SPEEL
Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning

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LIST OF DIAGRAMS, FIGURES and TABLES

GLOSSARY

Adult-led activities: adult decides what the child does;

Area of Focus: each of the 3 main elements of the Framework, each of which is further sub-divided into 3 parts

Articulate: ability to talk with confidence about practice and its underpinning beliefs, values and understandings

Child-initiated activities: child decides what activities to do

Curriculum: everything the child experiences in the setting – planned and unplanned

CGFS: *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*

Definition: descriptor for particular terms used in the research

Development: general pattern in the way that child functions and matures (physical, linguistic; social/emotional areas and cognitive areas)

Developmentally Appropriate: implies curriculum is congruent with child's developmental levels

Dispositions to learning: an approach to learning typified by e.g. curiosity, creativity or independence

EAG: Expert Advisory Group – early years experts in range of child related areas

Early Years (EY): The Foundation Stage – for children aged between 3 and 5+ years

EPEY Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years Project

Framework: overall synthesis of 129 Key Statements representing the core competences in effective early years pedagogy

Interaction: ways in which practitioners communicate (verbal and non-verbal) to adults and children

Teaching: ranging from specific transmission of knowledge to change behaviour or supporting children's learning, sometimes through play

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

Key Statements: list of non-hierarchical statements of competence [in effective early years pedagogy) under 3 headings (Areas of focus) within Practice, Principles and Professional Dimensions

Layer 1 – 3: division within SPEEL project involving examining proportion of settings within each of three terms

Learning environment: includes the physical environment of the setting and the nature of the learning atmosphere within the setting – informed by values, beliefs and understanding of the practitioner

Manager/headteachers: managers of playgroups or nursery units, heads of centres,headteachers of schools

Pedagogy: based in practice, includes management and organisational factors and demands specific set of knowledge, skills, techniques and values which inform the education and care of learners. See definition in Section 1

Practice: all that the pedagogue does within the teaching and learning context. See definition in Section 1

Practitioners: adults who work with children in the settings

Principles:	underpin/ inform practice and are based upon informed knowledge and theories of early childhood education. See definition in Section 1
RD:	reflective dialogue
Reflective Dialogue:	focused interview guided by researcher based on practitioner's selection and control of video episodes taken in settings. See more comprehensive definition of RD method in Appendix Ci
SEN:	Special Educational Needs
Settings:	school reception class or unit; nursery class or school; pre-school playgroup, day nursery or childminder; combined centre
Skills:	small units of behaviour that are easily observed
SPEEL	Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning

SECTION 1

Introduction

SECTION ONE
Introduction

This section introduces the final report for the Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning (SPEEL) Project. It gives some basic factual information about how the research has been conceptualised by those involved. It explores the language of the project and contains descriptors of the key terms used. The contribution of the various participants is outlined. Finally it outlines the aims, objectives and achievements of the research and indicates where adaptations were necessarily made to meet the expectations of settings and enable the research to be completed within the defined timescale.

1.1   This ethnographic study began on the 1st November 2000 and was completed on the 31st October 2001. The research has sought to identify the components of effective pedagogy which are embedded within the practices and thinking of those adults who work with 3- to 5-year-old children within the context of the new Foundation Stage (FS). The research was commissioned by the then DfEE, which became DfES in the course of the research. Both DfEE and DfES are used in the report, since some of the early research 'instruments' of necessity incorporated the DfEE logo.

Objectives and outcomes of the research
1.2   The research has at its root the view that children and families, whatever the setting, have the same entitlement to teaching by effective practitioners. Our objectives for the research were to:

> i.   identify the embedded characteristics of effective pedagogy in the early years through an extensive literature review covering national and international sources;
>
> ii.   validate these characteristics through extensive analysis and interrogation by identified effective practitioners and by an Expert Advisory Group;
>
> iii.   link these with the contents of the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (CGFS)/Early Learning Goals (ELGs);
>
> iv.   gather information on effective practitioners' understanding within five specifically defined aspects, those we have termed 'DfES 5 areas', i) outdoor learning; ii) special / individuals needs, including gender/equal opportunities; iii) care and education links; iv) thinking skills development; and v) Information and Communications Technology (ICT).
>
> v.   develop a working Framework of characteristics of effective pedagogy;
>
> vi.   refine this Framework by working with practitioners from 27 case study effective settings to develop and extend it;
>
> vii.   further refine the Framework by a) observing effective practice and reflecting on this with practitioners and b) scrutiny of the Expert Advisory Group;
>
> viii.   develop a final Framework of Effective Pedagogy for use alongside the CGFS in identifying performance indicators for early years practitioners.

1.3   At the point of the original proposal (September 2000), it was felt that we could best accomplish these objectives by concentrating on the quality of interactions between adults and children in settings identified as already engaged in 'effective' practices. As the research progressed – and in the context of the parallel 'Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years'

(EPEY/EPPE) project's main concentration on child factors – the SPEEL research focus increasingly evolved as a concentration on identifiable components of pedagogy and the adult role. Video evidence of practitioners' roles has given clear insights into their understanding and ability to:

- reflect upon that practice;
- interrogate their own principles underpinning practice;
- reflect upon their own qualities, knowledge and thinking and how these impact upon practice;
- articulate their own understanding of effective pedagogy.

1.4   Whilst we acknowledge that the practitioner's role can in no way be isolated from the effects upon children's learning, our focus has been on the attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding of the practitioners themselves in their work with children, team members and families, rather than upon child outcomes (a point to which we return later).   A main reason for this decision arose because of this and other research in which members of the SPEEL team have been involved (e.g. Moyles and Suschitsky 1997a and b; Moyles and Adams 2001) which has shown the difficulty experienced by practitioners in focusing upon their own impact upon children's learning as opposed to making practical provision, e.g. laying out materials from which children can make choices.

1.5   Evidence from the SPEEL research supports this focus shift in at least two ways: i) practitioners found it far easier to talk directly about practice involving provision for children – hence this was the first Area of Focus developed within the Framework; and ii) transcriptions of Reflective Dialogues undertaken with practitioners (the aim of which was to engage practitioners directly in observing themselves and identifying the underpinnings to their practice), offer evidence of many practitioners struggling to explain the rationale behind their actions and reactions. Most practitioners in looking at the video immediately identified features of a child's behaviour rather than their own, reactions to themselves being often at a very personal level rather than the level of identifying, for example, professional knowledge or skills. Asked how she knew that the practice was effective, one early years teacher thought long and hard and then responded *'How do we know? We just know – we just do'.* So it would seem that a focus on the teacher role is now ripe for investigation.

1.6   We conjecture later – with evidence from the literature review – that this inability to articulate may put a significant constraint upon effective pedagogical practices. Just as we now expect children to be engaged in the metacognitive process exemplified in Bruner's work, this must apply equally to the practitioners if they are to further hone and develop their professional skills:

> Modern pedagogy is moving increasingly to the view that the child should be aware of her own thought processes, and that it is crucial for the pedagogical theorist and teacher alike to help her to become more meta-cognitive, to be aware of how she goes about learning and thinking as she is about the subject matter she is studying. (Bruner 1996: 64)

1.7   Given the focus on pedagogy, we found it necessary to generate a definition (or descriptor) of pedagogy which has emerged from both the literature review and the practitioners. This was later refined as a result of scrutiny and comment by all those involved in the research as 'experts' as well as by managers/headteachers in settings. The final descriptor is shown in Figure 1.

1.8   The main <u>outcome</u> of the research has been the development of the **Framework for Effective Pedagogy** presented in Section 4 in user-friendly format. The Framework contains 139 **Key Statements** of competence identified through the research as contributing to effective pedagogy in the early years. The Framework contains three **Areas of Focus** – identified as

'Practice', 'Principles' and 'Professional Dimensions' – into which we have classified the Framework data. They contain 43, 35 and 51 Key Statements respectively. Each of the Areas of Focus is sub-divided into three further headings. **Diagram A** shows an overall representation of the Framework with the Areas of Focus and sub-headings. Figures 2-4 show the descriptors for each of the Areas of Focus.

1.9   The research process has been exciting, informative and as exhaustive as possible within the context of 27 early years settings and 12 months of extensive data gathering, analysis and interpretation. The researchers have been impressed by the willingness and openness of the settings and practitioners with whom we have conducted the field work. All the practitioners have welcomed the focus on their role as pedagogues and, whilst a major part of that role (as they have continually emphasised) is the focus upon the individual child and family, it has become clear that practitioners are increasingly taking an interest in their own roles and in developing their own knowledge and understanding:

> *… we really do need documents like this to put the focus back on teaching…*

> *I think this project is a wonderful opportunity to put the jigsaw pieces [of curriculum, children's learning and the teaching role] back together and look at pedagogy more holistically.*

That this is happening from a variety of perspectives and from a basis of highly differentiated experiences has been very evident within the research. Many of these issues emerge at different points in this Report.

Diagram A   The SPEEL Wheel, explaining the contents of the Framework of Effective Pedagogy
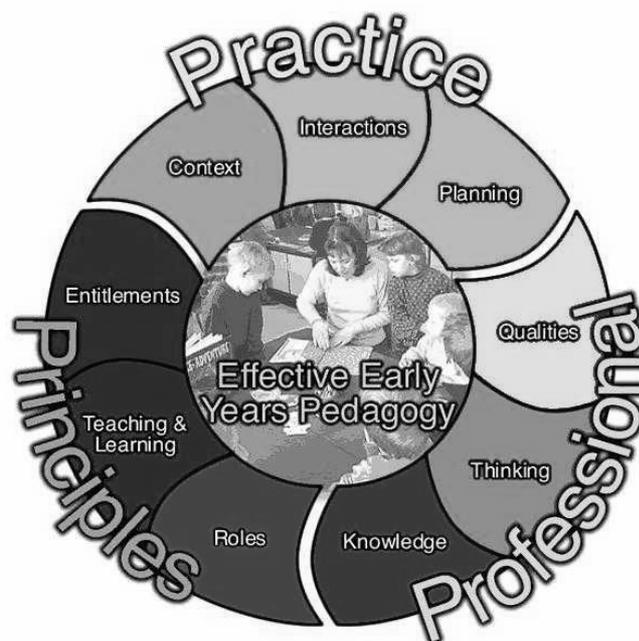
Figure 1 – Key Term Descriptor for Pedagogy

PEDAGOGY is both the behaviour of teaching and being able to talk about and reflect on teaching. Pedagogy encompasses both what practitioners actually DO and THINK and the principles, theories, perceptions and challenges that inform and shape it. It connects the relatively self-contained act of teaching and being an early years educator, with personal, cultural and community values (including care), curriculum structures and external influences. Pedagogy in the early years operates from a shared frame of reference (a mutual learning encounter) between the practitioner , the young child and his/her family.

