar. The social and economic factors were affecting both parents and children and since the parents are among the most important peers or influences of a child and I decided to compile the two method questionnaire with the student and interview with the parent(s) together. There were four main priorities here:

- The parents socio-economic status
- The parents own experience of the education system.
- The relevance of school
- Parents Expectations

The latter two were mentioned as priorities of the first questionnaire also.

I have looked at the parents own experience of the education system to see the relevance of family history to education and to social class particularly to occupations of parents. The interview with the parent(s) was conducted in a very chatty manner so that I could ask probing questions without running the risk of being considered noisy or intruding by the parents.

See Questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME:

ADDRESS

MARITAL STATUS

AGE

	MOTHER	FATHER
1. OCCUPATION	_____	_____
PARENTS	_____	_____
OCCUPATION	_____	_____

3. AREA GREW UP

4. SCHOOL THEY ATTENDED

5. DID YOU LEAVE SCHOOL AT AN EARLY AGE

6. WHY?

7. HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN ANY EXAMS

WHAT ARE THEY?

8. DID YOU EVER ATTEND ANY FORM OF ADULT EDUCATION?

9. WHAT WOULD YOU PREFER YOUR CHILD TO DO?

A.   leave at 15 and get a job   ☐

B.   do Intermediate Certificate Examination and leave school ☐

C.   do Leaving Certificate Examination and get a job   ☐

D.   do Leaving Certificate Examination and further education. ☐

10.   DO YOU THINK THAT GOING TO SCHOOL AND TAKING EXAMS IS

         IMPORTANT? WHY?

11.   WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE SCHOOLS MOST IMPORTANT ROLE OR

         FUNCTION?

12.   WAS BALLYMUN SCHOOL YOUR

A.   your first choice   ☐

B.   your only choice   ☐

C.   did not really matter   ☐

13.   DO YOU CHECK YOUR CHILD'S HOMEWORK?

A.   regularly   ☐

B.   some times   ☐

C.   no, not really   ☐

D .   I do not need to they do it themselves   ☐

14. DO YOU SEE TO IT THAT SHE DOES A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF STUDY EACH WEEK?

15. IS YOUR CHILD ALLOWED OUT

A. every night ☐

B. only at weekends ☐

C. whenever she/he wants ☐

16. WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST WISH FOR YOUR CHILD

17. DO YOU THINK IF SHE DOES WELL IN HER EXAM SHE WILL GET A GOOD JOB?

METHOD THREE

This method of research was based on my teaching schemes, "The broad parameters for the rationale behind the teaching of art are based on the relationship between art and the individual art and the community and art and culture". It was on the strength of this that I decided on schemes which would allow me to learn and understand more about my pupils.

In making out a teaching scheme one of the sub-headings is "Theme" see example below.

TABLE 12

Layout for Teaching Schemes for Classes for Art Education

WEEK	THEME	SOURCE	ART MATERIALS	ACTIVITIES	ART HISTORICAL REFER	CROSS DISCIPLINARY REFERENCE

SOURCE: Faculty of Education National College of Art and Design

It was primarily through the themes I choose that my teaching schemes would help me to find out about the following

- The range or extent of role models they have contact with in their everyday lifestyle both in the community and at home.
- The most influential peers or role models.
- How they perceive themselves
- Their personal level of self esteem.

However the use of the teaching schemes and skills involved had another purpose while they were are on the one hand a means of research they were also to broaden and heighten the four aspects of each individual students lifestyle mentioned above (A,B,C,D,). I choose different themes for the lower and upper stream. While both involved the individual and their lifestyle or environment the theme for an upper stream would be much broader in scope in terms of community; it considered not only their own community but also other cities and countries of the world. It was a less vivid theme and one I hoped would involve more complex discussions however it was one which I felt that the upper stream would be capable of comprehending- while it might have the opposite effect for a lower stream.

The Lower Stream

Individual identity, self-esteem and self accomplishment are essential if societies to grow and flourish. By taking them based on the individual and the environment I tried to aid this process. The title of the theme 'what I want to be when I leave school or grow up' seemed to me to co-ordinate naturally with

puppetry because they could choose whatever career they would like to work towards and they however also has an image in their heads of stereotypes by way of role models they have seen, uniforms or dress conventions associated with them and of course what they might have watched on television. The puppet would be a reflection of themselves, their ambition, the environments they are surrounded with and how they see themselves as a working part of this. While it is arguable to say that all art is abstract in some way or another I found that puppetry was the least abstract if conducted in a methods of teaching which involved direct observation and research from a tangible source....themselves.

Another method was through drawing with two/three dimensional media. This is less complex because they are asked to draw from direct observation and make a three dimensional representation of their heads. They don't have to consider so much therefore composition or design neither do they have to think of an abstract form of interpretation for example to make a painting about themselves.

The Upper Stream

The theme which was planned for a higher stream was "The World I wish for". This also involves a discussion in which I would ask individuals where they saw themselves in the future or what environment would they like to be living in or rather life style they desired but could also questioned the reality of them too. This also involved discussing their present environment and their personal feeling towards it and the social or economic deviancy and problems.

By asking the students to reason out their choices and expectations hoped that they would probe deeper and consider the quality of their career aspirations in the hope that they would strive towards a better career.

The process of interpreting their desires or aspirations for their environment and themselves as part of it was through a large painting - two meters long by one metre wide. We would take an aspect of the environment - nature because we decided it was now endangered and is essential to their own healthy futures, but on a broader scope the world its economies and societies. The source would be from direct observation of nature but they however had to arrange this visual information that is design a large composition. The media could range from paint, to chalk and oil pastel to tissue paper.

Another aspect of my research was merely getting to know the students more personally asking them about there favourite music, hobbies and interests. I would probe into their social lives at the weekends but equally by quite open myself so they do not feel that I am intruding on their private lives and the kind of community life and family life they are exposed to.

I have already discussed the streaming process in Ballymun Comprehensive. At present I teach two classes in the school both second years, one of which is bottom remedial stream and another which is the second highest stream. Peer influence within the class is an important factor in every pupils esteem and aspiration level. The class generates a certain group level of esteem and aspirations which may be a factor of importantance in regards to the six individuals that I have taken as case studies.

Educational attainment is linked to levels of self esteem - whether the pupils perceive themselves as successful performers and are consistent they will see themselves more positively as they would their education. There is a lower stream class who are lower ability students and may have problems comprehending lessons or concepts etc. This would reduce their value of - themselves and hence that of staying within the education system- ' what is the point I won't pass by exams anyway'.

Often lower stream pupils are less willing to receive or will disbelieve teacher made statements because they are irrelevant to their own situation. (4). Many of the questions asked by lower stream pupils may be 'irrelevant and inappropriate' as they were attempts to relate their personal experience to the course. In general low stream pupils are less likely to move within the guidelines set down by teachers. Often the inability to comprehend a lesson is diverted with misconduct. Ironically Nell Keddie comments that 'It would be failure if high ability pupils to question what they were taught in schools that contributes in large measures to their educational attainment'. (6). According to a report based partly on valid samples and statistics on observation made by teachers the average IQ. of our second year students in the year 1986/1987 was 80 which was well below the average IQ for the population as a whole. (6).