Figure 2 – Key Term Descriptor for Area of Focus: PRACTICE

PRACTICE is all that the pedagogue does within the teaching and learning context on a daily, weekly and longer-term basis to promote effectiveness. Practice includes planning, evaluating and assessing children's play and other learning experiences both indoors and outdoors. Practice is the application of practitioners' qualities, knowledge, thinking and underpinning principles and involves making both conscious and intuitive judgements. Practice is flexible, based on establishing and maintaining effective relationships through anticipating, observing, interpreting and evaluating the actions and behaviours of children and other adults. Practice represents the fluent performance of a complex and dynamic interaction, involving communication with and between children and adults, including parents.

Figure 3 – Key Term Descriptor for Area of Focus: PRINCIPLES

PRINCIPLES underpin practice and are based upon informed knowledge and theories of early childhood development, education and care, including management and organisational factors. Principles are at the heart of practitioners' values and beliefs. They are the ideological base for practitioners' thoughts and actions and are reflected in their visions, aims and goals. Practitioners who are reflective and on-going learners, recognise that principles are capable of adaptation and change in the light of further evidence.

Figure 4 – Key Term Descriptor for Area of Focus: PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS

PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS: Effective early years practitioners are those who possess particular professional qualities, knowledge and thinking which they bring to their role. Professional qualities are attributes and skills both brought to, and developed within, the role of the effective early years pedagogue and are underpinned by a sense of self-efficacy. Professional knowledge – intuitive and explicit – is that understanding which practitioners have and employ to develop a wide range of learning experiences for young children (including those within the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*). Professional thinking includes the ability to reflect on practice and to make informed decisions through well-conceived examination and analysis of pedagogy. It involves the thinking practitioner in articulating and evaluating practice and a continuous striving to improve. Professionals have a positive disposition to learn and are capable of extending themselves professionally.

1.10   The research has benefited in a variety of ways by the inclusion of a wide range of people:

- The practitioners themselves (detailed information is contained in Section 2) who come from a variety of settings and have varied qualifications, as do the Managers and Headteachers also involved in the research.

- The parents who were involved as respondents to questionnaires and who gave permission for their children to be part of the videos made of practitioners' work and expressed (unrecorded) interest in the research.

- The Expert Advisory Group (EAG), consisting of 10 early years experts, has included those with expertise in developmental psychology, child health, information and communications technology, language and communication, mathematics, assessment, management, special educational needs, equal opportunities, teamwork and early years policy. The backgrounds of these 10 people are also varied, with many overlapping roles (See Table 1a). The EAG and researchers have held four full-day meetings and, in addition, had direct communication via e-mail, telephone, correspondence and face-to-face contact with individuals has occurred on several other occasions. They have offered expert suggestions for literature, input their ideas into the Framework, questioned and challenged meanings, and advised on descriptors.

Table 1a – Background of EAG

Academics	6
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships	4
Local Authority Inspector/Advisor	3
Early Years Consultant	3
Early Years Manager/governor	3
Nursery Nurse Trainer	2
Child Health Trainer	1

- The DfES Steering Group, similarly with a range of backgrounds and differential knowledge of research, policy, practice and personnel in the early years.

We are grateful to all these people for giving their time and expertise to the complex task of identifying effective early years pedagogy. Together with the three researchers (two with an early years teaching and research background, including a High/Scope trainer, and one with Montessori training and policy development experience), all those groups and individuals have supported the evolving Framework particularly in ensuring, amongst other things, its validity and reliability.

1.11   A major aim within the research has been the attempt to identify '**effectiveness**' and/or 'quality' practice from an 'inclusionary paradigm' (Moss and Pence 1994: 173) rather than from the basis of teacher-input/pupil-output measures. Our (apparent) rejection within the SPEEL research of the latter stems from the known difficulties in adequately assessing young children's learning and development between the ages of 3-5 years (see, e.g. Drummond 1993; Pascal and Bertram 1997; Webster-Stratton 1999) and the lack of suitable measures of adult effects upon young children's attitudes and experiences.

Moss and Pence (and later Dahlberg, Moss and Pence 1999) consider that all those with a stake in early years education should work together to establish a common core of values and objectives. Practitioners and managers have confirmed that effectiveness, to them, is a quality-related issue, very much prone to the intentions one has for teaching and learning. As such the

process is dynamic and difficult to locate in only one paradigm. This we feel is epitomised in the Framework. Its components are drawn from the early years community, have been validated by early years practitioners and experts and will later be evaluated by all those involved in considering effective pedagogy. The following are examples of exploring effective practitioner issues from managers'/headteachers' interviews in response to the question 'What are you looking for in terms of effective practitioners?'.

> *I think one of the key things that we would be looking for is somebody who … likes children, loves children, respects children but also [has] a knowledge about children and about how children learn and develop. I suppose alongside that for me would be … I mean nobody is going to have all those answers, but a willingness to learn.*
> (Nursery Manager)

> *If I was appointing a practitioner, whoever it was, whether it was a teacher, a nursery nurse, support assistant, I would be looking for enthusiasm about children, new children, and the way children learn. A commitment and an understanding about how children learn as well, what they've got to offer those children, and ... how they express themselves when they set out to work in a partnership with the children.*
> (Headteacher)

> *When…we're looking to appoint, we look at a wide range of understandings. We are, are looking for people who have a good knowledge of how children learn, the process by which children learn. And so, and are clear about the learning process, using very much the ideas of people like Vygotsky and Bruner, and to inform them, and also Froëbel …. So those sorts of ideas about how children learn, so that's one thing we're looking for. We're looking for people that have an understanding about the adult's role within that process, so they, they see learning and development as something that's co-constructive, and something that happens in a social context. So, people that are aware not only of the process the child is going through, but how they and other children and other adults will relate and inter-relate with that process. We're also interested in…people's understanding of the needs and interests of children at different ages and stages of development. So do people have an idea about say how a 6-month-old is going to explore water and its properties and how a five-year-old is going to explore water and its properties? And therefore, what they as adults need to be doing in order to support that learning. So, the learning process, understanding of child development as it relates to children's needs ...* (Early Excellence Centre Headteacher)

> *We are looking for people who can be flexible … people who are prepared to think about their job. That is, people who can actually transfer skills from their training to their practice, so that they don't compartmentalise …* (Independent Nursery Manager)

1.12   It is suggested in the literature (see Section 6) that effective pedagogy is:

- practice-based, demanding specific skills and techniques which involve, for example, collaboration and the fostering of partnerships between practitioners, children and the wider community (Siraj-Blatchford 1999; Nurse and Headington 1999).

- dependent on pedagogical perception, a complex cognitive and affective process, rooted in reflective practice (Mailhos 1999).

- informed by articulated, surfaced philosophy and based on related principles (Moyles and Adams 2001).

1.13   The SPEEL research within its methodology has utilised all three aspects. Just as 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' so effectiveness is related to what knowledgeable observers deem to be 'effective'. The research has involved a wide representation of those with a stake in early years education in establishing a common core of values and objectives in relation to effective pedagogy. Practitioners reflected upon the effectiveness of their own practice: the EAG examined video footage against the evolving Framework and it became clear that it was possible to identify effective and less effective practices through such examination.

1.14   In this way we have introduced rigour into what may be considered as a subjective description of effectiveness. For, as Woodhead (1996) suggests, although issues such as quality and effectiveness are subjective, they are not arbitrary provided that indicators (of the kind identified in the Framework) are available. Siraj-Blatchford and Wong (1999: 14) suggest that terms such as quality and effectiveness are at the same time both *objective* in terms of characteristics and *subjective* in terms of views'.

1.15   Examination of the Framework against videos of practice suggested that effectiveness operates along a continuum from what might be conceived of as generally 'good' practice to that which is 'excellent'. Given that the personalities of all practitioners will vary – and also their levels of training are very diverse – this is to be expected (it must also be true of teachers across all phases).   Placing the Key Statements into hierarchies would not solve this challenge as it seems that practitioners achieve teaching/learning relationships with children which vary but are equally effective.

1.16   Our final descriptor for 'effectiveness' is shown in Figure 5. This, together with the descriptor for pedagogy shown in Figure 1, should be used alongside the Framework by practitioners as the basis for analysing and identifying effective pedagogy.

Figure 5 – Key Term Descriptor for Effectiveness in relation to early years pedagogy

> **EFFECTIVENESS** relates to identifiable features of pedagogy which indicate quality teaching and learning and can be identified by knowledgeable observers. Effective early years practitioners are those who both possess and apply to their practices specific values, qualities, knowledge and thinking which ensure they have a positive effect on children's learning and development. Effective pedagogy not only produces outcome results in relation to input, but also represents a common core of values and objectives to which all those involved can subscribe (and aspire). Effectiveness is, therefore, capable of being observed against a well-defined and inclusive framework and can be measured against agreed criteria and competences.

SECTION 2

Research Design and Methodology

SECTION TWO
Research design and methodology

The research design has comprised four strands: i) fieldwork in a sample of 27 geographically spread FS settings specifically identified as having effective pedagogical practices; ii) a literature review; iii) an exhaustive, constant comparison methodology to establish levels of internal consistency (see Cohen *et al* 2000: 115-117); iv) interrogation and interpretation of emerging findings by researchers and EAG members. The on-going literature review acted as a supporting structure to the emerging Framework as well as validating content. The research methods used have included: interviews; video stimulated reflective dialogues; a questionnaire survey of parents; documentary analysis; and a web-based validation. This section describes how the research was conducted and gives details of the regions, settings and practitioners who were involved.

Types of providers and sample of settings

2.1   It was decided from the outset that if we were to achieve a Framework based on currently identified effective pedagogy, then only settings with effective practices would be included in the sample. This proved interesting as it became clear to the researchers in filming and observing practice within the settings (and to the EAG who saw some video of practice) that effectiveness covers a range of different practices and levels of practice. This led to extensive discussions about the outcome Framework and its use in identifying effective pedagogy and comprising a set of core competences.

2.2   A three-layered approach has been used with 9 settings involved within each layer. The literature review and responses from the EAG contributed throughout the three layers. The overall design and conduct of the research is shown diagrammatically in Figure 6.

2.3   A comprehensive list of potential types of providers was formulated by the research team (see Table 2a) so that the final selection of settings would include the widest variety of settings and practitioners as possible within the 27 case studies.

Table 2a – Potential types of providers

Code used	Setting type	Description
MSRC	School Reception Class	Reception class within local authority maintained infant or primary school
MSNC	School Nursery Class or Unit	Nursery class or unit within local authority maintained infant or primary school
MNS	Nursery School	Local authority maintained 'stand alone', sessional nursery school
MECC	Combined Centre	Local authority maintained/charity integrated/combined early childhood or family centre
NMRC	Independent Reception Class	Reception class within independent, fee-paying school
NMNC	Independent Nursery Class	Nursery class or unit within independent, fee-paying school
NMNS	Independent Nursery School	Independent, fee-paying, 'stand alone', sessional nursery school
DN	Non-maintained Day Nursery	(private day nursery providing education and all day care)
PP	Pre-school Playgroup	Independent, fee-paying/charity sessional group, direct parental involvement often required
CM	Childminder	Provision for education and all day care within childminder's home

2.4   It was initially determined that effective settings would be identified mainly through OfSTED inspection reports but it proved difficult to track down a range of settings from the web-

based reports which gave a sufficiently broad geographical range and covered the different types of provision.

Figure 6: Diagrammatic representation of the research design and conduct

27 settings

Layer One

Literature Review
Documentation
Interviews (Ps)
Interviews (M/HTs)
Data reduction
1 x EAG Meeting

9 SETTINGS
6 Nursery Schools
2 Playgroups
1 Maintained School

LAYER ONE

Timing:
Autumn Term 2000

Layer Two

Literature Review
Documentation
Interviews (M/HTs)
RDs (Ps)
Observation/Video
Parent Questionnaire
1 x EAG Meeting

9 SETTINGS
3 Maintained Schools
2 Nursery Schools
1 Combined Centre
1 Childminder
1 Playgroup
1 Day Nursery

LAYER TWO

Timing:
Spring Term 2001

Layer Three

Literature Review
Documentation
Interviews (M/HTs)
RDs (Ps)
Observation/Video
Web-based validation
2 x EAG Meetings

9 SETTINGS
3 Nursery Schools
2 Maintained Schools
1 Independent School N.
1 Combined Centre
1 Playgroup
1 Day Nursery

LAYER THREE

Timing:
Summer Term 2001

Literature Review

Framework for Effective Pedagogy

Key

P = Parents
M/HT = Managers /
Head-teachers

2.5   As effectiveness has the potential to differ according to the geographical location within England and to the type of setting and its community, it was decided to focus the sampling process

on local authorities (LAs) where personnel were known to the researchers and expressed an interest in their authority and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) being involved. This resulted in a spread of authorities across the north, south, east, west and central England, including two London Boroughs (see Table 2b).

Table 2b – Authorities involved in the SPEEL research

Local Authority	Type
Birmingham	City Council
Devon	County Council
Essex	County Council
Hammersmith and Fulham	London Borough
Kirklees	Metropolitan
Lancashire	County Council
Leicester	City Council
Milton Keynes	City Council
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	City Council
North East Lincolnshire	County Council
Oxfordshire	County Council
Sheffield	City Council
Camden	London Borough
West Sussex	County Council
Worcestershire	County Council

2.6   Each authority member provided a list of up to six Foundation Stage settings which they had identified as having effective pedagogical practices (see Table 2c for selection criteria). It can be seen that OfSTED Reports are rated highly within the selection process. This compilation of settings resulted in 74 being identified from which a sample of 27 (plus 3 reserves) was drawn which included all the main types of providers (see Table 2d).

Table 2c – Analysis of Criteria for Selection of settings by LA personnel

Criterion	Number
Quality of teaching / learning	27
Good / excellent OfSTED inspection report	24
Strong leadership	22
Strong staff	21
Reflective practitioner	14
EEL Project involvement	11
Good Atmosphere, good outdoor facilities	10
Child-initiated /centred, good relationships between staff, good indoor facilities, high level of involvement of parents / carers	9
Good relationships with children, good professional development experiences, recommendation of peers/colleagues	8
Consistent approach to teaching and learning	5
Good level of community involvement, good local reputation, socio-economic mix	4
Good range of experiences, strength in Knowledge and Understanding, links with LEA, Reggio Emilia practices, special education needs	3
Appropriate provision, assessment, Beacon School, good progress from low Baseline, High/Scope practices, how children learn, PSLA Scheme, progress made towards ELGs	2
Creative development, data analysis, DfEE Centre of Excellence, EYDCP programme, focus on gender issues, Greenshoots Project, High School links, Investors in People, involved in previous research, language development	1
'Something Magical'!	+ 1

Table 2d – 74 settings identified for effective practice by LA/Partnership personnel

Code	Setting type	Identified	Selected
MS	School Class and /or Year R / Reception Class	18	6
NS	Nursery School	21	10
IS	Independent School	3	1
DN	Day Nursery	7	3
PP	Pre-School Playgroup	16	4
CM	Childminder	1	1

2.7   These 27 settings were invited by letter and telephone call preceding each of the three layers to join the research. The settings were asked to provide background information on a range of characteristics including type, accommodation, length of session, numbers and qualifications of staff, numbers and ages of children (including those with special educational needs (SEN)) and information on socio-economic backgrounds and ethnicity of families. Over the three Layers of the research only two substitutions were necessary. Table 2e (next page) shows the final sample of 27 settings by type and distribution over the three layers.

2.8   The 'layered' approach to the research meant dividing the 27 settings into 3 groups of 9 and visiting one group of settings during each of the 3 terms covering the academic year 2000-2001. This was intended to enable the evolving Framework to be checked at each stage in its development with the next layer of practitioners and managers. As the data from each layer was very rich, this process became somewhat problematic as significant time was needed to transcribe, analyse and interpret data from each layer in order to present an acceptable draft to the next. To overcome this problem, we used partial elements from Layer 1 data for use in Layer 2 interviews with managers. Similarly, partial elements from Layer 2 data were used in Layer 3 interviews with managers/head-teachers (see Appendix B). Through this process, we were able to cover elements of both Practice and Principles effectively. Feedback on Professional Dimensions (not completed until the end of the Summer Term 2001) was achieved through the SPEEL web-site which was set up specifically to gain further evaluation and validation of the Framework in its final draft format (see Section 5, Table 5a for details).

2.9   Full day visits were made to the 9 settings in Layer 1 to gather basic practitioner-based data for the Framework. During Layers 2 and 3, two-day visits were made to settings during which interviews and Reflective Dialogues (RDs) were conducted. Observational video was taken on Day 1 with RDs undertaken on Day 2. Interviews with managers/head-teachers were conducted at times and in locations convenient to the individuals.

2.10   Basic informational data was gathered before, during and after each visit to give a comprehensive picture of the settings and practitioners involved in the research. Whilst no attempt was made to identify effective practice in relation to particular setting or practitioner characteristics, the resultant dataset could be further used for this purpose. However, as variables within the 27 settings are diverse, generalisations must be considered as tentative.

Table 2e – Data on the sample of 27 effective settings involved in SPEEL research