Profile of the Lower Stream

There are twenty students in all. It is a regular characteristic of the class for at least three girls to be on report card. Within the class there have been seven or more report cards since September and three have been suspended while another two have left school altogether. They have been cautioned by many

teachers and the Principal for the behaviour and before Christmas they were sent home for a day as a form of discipline. There are constantly negative reports by teachers in the staff room of the class.

As the class are in the lowest stream they were administered a non-readers intelligence test instead of aptitude tests as they involve a series of questions which may be too difficult to understand and reduce their performance and could also be quite discouraging for them. With reference to results of the non-readers intelligence test the score (average is 100) for almost every girl is well below average hence manifesting low level of potential.

The attendance records show long periods of absenteeism for many students while others are missing a day here and a day there. They constantly name call to try to put each other down at the first opportunity available and they rarely praise each others work.

Profile of Upper Stream Class

There are twenty tow students in all and they are generally well behaved class. None of them have discipline report cards and are generally well praised in the staff room. They have great confidence as a class and come across as being quite supportive of each others work.

They were administers the AH 2 intelligence test which is based on three main area, verbal, numerical, perceptual skills. They are a combination of two classes 2D and 2E and on the basis of their subject choices French, Art and Science. While this test inquires into intelligence of a different form it is also very

differently structured to the non-readers intelligence test and is hence more complex given only to the top streams.

Apart from this pupils who have no choice of succeeding in many of the Junior Certificate subjects the rest of the lower stream feel they are failures in relation to their peers and 'consequently their self-esteem is lower than anything we experience among other students'. (7).

This was a general comment on the review of the pupils situation made by five teachers I interviewed.

The Case Studies: Lower Stream

A. Tracey is 14 years of age. She lives in the immediate area with her father and three sisters. He mother has been dead for over six years. They are all unemployed in the house and the father is on a pension. She has a further two brothers one who is married but again both are unemployed.

There is another older sister who is married which I only learned about when taking to her guardian - older sister Rose 20 yrs. Tracey apparently was constantly beaten by her sister and her husband. She was often burned with cigarettes and this was all only revealed when she was hospitalised. Her sister often left her at 10 yrs of age to mind her four kids while she went out. It was only learned later that her sister Rose was also beaten up though not as severely.

Tracey's ambition is to mind children. This influence comes from her sister Rose who went to live with Focus Point, again relating to being beaten-up. There she worked with kids for 2½ years that is from 15-18 yrs this seems to be the strongest influence on Tracey and she is trying to persuade he to do the Junior Cert. and then go on further. Tracey answers in the questionnaire that she wants to stay on in school yet when talking to her it is a different story. She is positive about herself in school but his is more related to her behaviour rather than performance as she receives a lot of praise for it by her teachers.

However while her sister Rose and Father who wouldn't speak with me ask Tracey to stay on in school until her junior cert. exam they say however 'if she really wants to leave I can't really make her stay and if she's not happy' yet they can provide no alternative for her.

Tracey would do anything to help a teacher or fellow student and always puts her best into her work. Sometimes she is slow to complete something. She is a weak student and this is evident even though there answering of the questionnaire. She puts some subjects in the same category twice e.g. religion is most and also least difficult. She doesn't relate a previous answer to the next question and her answers are very simple and do not actually answer the question asked. Her writing, spelling, construction of a sentence and vocabulary are weak. She is relatively ambitious but sees no point in remaining in school for what she wants to be, a child-minder.

B. Jennifer is 14 years of age. She lives in Poppintree, about 14 minutes walk from the school. She has a mother and father, two brothers and one sister. Her

older brother has just finished a Fas Course for under 18's and the other two are of the ages 9 and 3 years. Her father and mother are both unemployed.

Her mother and father both left school at a young age, her father before even completing Primary School. Her mother doesn't want Jennifer to leave but doesn't feel she should make her stay if she's not happy in school. Her mother is very aware of Jennifer's low esteem level and also of the fact that she is constantly in trouble at school. She is on report card since she came back to school in September.

Jennifer want most of all to be a pop singer but expects to become a school teacher when she leaves school. However she is in the lowest stream and fails to do her homework or listen and co-operate in class.

Her answers are more comprehensive of the questions. Subjects in which class work is difficult and homework is demanded are least useful/most difficult. Jennifer's study is left to her own discretion but her mother does ask her every now and then how she is doing and is genuinely concerned but does not feel she in a position where she can advise her. Jennifer is needed to do a lot of housework and especially on a Saturday when she minds the children and cooks the dinner while her mother goes out street trading to make some extra money and her father goes out to the 'pubs' or the 'bookies'. Her mother worries over Jennifer's peer influences or her friends. She gets very upset when she cannot provide Jennifer with the things her friends have like fashionable clothes of shoes etc.

Image is very important among her friends and this causes Jennifer a lot of trouble as she wants to be liked by them yet she doesn't have the money. She is also easily influenced at school. She is slightly overweight and at an awkward looking stage and I feel this adds to her attention seeking.

C.   Anita is aged 14 years and lives on the outskirts on Ballymun with her parents and an older brother and sister aged 18 and 19 years who both work and a younger brother aged three. Her father is self employed and trained as a car mechanic. The mother also works in the business a a secretary/clerk for which she trained when she was younger. Both parents have their intermediate certificate and the father his City and Guilds examinations.

While her parents have had a good education and training and hope that Anita will stay in school they don't mind if she leaves after her Junior Certificate as they feel they did well enough themselves after they left. However Anita is a very weak student and was advised to leave her first school in St Michael's Finglas as she was not keeping up with other members of her class there. Again subjects that demand a lot of work and involve homework are disliked or boring. Unlike Tracey and Jennifer he is involved in activities such as swimming and football, but she has transport out other area to these activities.

Case Studies: The Upper Stream

A.   Monica is 13 years of age. She has three older bothers and one older sister. They all live in their own homes and are qualified as an engineer, butcher, plumber and secretary. Her father and mother both have the Intermediate Certificate but the father is unemployed and the mother is a

cookery demonstrator. There are only three people living in their corporation house.

Monica is a very bright girl and has a lot of ambition. While her mother is concerned about her education she says she trusts Monica to do her work. Monica is very positive about school and has no behavioural problems. She has friends with high career aspirations one example is that one of her friends would like to be an accountant another a teacher.

She also rates herself as an excellent in school. She want to be a Cartoonist when she leaves school but there is not relative or friend in this field already. Her answers to the questionnaire relating to subjects are well thought out and show a clear understanding of the question and her answers are relevant.

She also relates certain subjects to getting a job such a Irish, English and French. While she sees that getting a good education involved staying at schools to sit the Leaving Certificate this is how she feels her parents see it too. Her parents also expect her to go to College as her brothers and sisters did.