No:	LAYER	TYPE of Setting	HOURS each day	TYPE of Accom-modation	TEACHING STAFF			QUALS			AGES of children			SEN of children		SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND (%) of parents	% ETHNIC 'Minority' Families
					No.	F-T	P-T	P1	P2	P3	3+	4+	5+	State-mented	Non-st'd		
1.	1	NS	6	PB	9	7	2	QT	QT	N3	104	0	0	0	33	a.15 b.5 c.10 d.10 e.60	60%
2.	1	NS	2.5	PB	10	6	4	QT	QT	NN	40	40	0	2	14	a.5 b.5 c.10 d.60 e.20	8%
3.	1	NS	2.5	PB	17	11	6	QT	QT	NN	90	90	0	2	53	a.10 b.25 c.30 d.25 e.10	5%
4.	1	PP	6	H	3	3	0	OC	DP	OC	10	5	1	1	1	a.0 b.10 c.10 d.40 e.40	33%
5.	1	MS	2.5	PB	25	13	12	QT	QT	QT	52	18	34	7	47	a.0 b.10 c.10 d.40 e.40	97%
6.	1	DN	5.5	PB	2	1	1	NN	OC	NN	7	3	0	0	1	a.90 b.0 c.0 d.0 e.10	10%
7.	1	PP	2-2.5	H	6	2	4	OC	DP	DP	28	18	0	0	1	a.40 b.40 c.20 d.0 e.0	5%
8.	1	NS	2.5	PB	6	3	3	QT	X	X	30	41	10	1	6	a.10 b.10 c.30 d.30 e.20	25%
9.	1	NS	2.5	PC	6	2	4	QT	QT	NN	31	19	0	0	4	a.10 b.25 c.25 d.25 e.15	25%
10.	2	NS	6	PB	7	7	0	QT	QT	QT	28	35	0	0	1	a.5 b.5 c.5 d.35 e.50	60%
11.	2	MS	6.5	PB	2	2	0	QT	QT	OC	0	13	18	0	0	a.20 b.20 c.20 d.20 e.20	0%
12.	2	CM	9	CH	1	1	0	NN	X	X	1	1	0	0	0	a.100	0%
13.	2	CC	6	CB	9	7	2	QT	QT	QT	53	27	0	2	15	a.20 b.40 c.10 d.20 e.10	47%
14.	2	MS	2.5	PB	5	5	0	QT	QT	QT	14	39	23	1	1	a.10 b.10 c.30 d.30 e.20	3%
15.	2	DN	9.75	CB	8	3	5	QT	N3	NN	6	22	0	0	2	a.95 b.5	5%
16.	2	PP	2.5	H	8	1	7	QT	OC	NN	16	31	0	0	1	a.10 b.15 c.12 d.13 e.50	2%
17.	2	NS	2.5	PB	8	5	3	QT	QT	NN	62	73	0	0	7	Data not held	2%
18.	2	MS	2.75-6	PB	8	3	5	QT	QT	QT	26	32	28	0	19	a.10 b.15 c.15 d.40 e.30	6%
19.	3	NS	2.5	PB	4	3	1	QT	QT	QT	21	99	0	2	6	a.45 b.40 c.5 d.5 e.5	3%
20.	3	IS	6	CB	4	2	2	QT	NN	X	6	12	4	0	0	a.80 b.10 c.5 d.0 e.5	27%
21.	3	NS	2.5	PB	6	6	0	QT	QT	QT	52	127	1	2	52	a.20 b.30 c.30 d.10 e.10	2%
22.	3	CC	6	CB	6	5	1	QT	QT	NN	75	55	0	5	25	a.0 b.0 c.25 d.25 e.50	91%
23.	3	PP	2.5	H	8	0	8	OC	NN	X	9	31	0	0	1	a.50 b.40 c.10	8%
24.	3	NS	5.5-6	PB	9	9	0	QT	QT	QT	26	91	0	0	12	a.5 b.15 c.20 d.30 e.30	1%
25.	3	MS	6.5	PB	10	8	2	QT	QT	NN	0	21	64	5	28	Data not held	1%
26.	3	DN	10	CB	7	5	2	NN	QT	NN	0	11	0	0	0	a.100	0%
27.	3	MS	5	PB	5	5	0	QT	QT	QT	0	17	38	0	3	a.25 b.36 c.27 d.6 e.6	0%

Legend for Codes

SETTING TYPE	
MS	School Nursery/Year R/ Reception Class
NS	Nursery School
IS	Independent School
CC	Combined Centre
DN	Day Nursery
PP	Pre-School Playgroup
CM	Childminder

ACCOMMODATION TYPE	
PB	Purpose built
H	Hall
PC	Portacabin
CH	Childminder's home
CB	Converted building

STAFF QUALIFICATION	
QT	Qualified Teacher
NN	Nursery Nurse (NNEB/BTEC)
DP	Pre-School Practice Diploma
N3	NVQ3 (EY Care/Ed)
N2	NVQ2 (EY Care/ Ed)
OC	Other Certs/short courses
X	Not Supplied

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND	
a.	Professional
b.	Skilled (non-manual)
c.	Skilled (manual)
d.	Semi/non-skilled
e.	Unemployed/Student

The sample of practitioners

2.11   In all, 75 adult subjects were involved in the research (managers/head-teachers, heads of centres and practitioners). In the case of the childminder, she was both practitioner and manager. One other manager of a playgroup was also interviewed additionally as a practitioner. The anonymised biographical details of all 75 practitioners involved directly in the research are shown in Table 2f. It can be seen that the majority of these practitioners are female (only 3 males) and all but 4 practitioners categorised themselves as being 'white'. As can be seen other factual information can be extrapolated from Table 2f:

- 58 are early years (EY) trained (77%): 17 are not trained for this age group (23%)
- 47 of the managers and practitioners have qualified teacher status (63%)
- 16 of the managers and practitioners are trained as nursery nurses (21%)
- 9 managers/practitioners were Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA trained) (12%)
- 6 have 30+ years length of service (8%); 22 have between 20-29 years (29%), 19 have 11-19 years (25%), and 16 have 5-10 yrs service (21%)
- 12 have less than 5 years of experience (16%)
- 4 managers/practitioners have higher degrees but interviews revealed that several more (not shown) are working towards these.

The sample appears to contain rather more qualified teachers than the national average for this population. We conjecture that this may be the result of local authority and EYDCP personnel choosing the most effective settings/practitioners for involvement in the research.

Table 2f – Biographical details of practitioners directly involved with the research

Code	Setting Type	Gender	Age	Ethnic Group	Length of Service	Current Post	Role	Qualifications	Early Years Trained
1/1	NS	F	41-45	W	21	3 FT	QT *	BEd	x
1/2	NS	F	41-45	W	19	6 PT	QT	Bed	✓
1/3	NS	F	18-20	O	2	2 FT	NN	NVQ 2/3	✓
2/1	NS	F	50+	W	32	11FT	QT *	Cert Ed	✓
2/2	NS	F	46-50	W	27	4 FT	QT	Cert Ed/Adv Dip	✓
2/3	NS	F	31-35	W	14	3 FT	NN	NNEB/High/Scope	✓
3/1	NS	F	50+	W	23	12 FT	QT *	Cert Ed	✓
3/2	NS	F	46-50	W	20	14 FT	QT	Cert Ed	✓
3/3	NS	F	41-45	W	9	9 FT	NN	NNEB/PP Dip	✓
4/1	PP	F	41-45	W	10	1 PT	PL *	Short courses	x
4/2	PP	F	41-45	W	3	3 PT	PL	PP Dip	✓
4/3	PP	F	50+	W	20	20 PT	PL	None	x
5/1	MS	F	46-50	W	27	17 FT	QT *	BEd/Cert Ed/ECDip	✓
5/2	MS	F	50+	W	31	8 FT	QT	Cert Ed/ EY Dip	x
5/3	MS	F	46-50	W	25	4 FT	QT	Cert Ed/SEN Dip	x
5/4	MS	F	31-35	W	14	11 FT	NN	NNEB	✓
6/1	DN	F	31-35	W	16	1 FT	NN *	NNEB	✓
6/2	DN	F	41-45	W	15	1FT	SW	Soc Services Cert	x
6/3	DN	F	21-25	W	2	1FT	NN	NNEB/NVQ	✓
7/1	PP	F	46-50	W	13	11PT	PL *	PP Foundation	✓
7/2	PP	F	41-45	W	10	2 PT	PL	PP Dip	✓
7/3	PP	F	31-35	W	7	2 PT	PL	PP Dip	✓
8/1	NS	F	46-50	W	23	4 FT	QT *	Cert Ed	x
9/1	NS	F	50+	W	28	3 FT	QT *	Cert Ed/Dip	✓
9/2	NS	F	31-35	W	7	5 FT	QT	BEd	✓
9/3	NS	F	21-25	O	6	4 FT	NN	NNEB	✓
10/1	NS	F	35-40	W	3	3 FT	QT *	PGCE	x
10/2	NS	F	31-35	W	14	3	QT	BEd	✓

Code	Setting Type	Gender	Age	Ethnic Group	Length of Service	Current Post	Role	Qualifications	Early Years Trained
10/3	NS	F	46-50	W	24	12	QT	Cert Ed	✓
11/1	MS	F	50+	W	30	4 FT	QT *	Cert Ed	x
11/2	MS	F	26-30	W	4	4 FT	QT	PGCE	✓
11/3	MS	M	41-45	W	2	1 FT	TA	NN Qualification	x
12/1	CM	F	31-35	W	7	3 FT	CM *	NNEB/CM accred	✓
12/1	CC	F	41-45	W	22	2 FT	QT *	Bed/Dip/MA/D32-3	✓
12/2	CC	M	36-40	O	7	7 FT	QT	PGCE/MEd	✓
12/3	CC	F	31-35	W	8	1 FT	QT	PGCE/MA	x
13/1	MS	F	41-45	W	21	21 FT	QT *	Cert Ed	✓
12/2	MS	F	41-45	W	22	3 PT	QT	Cert Ed/BEd	✓
12/3	MS	F	41-45	W	20	3 PT	QT	PGCE	✓
13/1	DN	F	50+	W	12	8 FT	QT *	BEd/BA/PGCE/MEd	✓
13/2	DN	F	21-25	W	1	1 FT	NN	NVQ3	✓
13/3	DN	F	21-25	W	3	3 FT	NN	NNEB	✓
14/1	PP	F	31-35	W	9	5 FT	QT *	Cert Ed/NN Dip	✓
14/2	PP	F	36-40	W	8	8 FT	PL	PP Dip	✓
14/3	PP	F	41-45	W	4	1 PT	NN	NN Dip	✓
15/1	NS	F	46-50	W	28	6 Ft	QT *	Cert Ed	✓
15/2	NS	F	36-40	W	15	15 FT	QT	BEd/MEd	✓
15/3	NS	F	41-45	W	23	23 FT	NN	NNEB	✓
16/1	MS	M	41-45	W	20	5 FT	QT *	BEd	x
16/2	MS	F	31-35	W	11	4 FT	QT	BEd	✓
16/3	MS	F	26-30	W	3	2 FT	QT	BEd/BA/MEd/Ma	✓
17/1	NS	F	46-50	W	27	6 FT	QT *	Cert Ed/BSc	✓
17/2	NS	F	50+	W	28	5 FT	QT	Cert Ed	✓
17/3	NS	F	31-35	W	12	2 FT	QT	BEd	✓
18/1	IS	F	50+	W	7	7 FT	QT *	Cert Ed	x
18/2	IS	F	50+	W	10	10 FT	NN	NNEB	✓
19/1	NS	F	50+	W	17	6 FT	QT	Cert Ed/BEd/Dip	✓
19/2	NS	F	41-45	W	24	3 FT	QT	Cert Ed	✓
20/1	CC	F	50+	W	34	7 FT	QT *	Cert Ed/PP Dip	✓
20/2	CC	F	31-35	W	6	6 FT	QT	Cert Ed	✓
20/3	CC	F	21-25	O	4	2 FT	NN	NVQ 2/3	✓
21/1	PP	F	46-50	W	12	12 PT	PL *	PP Dip	✓
21/2	PP	F	31-35	W	3	1 PT	PL	NNEB/Mont Dip	✓
22/1	NS	F	50+	W	31	4 FT	QT *	Cert Ed/Dip	✓
22/2	NS	F	36-40	W	5	5 FT	QT	PGCE	✓
22/3	NS	F	31-35	W	12	2 FT	QT	BEd	x
23/1	MS	F	50+	W	30	11 FT	QT *	MA	✓
24/1	MS	F	36-40	W	16	2 FT	QT	BEd	✓
25/1	MS	F	41-45	W	8	3 FT	NN	BTEC	✓
26/1	DN	F	31-35	W	16	11 FT	NN *	NNEB/D32/3	✓
26/2	DN	F	26-30	W	8	1 FT	QT	BEd/NNEB	✓
26/3	DN	F	31-35	W	6	6 FT	NN	NVQ 2/3	✓
27/1	MS	F	41-45	W	24	13 FT	QT *	BEd/BA/MA/MEd	x
27/2	MS	F	41-45	W	21	10 FT	QT	Cert Ed	x
27/3	MS	F	26-30	W	6	6 FT	QT	PGCE	x