B.   Rachel is 13 years of age and lives in the Santry end of Ballymun. She has four brothers and three sisters. Her father works in the ESB and the mother is a housewife. She lives in a very small house so it is quite packed. She is quite independent and is the only one with a part-time job apart from baby sitting in all the case studies. She goes to a lot of clubs but they are within the immediate area. She has to be at home at 9 o'clock.

Her mother expects Rachel to stay on in school and get some form of qualification as she says "she has the ability to do it". This is also the view held by her father.

Rachel is a very bright girl and is always well behaved in school but quite giggly in class and is a high achiever. She answers the questionnaire very clearly and showed an understanding of questions. Subjects she finds difficult are those that involve concentration and languages are found useful. She was the only girl to make reference to the teachers methods and there relation to helping her understand a subject better.

There are no discipline problems with Rachel and although she isn't the strongest girl in my class she puts a lot of effort into her work and needs a little push to start.

C.   Ann marie is 14 years of age. She lives with her parents and two brothers and one sister who are all at school. Her mother has a cleaning job while her father is unemployed but is trained as a sheet metal worker. She lived in a corporation house in the Ballymun area and is only ten minutes from the school.

She is a very bright girl and very mature and responsible, many of her friends are older than her. However she is quite high spirited in class. She has no major discipline problems. Her mother would like her to stay on in school until she has done her exams. Her son has been trying to get a place in college for two years now but hasn't got the points but the mother say's she cannot offer him any advice as she doesn't know anything about colleges. She lives in a very average house but they seem to be coping well.

However, as I walked from her house, Ann marie was embarrassed by her Father who stumbled across the field from the pub. It was only 4:30pm. Her mother and father both have the intermediate certificate. Ann marie's peer influences outside parents and or school have the potential to mislead her career aspirations.

Ann marie goes to raves and in an experimental stage of life and she mixes with some people most of whom have already left school and according to Ann marie are involved in some criminal activities.

Ann marie answered the questionnaire with thought and related subjects to job opportunities and found subjects she liked too easy while subjects with a lot of homework where considered difficult. Hence she saw a clear relationship between sitting her exams and getting a job making career for herself as a computer programmers which is what she hopes for.

Every girl here is at present a second year student and are all potential drop-outs before their Junior Certificate next year because of many socio economic problems the girls and there families are facing.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 3

1. Ballymun Working Party, Ballymun Pilot Programme, P.6.

2. Beary, McEvoy, O'Rourke, Female Choices in VPT Programmes, P.20.

3. National Art Education Association U.S.A., Art Education: Senior High School (Virginia: National Art education Association) P.£.
   p. 211

4. Haralambos, Sociology,

5. Ibid., P.211.

6. This was a report complied by the Teachers and Careers Guidance officer which was based on valid samples and statistics and on observation made by the teachers. It is a comprehensive report which summarises many problems that pupils and their families are facing. It was released in 1989. It is a short report (only two pages) Ballymun Comprehensive School Report.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

What is most obvious from these case profiles and the research or observations I made via my teaching practice is that these students face an enormous range of problems from those of financial origin which are most basic and seem to be of a continuos almost accepted part of the quality of lifestyle for most families in the community to emotional stresses many of which seem to be caused by the former mentioned and are reflected in various manifests. According to a school report which was released in 1989 there are five major areas of disadvantage which leave education as a secondary priority with both parents and children. They are as follows financial, social, physical, emotional and academic (1). Features of these problems facing families in the Ballymun Community are closely related to each of the case studies (although not all area need apply).

Financial

Four out of the six girls have unemployed fathers two of whom have no skill at all while the others are skilled / semi skilled workers. This is a normal feature of most families in Ballymun. High unemployment in an untrained or semi-skilled work force. Many families live on less than £150 per week and 19% out of 40% of those employed are either single, widowed or separated parents. This is evident from the table below.

Table 13

Status of parents of students who attend Ballymun Comprehensive School
(1988).

	Father Unemployed	Single, Widowed Separated Parent	Employed but Wages under £150/week
1st Year Junior Cycle	59%	19%	19%
1st Year Senior Cycle	46%	13%	12%

Source: Ballymun Comprehensive Statistics

As a result a lot of students suffer through poor diet, lack of adequate or suitable clothing and through actually worrying over their parents problems and how they will cope. This is particularly relevant to Tracey, Jennifer, Monica and Ann Marie as there fathers are all unemployed and more broadly speaking it was evident through my teaching practice. Many of the girls when asked "would they like to have a career" or "what do you want to be when you leave school" considered leaving school early or whenever a job came up because they felt that their parents could not support them and it was their duty to support themselves. On many occasions I have sat in during my lunch hour with the girls

in the art room. Crisps and chocolate seemed to be the average contents of their lunch. Providing healthy lunches may be too expensive while the mothers main concern is to provide a breakfast, a dinner and a tea time need a task of daily survival for many parents on such a low income.

Code is characterised by very limited vocabulary, very few adverbs and adjectives, simple short sentences with few subordinated clauses and hence they find it difficult to express orally their feelings and emotions. (4). This is one cause for a students difficulty in expressing their feelings and emotions in both school and home environments. However while most of the teachers agreed with this, they also agreed that this also has a lot to do with peer influences.

I found out myself that many students are easily led by others actions and opinions and in many cases there is a thin line between peer influence and a bully. Often the result may lead to deviant behaviour and bad school reports. This is not only true for the three cases studies in the lower stream but the rest of their class. It is not as strong a feature among the girls of the upper stream . Most of them including the three cases studies are not afraid to speak or defend themselves to or defend other members or their class irrelevant of who it is but this does not mean that they are cheeky or overbearing.

Another aspect of social disadvantage is that most of the people who the students see around them are either unemployed or in low status jobs. Ballymun is not an industrial area that is there are no factories or industrial estates in the immediate area, the shopping centre being the greatest source of employment within the area. Hence apart from Teachers and the Garda Siochana who are not too popular there are not many other professional or non manual role models

to look up to. This accompanied with a general low level of esteem means that often pupils do not see themselves rising more generally according to the school report, parents cannot manage on the money they have and are often in the grips of money lenders and the children are usually aware of this. (2). I know for certain that this has been relevant to three of the case studies at one time or another.

Social

With reference to the questionnaire results many of the girls felt that their addresses let them down when it came to getting a job. I also asked this question to other members of the class when discussing the theme "what I want to be when I leave school" and generally the answers were similar. They label themselves as coming from a "common" area and view people from other areas they are not familiar with as "posh" and therefore better able to compete with them according to the Careers Guidance Counsellor and the School Home Liaison Office. Another aspect of this was the reluctance of all case studies to visit their houses as they were very embarrassed.

According to the school report the general low self esteem means they have difficulty in dealing with social situations that may arise. (3). This is most obvious during teaching practice with the lower stream. It was with great reluctance that class members would speak openly about themselves and their aspirations in front of other class members. Many of the girls choose hairdressing initially and when I asked them if they would consider getting a Saturday job for experience perhaps in a local saloon they replied "no way I'd be scarlet". The Upper Stream class were more ready to speak up and assert their

views as they are more capable academically of expressing themselves. Many of the students and parents have a restricted code of language. This above all manual or semi-skilled occupation to a professional one. This was reflected in the puppetry scheme with the lower stream. Many of them considered hairdressing as a highly rated job along with others such as childminding and a secretary. While these might be realistic options for the lower stream girls it also provides an insight into the lack of role models within the community, people of their own social class background to encourage them to be more positive towards their career aspirations then perhaps they can get the job they wanted. This is particular to Tracey but also Jennifer and Anita. While the latter two would like to become a teacher or an air hostess they see not the point in "dreaming" therefore they are related to what they would hope to be as opposed to what they actually expect. When asked however what she expects to do when she leaves school Anitas answer was "work in a chipper prople if I get a good exasame". Again this is evidence of low esteem and level of aspiration.

Physical

With reference to any interview with the school nurse there is a high number of physical disorders among the students. For example kidney disorders, chest aliments, colic disease and hence this accounts for some of the poor attendance patterns and the consequent and under achievement, that is not performing to the best of their potential ability because they have missed lessons and have a lot of catching up to so. Poor diets and housing add further to these problems. Almost all of these case studies showed some feature of getting by financially as opposed to being comfortable. This was most evident when visiting the homes of four of the case studies.

Emotional

The students of Ballymun Comprehensive suffer from the fact the many of their parents married too young, have large families and are totally unprepared for parenthood and its responsibilities both financially and emotionally. (4). In those families girls and boys have much responsibility imposed on them at an early age before they have been allowed to fully develop, John Springhall commented that

> ..."The abolition of child labour, the introduction of compulsory education, the progressive raising of the school leaving age and the advent of the teenage market for leisure have all insured that everyone is no guaranteed an official period of adolescence that was not available to all social classes in the past" (5).

However this brings to mind Rachael who lives in a three bedroom house with nine others (including parents) six of the children are younger than her so she shares much of the responsibility of looking after them for example getting them out to school and helping them with homework etc. She also puts a lot of her free time into her part-time job to support herself. Jennifer is also an example of a girl who shares much of her parents responsibilities while her mother had to work on Saturdays Street Trading, Jennifer has to run the house. This involved "bathing the children, cleaning the house, all the washing and cooking the dinner". This was a feature of many other girls in both classes many of whom often leave school after lunch hour as they have to baby-sit for their mothers. Hence the imposition upon many students at an early age would seem to unfair their guaranteed period of adolescents and instead of girls worried only about their teenage pimples there are girls worried over problems at home.

Many of the young people are subject to verbal, sexual, physical and physiological abuse both in their homes and also in social groups they are with. Here we recall the physical abuse suffered by Tracey at home. Indeed the emotional stress brought on by poverty due to unemployment, consider here almost 60% of parents are unemployed. Ann Maries father who spends a lot of time in the pub due to free time again because he is unemployed. This is said with reference to a comment made by Ann Marie "I don't mind he's always in the pub". According to many teachers and the careers Guidance Counsellor and Home School Liaison Officer, control in many families is maintained through fear and this tends to produce highly defensive and aggressive personalities who encounter enormous difficulties when it comes to school rules and authority.

Academic

Many of the students have very poor academic motivation and need lot of encouragement if they are to remain in the education system beyond the junior cycle even as far as sitting that examination. This I observed was a strong feature of the lower stream. Many saw no point in remaining in school "what is the point I won't pass my exams anyway". While most of the upper stream have the intention of sitting their leaving certificate exam. There are other hindrances to performing to the best of their ability even as poor conditions for study (over crowding, cold rooms or lack of an empty room). Four out of the six case studies live in similar conditions. I known this because I have visited their homes. Lack of encouragement from the parents to study even to do their homework is done to their own very limited education due to similar problems their own children face, problems which take priority over education.

The desire to be financially independent, to take the burden from their parents and ease the stress related problems of money to buy the material things they desire which they see other young people with (but not necessarily those from their own area), means to many young people want to leave school early or get part-time jobs a value which may be supported by many parents who need financial assistance. Hence a lot of parents find it hard to support academic application and achievement. Many of the girls as I had discussed have a limited vocabulary and often they have problems in understanding lessons this is also evident in their writing. This is illustrated in the sample of a questionnaire below. A further problem is that many of the parents are illiterate. Therefore there is no back-up from home. Many of the girls parents left school at a very early age.

ILLUSTRATION 2

A Sample of Response to Questionnaire by Case Stdy from the Lower Stream

10. Whar subjecrs do you find the least interesrring
and write why?

   A. Religion Because it is a looelog
   B. Home.econimcs. Because it is to heard.
   C. Maths Becaus it is very heard.

11. What would you mosr of all like to be when
    you leave school
    I would like to be an airos.
    and go all over the world in
    an airplan that is why.

13. Do you have any friends or relarions who
    do this   :
    Yes my siters friend is an
    aircste and she love it.

14. Whar do you expecr to do when you leave school
       work in a chipper.
          Prople if i gct a goo
    exa same.

Aspects of each of these five areas as I have shown manifested themselves through their art and the processes involved. Whether it was through their behaviour and treatment of other students or their reaction to the lesson. I found that the lower stream class needed a lot more encouragement and a sense of importance in the organising and progress of the class and I tried to create as many little jobs as possible so that they could all be involved. Many of them were highly strung and became extremely frustrated when they found an aspect of the lesson difficult. So in every lesson I tried to give a step by step introduction to the lesson and when giving individual tuition during the lesson. Lowefield however said that step by step instruction shifts the "problem solving process"!. It is important therefore to explain that by step by step instruction, I mean breaking the lesson into small sections which done continuously after one another compete the lesson. I would also make an example of printing where there is a certain criteria to follow and learn before one can begin to be creative and innovation.

The same may be said of puppetry depending on the type of puppet. The initial research drawings for the puppets by the majority of students were very weak as is illustrated in the following examples of their work.

ILLUSTRATION 3

Line Drawing To Describe Form of Head

Source: Themselves

The drawings show weak composition and little concept of scale and proportion. The lines drawn do not describe form very accurately neither do the contour drawings which follow however they are improving.

ILLUSTRATION 4

Contour Lines to Describe Forms of Head

Source: Themselves

After two lessons drawing form using a two dimensional media I changed my schemes from following into drawing the face as a series of planes to actually using clay to draw the forms and features of the head. This proved most successful.