Code – Practitioner Code   Setting Type – MS School Nursery/Year R   Role – QT   Qualified Teacher
                                                       NS Nursery School   NN   Nursery Nurse
                                                       IS Independent School   PL   Play Leader
✓ = early years trained .   CC Combined Centre   CM   Childminder
x = not early years trained   DN Day Nursery   TA   Teaching Assistant
                                                       PP Pre-School Playgroup   SW   Social Worker
                                                       CM Childminder   *   Setting Manager/Headteacher
Ethnic Group – W White
                    O Other

The sample of children and families

2.12   Managers/head-teachers gave information about the socio-economic background of families of the Foundation Stage children in the setting. A five-point structure based on the

occupation of the main householder was used, constructed from an alignment of three classifications. Table 2g shows the socio-economic background as a percentage across the three layers in accordance with this classification. (N.B. data were not held for two of the settings.)

Table 2g – Socio-economic background of children in settings across the three layers as a percentage of the total

	Layer 1 (9 of 9 settings)	Layer 2 (8 of 9 settings)	Layer 3 (8 of 9 settings)	Average over 3 Layers
Professional	20%	34%	41%	32%
Skilled (non-manual)	14%	12%	21%	16%
Skilled (manual)	16%	12%	15%	14%
Semi/non-skilled	26%	20%	8%	18%
Unemployed/Student	24%	22%	15%	20%

2.13   Managers/head-teachers indicated the proportion of Foundation Stage children in attendance whose parents were described as having minority ethnic backgrounds. Classification of ethnic minority was based on the annual Schools' Census (Form 7) for January 1999. Table 2h shows settings grouped according to the percentage of minority ethnic children in attendance across the three layers. The percentage shown is of children/families described as 'other than White UK Heritage, White European or White Other'. In all three layers settings involved in the fieldwork varied according to the number of minority ethnic children. There appeared to be a reasonable spread for the purposes of this research. Overall, just over half of the settings had between 1% and 10% minority children, four settings had no minority ethnic children, four settings had between 11% and 50% and four settings had over 50% minority ethnic children. Of the latter, two settings had over 90% minority ethnic children.

Table 2h – The percentage of ethnic minority children in settings across the three layers

% Minority Ethnic Children	Number of Settings			Total over 3 Layers
	Layer 1	Layer 2	Layer 3	
0%	-	2	2	4
1%-10%	5	5	5	15
11%-20%	-	-	-	
21%-30%	1	-	1	
31%-40%	1	1	-	4
41%-50%	-	-	-	
51%-60%	1	1	-	
61%-70%	-	-	-	
71%-80%	-	-	-	
81%-90%	-	-	-	4
91%-100%	1		1	

Accommodation in which settings were housed

2.14   The type of accommodation was noted as a characteristic of the settings and highlighted in relation to effective pedagogy by some of the practitioners (see Table 2i). Three out of the four sample playgroups, for example, needed to set up and dismantle the teaching and learning

environment on a daily basis, which they noted had a significant effect on the type of equipment which they were able to set up, e.g. computers and other ICT equipment and the pedagogy surrounding them. Similarly, converted buildings were also noted as having an effect on pedagogy.

Table 2i – Type of accommodation by setting

	Purpose built	Hall	Temporary structure e.g. Portacabin	Childminder's home	Converted building
School Nursery/Year R	6				
Nursery School	9		1		
Independent School					1
Combined Centre					2
Day Nursery	1				2
Pre-school Playgroup		4			
Childminder				1	

2.15   In the original proposal, we had intended to video a number of target children who had been identified by practitioners as covering a range of capabilities and needs within the setting. These children would be selected from the records kept by the settings, the intention being to monitor how individual needs are handled by practitioners on a daily basis and how effective practitioners' monitor and record individuals' progress. It was felt that it may then have been possible to observe the practitioner in action with these children and develop a clearer perception of what constituted effective intervention. We were ultimately unable to take this approach because it was quickly recognised that:

- longer duration visits would have been needed for appropriate tracking of individual children and the conduct of video stimulated reflective dialogues with practitioners;

- in sessional contexts, individual children actually being present in the setting on the days of the visits was going to be hard to predict and impossible to control;

- the sensitive nature of this type of information meant that we would need the full co-operation of parents, and this was likely to extend the time-scale for each visit. Clearly this was not possible in a project of this short duration.

2.16   It also became apparent, through the earlier research in both Layers 1 and 2, and the collection of documentation that, whilst in some settings extensive individual records were kept, in others record-keeping was very minimal. Early video observation also revealed that, although practitioners were able orally to identify children with specific needs, in the name of 'treating all children the same' little by way of differentiated practice appeared to occur in most settings. Records tended to be summative rather than formative and few settings appeared to use their records for overtly planning progressive experiences to meet individual children's identified needs. (We would venture that this warrants further investigation as there may be less overt practices being pursued which were not evident in our visits.)

Research Methods
Interviews: Managers/Head-teachers and Practitioners

2.17   Audio-taped interviews were conducted with all 27 settings' managers/head-teachers which ranged in duration from 1-hour to well over 2-hours. (The Layer 1 Interview Schedules are shown in Appendix A and the Layers 2 and 3 in Appendix B). This has resulted in some 63.5 hours of transcribed interviews. In at least a quarter of the settings, managers/head-teachers sought further opportunities to give information and to share thoughts with the visiting researcher.

2.18   In Layer 1, two practitioners were interviewed in each of the settings (n=18) to establish their perceptions of effective pedagogy (see Appendix A). These audio-taped interviews similarly lasted between 1- and 2-hours and some 28 hours were transcribed and analysed.

2.19   All interviews from Layer 1 resulted in substantial information being extrapolated on all interviewees' perceptions of effective early years pedagogy, which formed the basis of the initial draft Framework.

Reflective Dialogues and Video Observation

2.20   Reflective Dialogues were used in both Layer 2 and Layer 3 settings (the original proposal suggested that RDs would only occur in Layer 3). This change was made to facilitate deeper exploration of effectiveness issues with practitioners earlier in the research as it was recognised from Layer 1 interviews that many practitioners were finding it extremely difficult to articulate in standard, semi-structured interview situations, their knowledge and understanding of effective practice. It was decided that by having video of their own practice immediately to hand, and as a focus of 'friendly' dialogue, practitioners would be encouraged to explore their practice more freely and deeply, and from different perspectives (see conceptual paper in Appendix C(i)). Practitioners were given prior information about the purposes and nature of the RD process via a personal letter (see Appendix C(ii)).

2.21   On Day 1 of both Layers 2 and 3 visits, practitioners decided upon 20 minutes or thereabout of effective practice which they would like the researcher to video. This produced around 16 hours of video observation data across the two Layers. Digital cameras were used by two of the three researchers and a small camcorder was used by the third. In order to reduce observer bias, the camera was focused on the practitioner and filming moved to children only where the practitioner was in direct interaction with the children (see Prosser 1999). The practitioner then took the video away for 'private' viewing alongside a pre-prepared paper identifying the types of questions s/he might wish to think about regarding their practice during viewing (see Appendix C(iii)). Researchers were also able to view the video independently. On the second day of the visit, time was set aside for the research-partners (practitioner and researcher) to view the video together, share their perceptions of effective practice and challenge the observed practice. In Layer 3, particular prompts were added in relation to the 'DfES 5 areas' (see Section 1) as these were otherwise rarely seen and, therefore, rarely discussed.

2.22   Because the cameras were small and unobtrusive, filming could be undertaken discretely and few children or practitioners showed overt awareness of the camera. The potential use of radio microphones was limited in a wide number of settings because of the physical circumstances under which they operate. The use of microphones would also have meant time spent acclimatising both children and practitioners to the equipment at the expense of other forms of data collection considered more beneficial to the development of the Framework. For this reason, whilst still photographs can be extracted from the video for use in exemplifying the Framework (see Section 4), the videos lack sufficient aural clarity to be used more widely.

2.23   Time in many settings was limited for video to be taken because of sessional issues, and so the opportunity for longer filming during field-work became somewhat curtailed. Particular features of everyday practice were of such lengthy duration that opportunity for extensive filming was very limited. As an example, in one playgroup visited, the session lasted 2.5 hours in total.