ILLUSTRATION 5

Three Dimensionl Drawings of Head in Clay
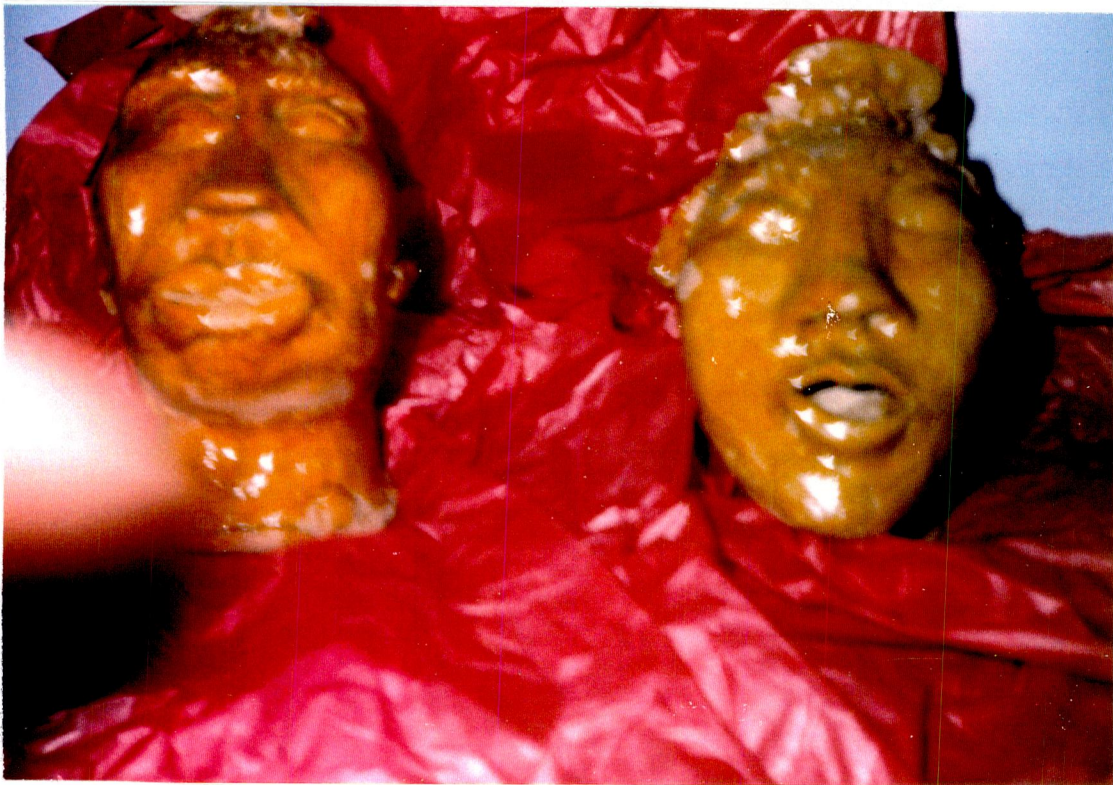
They found it less difficult to manipulate and the result whether it was most accurate or not would be deemed quite successful by the student themselves. From that lesson on their faith in themselves increase and they became more involved in the lessons.

Source: Students Themselves

After two lessons drawing from memory to mainstream modalities, I then I changed my
direction from drawing into drawing the object ... a variety of places around ...
using clay to draw the form and texture of the idea that I had provided for
support.

ILLUSTRATION 5

...

During the succeeding lessons the puppets heads were worked on they gave the class a greatest sense of achievement and felt very valued to be allowed to actually do puppetry as most of the work they have done to data is dimensional.

IILLUSTRATION 6

Finished Puppet Heads

Source: Themselves

Through puppetry we addressed many problems the girls encounter. We looked at the relationship of themselves to their environment which helped them to have a broader understanding of themselves, others and to the world. They looked at various slides and works of art and in this way art knowledge and skills were used to heighten outlooks in their personal and community life.

ILLUSTRATION 7

Finished Puppet Head

Source: Themselves

IILLUSTRATION 8

Finished Puppet Head

Source: Themselves

During the process to my delight many of them changes their career choices. It showed greater aspirations and chage as to how they percieve themselves some of them initially did not think themselves in the role of a secretary. They now know how and where to apply for courses proving they are also motivated for their futures.

The upper stream were more eager to get involved without as much encouragement. There first lesson showed evidence of a very visually capable class as may be seen in the examples of there work.

ILLUSTRATION 9

A Line Drawing of a Plant in Pencil

Source: A Natural Plant

ILLUSTRATION 10

A line Drawing of A plant
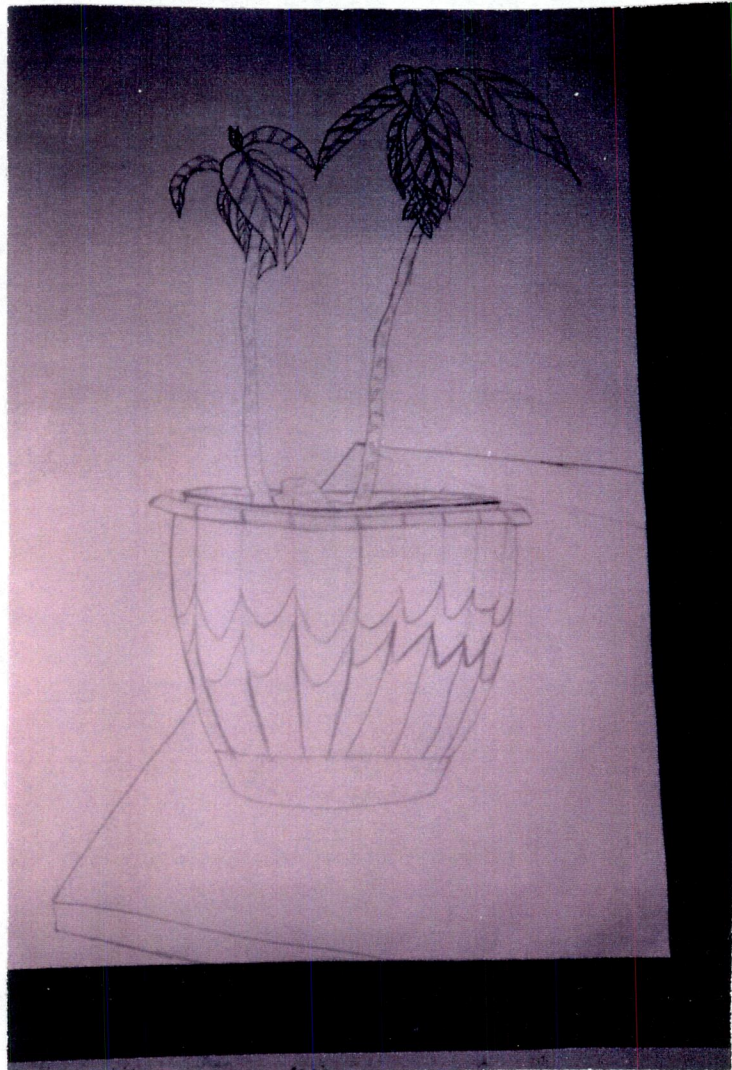
Source: A Natural Plant

Because of the new improvements in progress on the tower blocks by talking about their environment and the work in the sense was a very tangible topic. It was intended also to be a broader view and so I felt that nature could encompass a discussion on the environment at the world in general, but for their purpose also I took them beyond the classroom and outside their own community to draw and observe nature. The following are examples of studies inside and outside of the class using various media.