There was a 'settling down' period at the start of the session in which parents and children were welcomed and practitioners chatted with parents about a variety of current issues that took most of the first half-hour. Snack-time occupied at least a further half-hour in the middle of the session and story time often took yet another significant period of time towards the end of the session. This 'bitty' nature of sessions meant that filming often occurred in snatched moments when the practitioner indicated that s/he was going to undertake activities with the children.

2.24   Additionally, it was felt that, as practitioners were to watch the video in their own time over the course of one evening, it was too much to expect that they would watch a whole hour of video. In fact, as many practitioners watched the video several times to highlight aspects of their practice for discussion with the research-partner the following day, an hour's video could have meant several hours being spent on that activity which could have alienated practitioners from the RD process. In all, approximately 16 hours of video became available for analysis.

Parent Questionnaire

2.25   An original intention was to interview parents during Layer 3 data collection to gauge their views on the final draft Framework. However, an interesting set of findings from Layer 1 data analysis revealed a majority of practitioners felt very strongly about their role in supporting families and in working in partnership with parents. We felt the need to establish earlier than planned whether parents substantiated this perception so that relevant inclusions were made to early drafts of the Framework. It was decided that the views of parents should be gathered through a questionnaire to be distributed by all Layer 2 settings to FS parents. It was still hoped to interview at least a small number of parents from Layer 3 settings, but the manager/headteacher interviews in Layer 3 proved very lengthy given that they had so many informative (and positive) things to share regarding the draft Framework and time became an inhibitive factor.

2.26   A questionnaire was designed to be distributed to all Foundation Stage parents in the nine Layer 2 settings (n=527 parents) – see Appendix E. It was distributed to settings two weeks prior to visits on estimated numbers of (FS) parents provided by managers/head-teachers. 213 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 41%. This is an acceptable level in educational research (Oppenheim 1992). Of these, 15 responses were from fathers and 198 from mothers. There was known 'wastage' in terms of distribution by settings, mainly related to misunderstanding by some settings that all parents – rather than FS-only parents – were to be surveyed and, therefore, only around 80% of the original 527 questionnaires were distributed. A recalculated response rate (based on a distribution of c.400) would be nearer 53.5% returns.

2.27   Questions were designed to include 18 statements which would confirm, or otherwise, the emerging views of practitioners and managers/head-teachers from Layer 1 data analysis of the importance of close links and relationships with parents for effective pedagogy to be taking place, with 3 further open-ended questions (see Section 3).

Documentary Analysis

2.28   A range of documents was collected from settings (see Table 2j) with the intention of identifying other aspects of practice that may not be apparent within interviews and reflective dialogues. This proved to be so, in that the main Areas of Focus under the heading Principles, were manifest in the documentation, which often described the ethos of the setting and the rationale for its practices, both of which informed the 'Principles'. For example, aims for practitioners often included:

- To provide a safe environment in which each child can learn, explore and develop;
- To encourage independence and plan wide range of educational play activities;
- To arouse each child's curiosity so they want to learn more … to value each individual child;

- To develop a two-way partnership that benefits parent, child and teacher.

Other principles evident in the documentation included:

- Build on what children already know and can do;
- Great emphasis placed upon learning through play;
- Teaching approach can then be designed for the child being aware of each child's individual needs, interests and preferred learning styles;
- Curriculum being child-centred encouraging self-respect and a positive self-image;
- Promotes the necessary skills to enable individuals to play an effective part in building more just and peaceful relationships, encouraging co-operation and consideration towards others;
- Philosophy to have a positive outlook on gender, race, additional educational need and discipline … a wish to eliminate stereotyping and bias in resources and own practice.

The documentation also proved useful in identifying the diversity of record-keeping practices.

Literature Review

2.29   Using book- and web-based sources both national and international, a literature review was commenced early in the project. Initially, we trawled all the literature relating to early years practice, philosophy, principles and teacher perceptions (using an earlier version of Diagram A as our overall model). Gradually, as the Model was reviewed and revised, the literature review become more focused on the three Areas of Focus shown in Diagram A. The full literature review related directly to the Framework is included in Section 6.

Ethics

2.30   The ethical conduct of the research was carefully conceived and at each stage all participants were given clear extensive information about the project and their consent was sought for involvement (informed consent) (Anderson and Arsenault 1998). Access to settings was negotiated through telephone and written communication and the expectations of both researcher and researched were clarified. Where children were likely to be involved, e.g. in the video filming, parental consent was sought and obtained by and through the setting. No parents refused access on behalf of their children. Children were informed by the setting about the research visitor and the use of the camera. One practitioner did not want to appear on the video and this was respected. Copies of all video material were given to the settings and they were informed that clips from the video would only be used within the constraints of the research. Should we wish to use video for other purposes (e.g. to generate still photographs for public dissemination), permission from settings will need to be obtained. Anonymity and confidentiality was assured at all times for all participants and negotiated access to the use of video from the research, for research purposes, has been respected. The use of video-stills has received written permission from those settings and practitioners involved

Table 2j – Documentation gathered from 27 settings

	1 NS	2 NS	3 NS	4 PP	5 MS	6 DN	7 PP	8 NS	9 NS	10 NS	11 MS	12 CM	13 CC	14 MS	15 DN	16 PP	17 NS	18 MS	19 NS	20 IS	21 NS	22 CC	23 PP	24 NS	25 MS	26 DN	27 MS
Planning			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓				✓		
Curriculum planning	✓		✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓							✓	
Mission statement/aims	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓			✓
OfSTED summary		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Evaluation	✓			✓				✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓										
Information for parents	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Individual records of children			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓			✓						✓
Records of observations	✓			✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓									
Records of reporting				✓						✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓								✓	✓
Child profiles	✓			✓						✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓				✓				
Teaching and learning policy				✓					✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓			✓
Planning policy	✓									✓			✓	✓	✓				✓								
Curriculum areas policy	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓						✓
Outdoor policy	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓			✓	✓	✓				✓								
Play policy		✓	✓	✓									✓	✓	✓												
Assessment policy	✓	✓								✓			✓	✓	✓										✓		✓
Record keeping policy		✓	✓							✓			✓	✓	✓				✓								
SEN policy		✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Equal Opportunities policy		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	
Settling in/home visits policy			✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						
Parental involvement policy		✓	✓	✓			✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓						
Behaviour policy	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓			✓			✓	✓			✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Monitoring and evaluation policy										✓																	
ICT development plan																	✓										
Job descriptions																			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

MS School Nursery/Year R
NS Nursery School
IS Independent School
CC Combined Centre
DN Day Nursery
PP Pre-School Playgroup
CM Childminder

SECTION 3

Analysis of Data and Source of Framework Key Statements

SECTION THREE
Analysis of Data and Source of Framework Key Statements

In this Section we outline the various stages in the process of handling and analysing the data gathered through the interviews, questionnaires, reflective dialogues, documentation and literature review. It is presented according to the Layers within which different data were obtained.

Layer One

3.1   Tape-recorded **interviews** with practitioners (n=18) and with managers/head-teachers (n=9) resulted in approximately 47 hours of transcription which included a plethora of data about what constitutes effective pedagogy and the characteristics of the effective pedagogue. Initially we used manual coding of the statements and phrases under the headings Pedagogy (general ideas), Characteristics, Skills and Knowledge. Appendix D(i) shows two examples of this type of analysis. This strategy began the process of extracting relevant information for the initial draft of the Framework. The categories appeared to overlap considerably and much discussion occurred between the researchers and the EAG as to other potential categories which could result from the transcription data. For example, pedagogy and characteristics were 'catch all' categories at this point.

3.2   A further review of the transcriptions revealed that many of the statements extracted and coded related to pedagogical practice, provision and management of activities and resources. This seemed to be the largest category. Typically, practitioners spoke of effectiveness as being related to the way they:

> *'present activities in a stimulating way'*,
> *'manage children's learning'*
> *'use play as a vehicle for learning'*
> *'make equal provision for indoor/outdoor classroom'*
> *'share knowledge of individual children with parents'*.

3.3   As 'Practice' was the dominant and overwhelming theme, this was the first Area of Focus to be developed from Layer One. The Practice-level overview chart is shown in Figure 7. The initial Practice-level detailed statements are shown in Appendix D(ii).

3.4   The refining process also involved the transfer of transcriptions to Nud*Ist (1997), a software tool through which the researcher is able to manage documents by creating and exploring categories within the data. It is first necessary to establish categories as we had previously done. Through the additional capacity of Nud*Ist, we were able continually to add to the evolving categories, comparing at each stage, until they became saturated (see 3.15 to 3.18 below). During this process it emerged that there were certain features we were in danger of neglecting in our original categorisation.

3.5   Amalgamation of other statements and phrases used by practitioners suggested that Practice was affected by the ways in which practitioners **perceive** themselves as effective pedagogues, how they reflect on that role and what they understand by their role, for example:

> *'ability to set standards for children/staff'*
> *'accurately interpret children's outcomes/expressions'*
> *'understanding of how children acquire knowledge and skills'*
> *'knowing and using knowledge about child development'*
> *'ability to articulate own practice'*

This led to the development of a category called 'Perceptions'.