ILLUSTRATION 11

Colour Study of Plant in Oil Pastel

Source: Inside the Classroom

ILLUSTRATION 12

Colour Study of a Plant in Chalk/Oil Pastel

Source: Inside the Classroom

ILLUSTRATION 13

Colour and Texture Study of Plants

Source: School Grounds

ILLUSTRATION 14

Colour and Texture Study of Plants
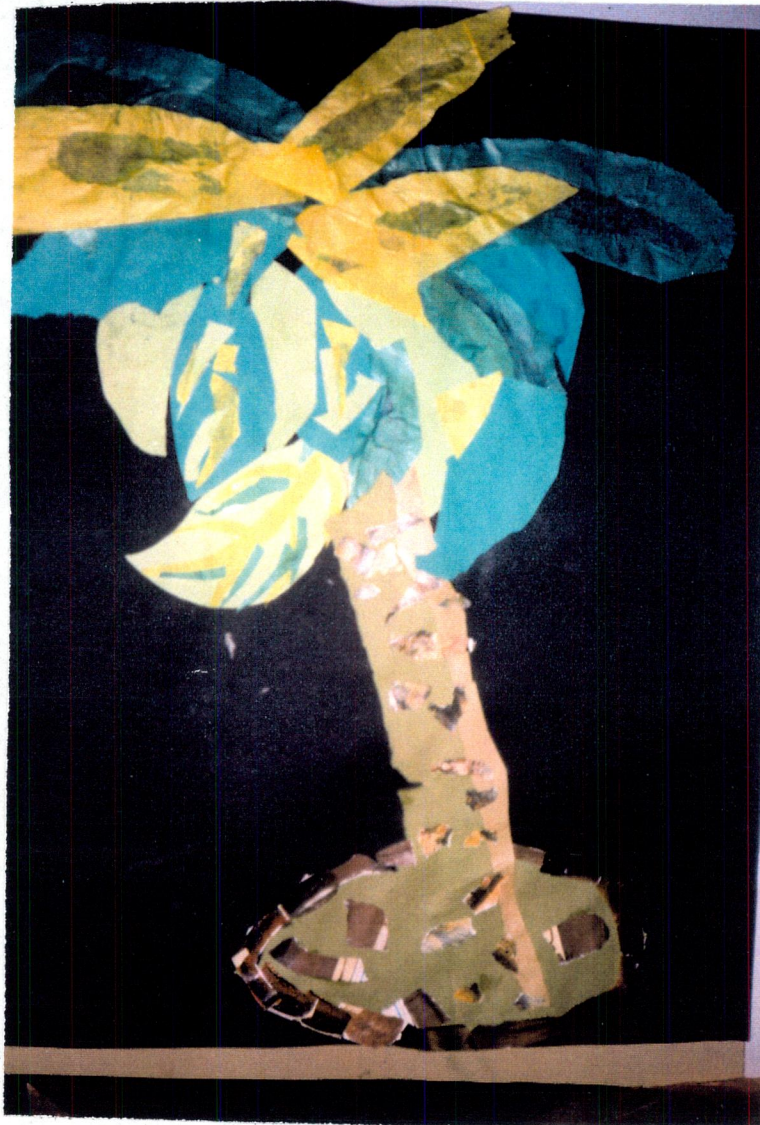
Source: Botanic Gardens

ILLUSTRATION 15

Colour and Texture Study Using Crepe and Tissue Paper
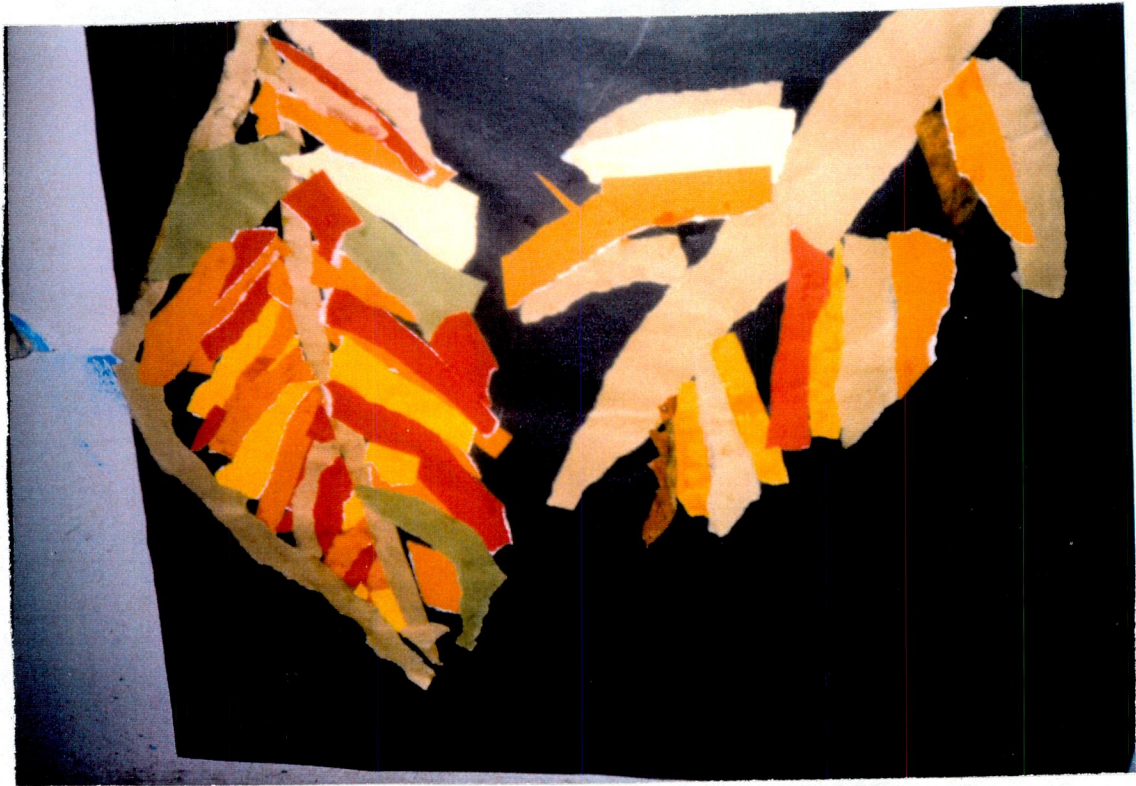
Source: Natural Plants

ILLUSTRATION 16

Colour and Texture Study using Crepe and Tissue Paper

Source: Natural Plants

The final piece which was to be used as a functioning blind perhaps for their bedroom was a way to address poverty and materialism and their experience of it and their communities. The finished pieced gave them great pride and also the initiative to try and make other pieces of furniture, for themselves by more generally I hope it has helped them to look for alternatives no problems they have for example if their parents are unemployed or on low income and they cannot but buy that new blouse or go to the disco to try and find a part time job particularly on holidays to pay for it themselves.

How Attitudes are formed

These disadvantages are the basic framework through which attitudes manifest themselves. But how do they develop? According to learning theory, we learn attitudes the same way we learn everything else. (6).

Just as we learn new information we learn the feelings, the thoughts and the actions associated with them. Experts in public relations, advertising and sales put this principle into effect everytime they couple information about a product with a pleasant association - a satisfying meal or a picture that conjures up happy thoughts.

Learning theories see people as reactors rather than initiators, as primarily passive beings whose learning "dependants on the number and strength of positive and negative elements previously learned". (7).

People have attitudes to everything or one that they have come in contact with and attitude therefore is "a learned, relatively permanent way responding to someone or something in a favourable or unfavourable way". (8).

It consists of three elements what you think (the cognitive component), how you feel (the emotional component), and how you tend to act your thoughts and emotions (the behavioural component). (9).

One problem with studying attitudes is that the three elements often contradict each other. While you might feel positively about someone or something there may be forces within your environment that are stronger or of greater priority and result in negative responses. You many be able to identify a criminal for instance who mugged an elderly person however he lives in your area and you are too afraid to testify. Often it is very difficult or uncontrollable for one to react to a situation exactly how one feels one should or wants to. This relates particularly to parents and students in Ballymun. Parents do think their education is important, however many of them feel under pressure by financial worries to accept even encourage their daughters to leave school to work, in particular those parents whose children are low academic achievers constantly failing exams who may feel there is no sense in continuing their education. Two of the parents of the case studies commented "Well I did alright did in I and left before d'inter".

More specifically and related to most of the students including four of the six case studies almost all parents are aware of the necessities their children have to be bought - lunch, uniforms, books, shoes, travel etc. (while the school has a supplementary scheme for books the parents do have to contribute and also

most buy other materials such as stationery and materials for practical subjects such as Home Economics - food ingredients and fabrics. While they think that their children's education would befit with all necessary materials. They cannot help feel negative thoughts "free education that's a joke". "It would be cheaper if they left school". "They are always asking for money". They also commented on the waste of their money and their daughters time remaining in school "if they are not learning anything". The result being that they are accepting of their daughters decision to leave school and many even offer other options.

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 4

1.   Ballymun Comprehensive School report compiled by the teachers and Careers Guidance Officer.

2.   Ibid., p. 2.

3.   Ibid.,p. 2.

4.   Ibid., p. 2

5.   Tony Crooks, "Overcoming Disadvantage: The educational response" in <u>Disadvantage, learning's and Young People</u>, edited by Tony Crooks and Dermot Stokes, (Dublin: C.D.U., 1987), p. 64.

6.   D. Papalla and S.W. Olds, Psychology: International Student conditions (, 1986) p. 642.

7.   Ibid., p. 642.

8.   Ibid., p. 643.

9.   Ibid., P. 643.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

Working Class and Education

Members of the working class and as it has been shown Ballymun is such an area place less value on education. They place less emphasis on "formal education as a means to personal advancement and they see less value in continuing at school beyond the minimum leaving age. Secondly, they place a lower value on achieving high occupational status. (1). In evaluating jobs, they emphasise: stability, security and immediate economic benefits" and tend to reject the risk and investments involved in aiming for high status occupations. (2). Job aspirations tend to be limited hence to a "good trade". Many of the students at Ballymun Comprehensive will leave school at the first offer of an apprenticeship because unemployment is so high and has been a long term characteristic of the area. However Barry Sugarman, a British sociologist relates differences in outlook and attitude say comparing for instance those between the middle class and the working class to education as being linked to the very nature of their non-manual and manual occupations. (3). Many middle class jobs provide an opportunity for continous advancement with training schemes to improve qualifications for better income and status. Sufficient income also means that they can invest in their future for example insurance policies and mortgages. However working class jobs often reach the limit of wage increases quite quickly, with fewer chances for promotion and less income to invest with. Furthermore they are less secure and are more likely to be laid off or made redundant than white collar workers. The absence of a career structure is many

working class jobs means that individual effort has less chance of producing improvements in income status and working conditions. (4). Hence, collective action via Trade Unions is more effective. Sugarman agrees that it is these very differences in jobs that produces different outlooks and attitudes to education since they have less control over the future, less opportunity to improve their position, and less income to invest, "manual workers tend to be fatalistic, present time orientated and concerned with immediate gratification" (5). Sugarman identifies these attitudes as part of the working class families all be "socialised" in terms of them.

From the case studies both Tracey and Jennifer whose parents have no skills and are both unemployed are already considering leaving school after their Junior Certificate exam. The parents of each girl have said that if " she wants to leave I can't really stop her". Anita, while she is a very slow learner (she has a slight mental handicap and has visited a psychrist) has however got support and encouragement from both parents who have skilled jobs. Both have more had more experience with the education system. The three cases from the upper stream who all have fathers with skilled occupations again have encouragement and motivation to achieve. However both Ann Maries and Monicas father is unemployed and this brings one to the question whether genetically based differences have a stronger impact on attitudes then environmental factors.

<div align="center">Environmental Versus Genetic Factors</div>

A. R. Jensen wrote that "genetic factors determine individual difference twice as much as do environmental factors" (6). He believed that what pupils take out of schools" was proportional to what they bring into the schools in terms of IQ. If all

people were born into the same life situation this may be true. Indeed it may also true to those students with high IQ's not necessarily from the same social class backgrounds who because of their achievement and success can be self motivated and need little encouragement while at second level school. Here I think of the three upper stream cases. They seem to be little effected by their parents social class as does their educational achievement. However other environment factors in the area will become more relevant as they proceed within the system. The majority of the peers and friends in the community will leave school early or will not go onto further education and this will have strong influence of their decisions. It will also become financially very difficult for all three to go into further education even with an education grant of some form. The situation becomes more obvious for the low achievers of different social class backgrounds. The pupil from the middle class family will have firstly the motivation to equal her parents achievement. In addition to attending a secondary school as opposed to a vocational vs. comprehensive (which cater mostly for working class areas) the pupil will be surrounded and hence motivated by others who want to be successful. His/Her parents can also afford to pay for extra tuition. However the pupil from the working class family can just about afford uniforms, shoes and travel etc. let alone extra grinds and she/he must also rely on her parents help with homework and due to their own limited experience of the education system do not understand much of the curricula. This lack of success in the system for working class children encourages their fatalistic attitude to education and increases the desire to do something "more worthwhile with their time" that is go out and work", "why not get paid for your time".

Heredity of Attitudes to Education.

The key to understanding the outlook or attitudes of young people on Ballymun to education is through their parents. Most of what has been discussed has continuously been related to the parents of the girls. From my research it has become all to obvious that the girls are subject to their parents values attitudes and norms and due to the fact that there is a high drop-out rates junior and senior levels and the 1% rate of school levers entering third level education these prove very unfavourable of education.