Figure 7: Practice-level Overview Chart (Jan 2001)

CREATING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (CLE)
The *ways* in which practitioners provide for children's learning (rather than *what* practitioners provide, as that is the curriculum)

i. *Providing a positive learning atmosphere*
ii. *Providing an environment which is conducive to learning*
iii. *Balancing care and education*
iv. *Providing for children as individuals*
v. *Providing learning opportunities that challenge children appropriately*
vi. *Providing opportunities for active exploration*
vii. *Providing a balance and variety of activities*
viii. *Grouping children*
ix. *Positioning adults*
x. *Providing opportunities to promote children's personal, social and emotional development*
xi. *Providing opportunities to promote children's communication, language and literacy development*
xii. *Providing opportunities to promote children's mathematical development*
xiii. *Providing opportunities to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world*
xiv. *Providing opportunities to promote children's physical development*
xv. *Providing opportunities to promote children's creative development*

TEACHING (T)
The *ways* in which practitioners teach children (practitioners *doing* rather than providing)

i. *Teaching skills and knowledge directly*
ii. *Teaching through modelling behaviour*
iii. *Teaching through interacting with children*
iv. *Teaching through scaffolding*
v. *Teaching through communicating*
vi. *Teaching through giving children feedback*
vii. *Teaching through questioning*
viii. *Teaching through intervening*
ix. *Teaching through responding to children*
x. *Motivating children and fostering their interests*
xi. *Encouraging children's enquiry*
xii. *Encouraging children to think about their learning*

EVALUATION (E)
Evaluation of and reflection about quality of practice and provision

i. *Evaluating the quality of the learning environment*
ii. *Evaluating the provision of learning opportunities*
iii. *Evaluating organisation and management*
iv. *Evaluating quality of teaching*
v. *Developing reflective/reflexive practice*
vi. *Developing practice*

COLLABORATION (C)
Collaborative practice with children, their families, the team and with others

Collaboration with Children:
i. *Supporting and working alongside children*
ii. *Supporting children to lead and make decisions about their own learning*
iii. *Supporting children's thinking and reflection collaboratively*
iv. *Supporting children's communication collaboratively*
v. *Using what the child brings*
vi. *Teaching children to listen to others and value what they say*
vii. *Teaching children to share*
viii. *Teaching children to co-operate and work with others*
Collaboration with Families:
ix. *Establishing relationships with parents*
x. *Working in partnership with parents*
xi. *Establishing good communication links with parents*
xii. *Supporting parents*
Collaboration with Team:
xiii. *Supporting effective teamwork through communication with each other*
xiv. *Supporting effective teamwork through involvement*
xv. *Supporting effective teamwork through shared practice*
xvi. *Supporting effective teamwork through shared sense of purpose*
xvii. *Supporting effective teamwork through good relationships*
xviii. *Demonstrating collaborative teamwork*
Collaboration with Others:
xix. *Establishing good working relationships with other agencies*
xx. *Establishing good working relationships with receiving schools*
xxi. *Establishing links with other settings in the partnership*
xxii. *Establishing links with the community*

ASSESSMENT (A)
The *what* and *how* of assessment activity

i. *Planning assessment opportunities*
ii. *Assessing children*
iii. *Assessing activities*
iv. *Using assessment to plan next steps*
v. *Setting targets based on assessment*
vi. *Developing and maintaining records based on assessment*
vii. *Sharing information gained from assessment*

SPEEL Framework ~ Practice Level Overview showing Areas of Focus

3.6   When practitioners were speaking of their practices and their own knowledge and understanding, it became evident that they were also steeped in underlying **principles** and **philosophies/theories** upon which they based the activities, for example:

> *'all children should be valued as individuals'* (principle)
> *'you have to start from the child'* (principle)
> *'it's vital to have respect for the child and the family'* (principle)
> *'we do things the Reggio / High/Scope way here'* (philosophy/theory)
> *'we try to scaffold children's learning'* (philosophy/theory)

A very few practitioners mentioned, for example, specific theorists such as Piaget or Bruner but the underlying notions of learning theories such as behaviourism, constructivism or multiple intelligences were apparent and it seemed, at this early stage of the research, that they may be very significant as underpinning knowledge through which practitioners provided for children's learning and developed their own practices. However, practitioners expressed themselves in very different ways according to their training, backgrounds, beliefs and priorities and we were intent upon categories to which all practitioners could relate.

3.7   Thus, using our extensive data, researcher knowledge and the evolving literature review (see Section 6), we re-categorised our data using a model specifically devised for SPEEL purposes, which re-defined the categories as Practice, Perceptions, Principles and Philosophies. Figure 8 (next page) shows an early attempt at portraying these '4Ps' as related and interlinking elements of effective pedagogy.

3.8   **Documentation** gathered from Layer 1 settings in particular also suggested principles and philosophies/theories that underpin the ways in which settings perceive children, families and the roles of the practitioners themselves. (Principles are also a key feature of the CGFS, although in a somewhat different form.)

3.9   It had been anticipated from Layer 1 data collection and analysis that it would be possible to present an overall draft Framework to the EAG and Steering Group for comment. However, the wealth of detail at Practice level was such that continuous grounded analysis at this stage of this one aspect took considerable time. It was also felt that if we could refine the process sufficiently with this one aspect of analysis, the other aspects would more readily follow (this proved to be the case).

3.10   That said, the focus for Layer 2 data collection and analysis was adjusted in order to gain more information about the other three areas as defined in the '4P's model' to confirm (or reject) their importance to the Framework whilst, at the same time, ratifying the Practice level statements.

3.11   The Practice-level Area of Focus (Appendix D(ii)) was presented to both the EAG and Steering Group for comment during the interim period between Layers 1 and 2 data collection. The detailed contents had exposed the range and complexity of early years pedagogy even at just that one level and whilst the EAG commented on this favourably in terms of the identification of what arguably had previously been conceived of as a fairly straightforward role, it seemed that this very complexity might undermine practitioners' confidence. If the outcome Framework was to be user-friendly, it would need to be reduced to something more manageable. Figures 9-12 show how the data from one aspect of Practice ('Collaboration') was reduced progressively and amalgamated into other headings to make it more useable and less repetitive. Throughout Layer 2 data analysis, a similar process was to be involved in each of the categories.