However the parents themselves were subject to similar circumstances. Up to the mid 1960's over 60% of Irish children went daily to primary school. (7). This was again due to problems of financial origin. On the one hand children went to work to help the parents financially and secondly because there was no other option as parents could not afford expensive school fees.

So why then if this major problem has been abolished through free education has there not been greater effort by parents to keep their children in the system to leaving certificate. One answer to this may be that there are different types of parents:- Parents who do care. Parents who do not care and Parents who do not know how to care. From my study I would say that the majority of parents in Ballymun are those parents who do not know how to care (speaking in relation to education).

But what do I mean by not knowing how to care. Here I would remind you of Lukacs false consciousness theory which I made reference to in Chapter One

(8) where a lower social class because of the task of daily survival were unable to assess and reform their situation.

Most parents are either semi-skilled or manual workers with few exceptions who work long hours to make ends meet. Families are also quite large with a broad age-band, The results are multiple. Firstly many parents find it hard to make time for their children's education. For example attending parent/teacher meetings or A.G.M's. There own limited education means that they are not familiar with the schools curricula and cannot help them with homework and neither can they help in making schooling decisions.

It is this aspect of inability which is most concerning and most in need of change. Schooling decisions can range from those of making subject choices to the more complex matter of applying to college or further education courses. Such decisions are too much responsibility for the child to bear and she/he needs advice to make appropriate choices. Statements such as "I honestly haven't a clue about all that stuff" and " sure I do no much about the colleges 'n all our know" made my some parents during my interviews with them indicated a problem. Other observations where made in class through asking questions related to subject preferences and choices. The answers were all similar and show that there was little or no input by parents in such decisions.

If the initiative to apply themselves (pupils) move diligently and also to remain within the system and also to remain within the system came via the parents this would have a favourable outcome on drop-out rates and other such attributes such as attendance and attainment for a school cannot work alone in this aim. Ballymun Comprehensive has already the "BITE" initiative in progress. This is

the Ballymun Initiative for Third Level Education which has been previously discussed. Its programmes begins late primary school years and is carried thorough to 6th year of second and third level. It involves giving financial assistance for bank-loans schemes, scholarships and summer programmes to awaken the students to colleges and opportunities. More importantly it involves meetings with parents of students chosen to the part of the programme and gives major financial assistance at third level. Students also benefit by extra tuition and supervised after school study. However this programme tends to concentrate on high achievers and is not a programme to involve all of the parents and all of the students. While it is an aim of BITE to raise awareness and importance of staying in school for certified examinations it needs to be brought home to every parent in Ballymun. Parents also need to be informed on more basic components of education such s the cirriculum nd how it works, even to understanding the school reports for example the grade system.

Parents need also to be shown exactly how important their role is in their child education. The school has the organisational strength and energy to do this, They also must be made ware that there are options for low achievers too, that it is only the easy way out to say "what is the point I won't pass anyway". Young people cannot find there why on their own just as a baby needs its mother/father to help it to do the young students of Ballymun. While the majority of parents began working at the same age or earlier of the average age of the students I teach in the Junior Comprehensive - thirteen of the cycle is not to repeat itself once again change needs to begin now. Ballymun parents however are not alone there are many other working class parents across the country who need to be informed. The title of a book I read when researching my thesis was "Education for Tomorrow" by John Vaizey it would be a most appropriate title for

a video package which the Department of Education could invest in making which could be sent to schools and watched by parents and students together at school meetings.

In short what I have gathered is that parents do not have as active a part as they should but in many cases it is not because of disinterest but because they do not know how to advise or direct their children.

In short what I have gathered is that parents are not contributing as much as they should or could to their childrens education. In many cases schooling decisions are left to the pupils own descretion and it is this freedom which is failing the education system in Ballymun. It however is not that parents are disinterested in education at their children's future but a combination of a) their own education history, (b) worries and pressures of social and economic origin, (c) most of all because they do not know how to.

The approach in which some of the major hazards of education such as low self esteem, low achievement and the environmental factors at work might be debarunchers is though a vital component of any schools and cirrocumuli - The Arts in particular. The visual arts which is what I have studies and used in my own teaching , the arts are of central importance in education at all levels and "are accessible" and welcoming to all pupils, irrespective of class, gender or level of academic achievement? hence a programme which is so indiscriminate is essential is a school such as Ballymun Comprehensive. (9).

A well thought out good quality teaching scheme of art should result in an increase in a pupils capacity to see and think visually thought the involved process or making and studying are and

> ......"education in the visual arts should develop those processes which function through imagery and visualisation, The visual arts help to develop self esteem, self reliance and personal identity through creative achievement. A good visual arts education enables students to create and master their world in order to understand it and to effect it positively" (10).

Much of this was the rationale behind my teaching schemes as had already been discussed but it was also very essential to the students in Ballymun Comprehensive. The validity and nature of this rationale was illustrated in the work we produced during the course of my teaching schemes.

The picture of lifestyle of this Working class community is not a very attractive one. Families that living on low incomes almost 60% of them on social welfare benefits resulting in a low standard of physical environment. Large numbers of the community unemployed causes other problems of alcoholism, drug addiction and delinquency. The young people of this community are culturally deprived, they lack important skills, attitudes and values which are essential to high indeed an average educational attainment. There are a few educational resources at home except their school books and many of the parents do not have the skill to help their children's education progress. The majority of them have never left this country let alone another city indeed they are very apprehensive when meeting other communities and people hence they are often very tense in social situation. Their behaviours, responses, values and attitudes indeed they themselves are as much a sociological as biological creation. They need to

have a good experience at school they need to succeed in something so that they feel they could succeed oat other things that they are in control of their lives. Achieving can change how you view yourself and how you tackle further problems. Both the parents as well as teachers need to encourage and provide such experiences for the student of Ballymun comprehensive and try to overcome the deprivation and deficiencies that theses low income families experience. As Michael Rutter the British Sociologist commented "We have to break these linkages, to see that kids who start in a bad environment don't go on having bad environment and develop a sense of impotency"!. (11).

FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 5

1. M. Haralambos, <u>Sociology</u>, p. 194.

2. Ibid., p. 194.

3. Ibid., p. 194.

4. Ibid., p. 194.

5. Ibid., p. 195.

6. T. Crooks, Overcoming Disadvantage: The Educational Response, D.L.Y.P., p. 69.

7. M.Collins, <u>Modern Irish History</u>, (Dublin: Educational Company, 1985), p. 425.

8. J. Kuper, Social Science Encyclopaedia, p. 111.

9. Arts Working Party, <u>The Arts in Education</u> (Dublin: Curriculum and Examination Board, 1985), p. 4.

10. Ibid., p. 16.

11. This was statement made by Micheal Rutter when interviewed by Maya Pines a contributing editor of Psychology Today magazine. Maya Pies and Michael Rutter "Psychology Today" in Psychology Today , London, 1984

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