**Figure 8: The 4 Ps' Draft Model of Early Years Pedagogy**

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │     PRACTICE        │
                    │   (resourcing,      │
                    │ strategies/tactics) │
                    └─────────────────────┘
        ┌─────────────────────┐    ┌─────────────────────┐
        │    PERCEPTION       │◄──►│     PRINCIPLES      │
        │     (process)       │    │  (tacit/embedded)   │
        └─────────────────────┘    └─────────────────────┘
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │     PHILOSOPHY      │
                    │      (theory)       │
                    └─────────────────────┘
```

Thinking
Reflecting
Metacognition
Interpreting
Challenging
Evaluating
Making knowledge
  explicit
………………..

Gesell (e.g.) (child dev.)
Piaget (constructivism)
Vygotsky (social-
  constructivism)
Bruner (scaffolding)
Dewey (child-centred)
MacMillan sisters
  (compensatory, outdoor)
Montessori (structured
  play)
……………………….

Informing
Values
 'Bedrock' of practice
Implicit knowledge
General/'common sense'
  knowledge
Social knowledge
Integrating mechanism
…………….

Figure 9: Detailed analysis of 'Collaboration' from all Layer 1 transcriptions

COLLABORATION	
Collaboration with Children	
Supporting and working alongside children	• Working alongside children to support their learning • Being available as a learning resource • Intervening collaboratively • Supporting all children to be active participants • Sharing learning with the children
Supporting children to lead and make decisions about their own learning	• Providing opportunities for children to be independence/autonomy and in control of their own learning • Using children's interests to planning learning opportunities • Providing opportunities for and encouraging children to ask questions • Recognising when it is appropriate to tell a child something • Providing opportunities for and encouraging children to think things through
Supporting children's thinking and reflection collaboratively	• Providing opportunities for and encouraging children to talk through what they are doing • Developing learning objectives with children • Developing targets with children
Supporting children's communication collaboratively	• Communicating with children at an appropriate level • Allowing children time to talk at their own level • Sharing experiences with children • Valuing what children say • Being positive with children about their language capabilities
Using what the child brings	• Providing opportunities for children to give personal recollections • Knowing and understanding individual children's interests • Valuing and using children's interests
Teaching children to listen to others and value what they say	• Providing opportunities for and encouraging children to express their views and feelings • Providing activities that promote turn taking, listening to each other and valuing others • Modelling listening skills
Teaching children to share	• Promoting children's independence and socialising • Modelling sharing
Teaching children to co-operate and work with others	• Providing opportunities for children to play and work co-operatively • Encouraging children to value co-operative play and work • Talking through and about other people's feelings • Talking about actions having consequences • Modelling negotiation skills
Collaboration with Families	
Establishing relationships with parents	• Establishing reciprocal and collaborative relationships • Building parents' trust and confidence • Helping family to feel welcome and part of the setting • Respecting the family's values
Working in partnership with parents	• Gaining a better understanding of the child through parents • Using knowledge and understanding of family to teach • Encouraging parents to support the teaching
Establishing good communication links	• Good quality information sent home • Encouraging two-way exchange of information about the child

Supporting parents	• Addressing parents' concerns • Sharing children's successes with parents • Supporting parents with their children's development • Supporting parents in their understanding of teaching in the setting • Supporting parents in their understanding of parenthood

Collaboration with Team

Supporting effective teamwork through communication with each other	• Establishing effective systems for communication • Sharing information about children between practitioners/teaching team • Sharing information about families between practitioners/teaching team • Sharing information with non-teaching staff • Sharing information with governors
Supporting effective teamwork through involvement	• Making good use of practitioners' non-teaching skills and experience • Involving all practitioners in planning the learning environment • Involving all practitioners in decision making where appropriate • Making good use of non-teaching team's support, skills, expertise and experience • Involving non-teaching team in decision making where appropriate • Making good use of governors' support, skills, expertise and experience and involving them in all areas where appropriate
Supporting effective teamwork through shared practice	• Sharing ideas, knowledge, new developments and good practice • Sharing evaluation of practice
Supporting effective teamwork through shared sense of purpose	• Establishing a shared sense of purpose, vision, aim, ethos • Valuing and respecting the opinions of all team
Supporting effective teamwork through good relationships	• Establishing an ethos of care, respect and support
Demonstrating collaborative teamwork	• Modelling collaborative teamwork through demonstrating to the children a team who work well together

Collaboration with Others

Establishing good working relationships with other agencies	• Developing effective systems for liaison • Working together to plan for children with special needs and records of concern • Working together to support families (eg workshops, information) • Sharing information and ideas
Establishing good working relationships with receiving schools	• Developing effective systems for liaison • Developing shared transition procedures • Sharing feedback • Sharing information and ideas, good practice etc
Establishing links with other settings in the partnership	• Sharing information and ideas, good practice etc • Sharing training • Sharing expertise (eg technicians, language support)
Establishing links with the community	• Supporting families within the community (eg workshops, under 3s groups) • Sharing information about the setting • Being active in community initiatives

Figure 10: Practice Area of Focus showing data reduction process, highlighting 'Collaboration'


Providing for Differing Needs	
Providing Learning Activities	
Promoting Collaborative Learning	**LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**
Promoting Thinking Skills	
Promoting Learning Outdoors	
Pedagogy and ICT	

Assessing Children

Using Assessment Information

ASSESSMENT

COLLABORATION

Collaboration with Families

Collaboration with Team

Collaboration with Others

PRACTICE

Leading

Engaging

Scaffolding

TEACHING

Communicating

Modelling

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Balancing Education and Care

Atmosphere

Routine and Rhythm

Environment

Resources

Figure 11: Example of Nud*Ist generated nodes for analysis of 'Collaboration'

Collaboration

with families
- establish relationship
- work with parents
- communicate
- support

with team
- each other
- involvement
- share practice
- sense of purpose
- relationships
- teamwork

with others
- other agencies
- schools
- settings
- community
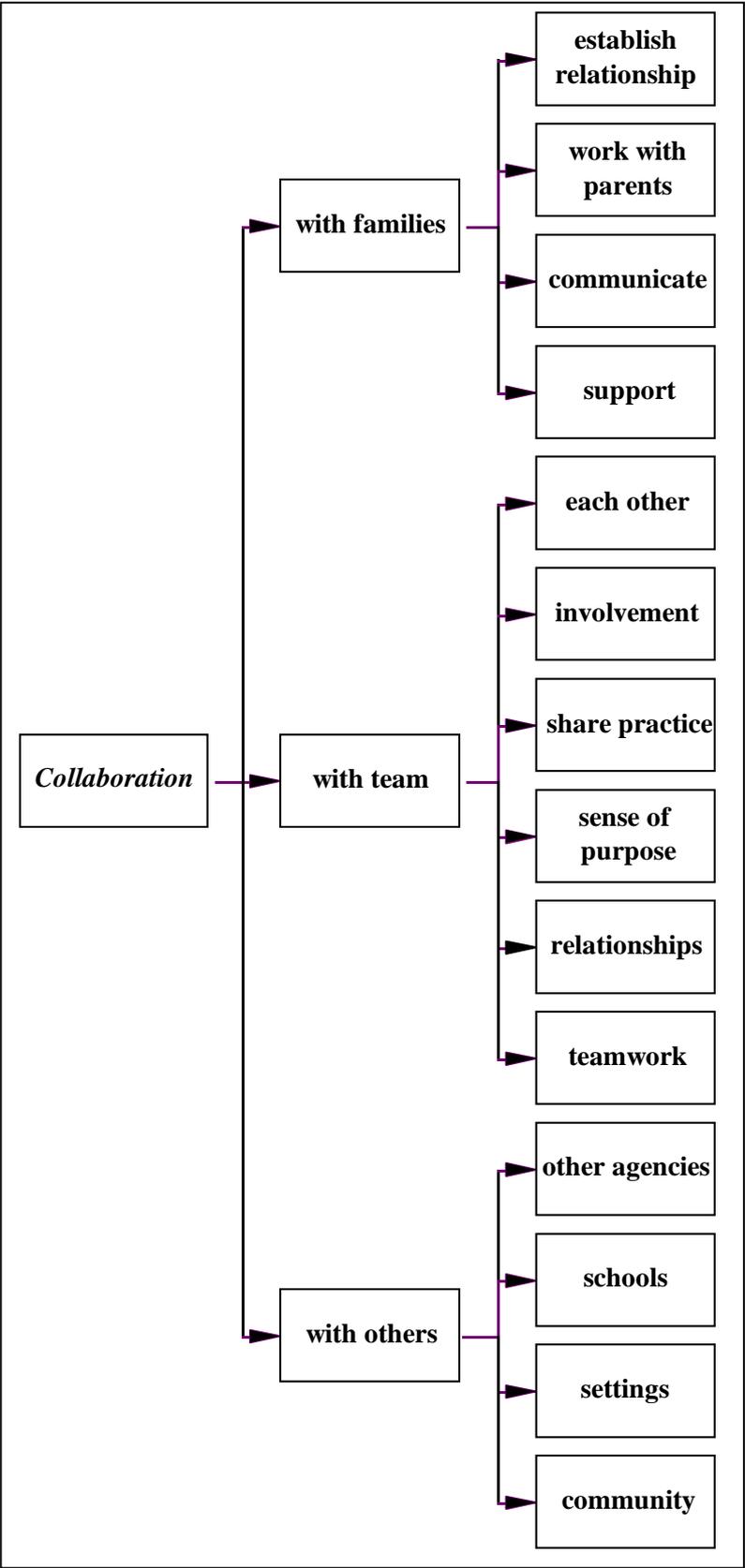
Figure 12: Data reduction – 'Collaboration'

Collaboration with Families
1. Establishes reciprocal and collaborative relationships with parents, building parents' trust and confidence
2. Gains a better understanding of the child through parents and uses the knowledge and understanding of the family to teach
3. Establishes good communication links with parents, encouraging two-way exchange of information about the child
4. Supports parents with their children's development, their understanding of teaching in the setting, shares children's successes with parents and addresses their concerns

Collaboration with Team
5. Establishing and supporting effective and collaborative teamwork through communication with each other, involvement and sharing good practice and sense of purpose
6. Supporting effective teamwork through establishing an ethos of care, respect and support

Collaboration with Others
7. Establishing good working relationships with other agencies and receiving schools
8. Establishing links with other settings and within the local community

COLLABORATION WITH FAMILIES

COLLABORATION WITH TEAM

COLLABORATION WITH OTHERS

3.12   The thread of 'collaboration' was used throughout the 3 layers of data collection, particularly because, for example, 'collaboration' with parents was particularly emphasised by practitioners and managers/head-teachers. As can be seen, collaboration was originally a separate area but the EAG felt strongly that it should be integrated within other aspects of the effective pedagogy and for these reasons, in the penultimate version of the Framework (see outline in Figure 13), 'collaboration' became an element within the teaching and learning context.

3.13.   In Layer 1, developing the Framework proved challenging because pedagogy soon emerged as based on teaching, learning **and** the curriculum. Providing the teaching and learning context, for example, is as much part of teaching as undertaking the face-to-face daily practice, especially in the early years. This supported our shift in focus to exploring pedagogy as specifically as possible from the <u>perspective of the practitioner</u>. Interaction and assessment featured in Layer 1 as critical aspects of practitioners' work and this supported the development of the categories shown in Figure 13.

3.14   It was also recognised that, although some emphasis, particularly in relation to other phases of education, had emerged in the literature on teachers' subject knowledge as important in effective practices, this had not appeared spontaneously in the data analysis from Layer 1. This was, therefore, included in the managers'/head-teachers' interviews for Layer 2.

3.15   As collaboration and strong partnership with parents had emerged in particular from Layer 1, we made the decision to undertake a questionnaire survey to parents in Layer 2 to establish if this close link emerging in Layer 1 typified both the situation in other settings and whether parents' perspectives would be similar. Paragraphs 3.16 to 3.18 describe just one part of the Nud*Ist analysis relating to parents.

Figure 13: Penultimate Version of Practice-level Framework showing the inclusion of 'Collaboration' within the Teaching and Learning Context (June 2001)

Assessing Children's Learning

Using Assessment Information

Planning for Teaching and Learning

Evaluating Teaching

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING, PLANNING AND EVALUATION

PRACTICE

Atmosphere

Learning Activities

Environment

Providing for Children as Individuals

Promoting Collaborative Learning

Collaboration with Families

Collaboration with Team

Collaboration with Others

TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTEXT

TEACHING AND LEARNING INTERACTIONS

Teaching Through Play

Teaching Through Directing

Teaching Through Engaging

Teaching Through 'Scaffolding'

Teaching Through Communicating

Teaching Through Modelling

Parent Partnerships and Collaboration of Data from interviews with Setting Staff in Layer 1

3.16   As has been seen, interview transcripts from Layer 1 were reduced to short phrases. These phrases were all coded. Initially this was done through colour coding categories. The visual impact of the colours was used by the researchers when exploring convergence of results and identifying if there were contradictions or new perspectives in the analysis. This process of triangulation occurred throughout the analysis (See Section 5). The following excerpt from one interview transcript illustrates the coding process:

> *We also set aside time [blue] to talk individually to parents[red] about their child and to get as much information as we can really about their child [green]before they start [pink] [school]..*

Coding from this extract relates to
- Collaboration with Parents: (working with and valuing parents) [red]
- Principles: (School Policy [blue] makes provision – time – for induction meetings with parents)
- Assessment: (Requesting information from parents [green] before child starts school [pink]).

3.17   The coded transcript was then transferred and developed within Nud*ist software. The software has the facility to interrogate emerging hypotheses about the research and confirmed the importance of parental partnerships. The emerging framework included the statements about practitioners working in pedagogical collaboration with parents including reporting information about children's progress to parents (as can be seen in the preceding Figures).

3.18   The researchers attempted to saturate categories through constantly comparing codes and phrases with phrases. Many similar categories were created and further codes developed. Through comparisons and contrasts made, existing codes were confirmed and substantiated (Creswell 1994). The example of analysis illustrated below was repeated so that all categories relating to parents were identified, confirmed and, where appropriate, related, new categories developed (Working with parents [red] and encouraging further links with families [pink]):

Practitioner:	*One of the children, his Mum had got a whole box of shells at home, so she sent those in with him [to school]. So that was nice because he, he's a very, very quiet little boy, and that was lovely for him, because he could share something of his [home] with his friends, and* [pink] *it involved his Mum as well.*
Researcher:	*And what do you feel is the benefit of that...?*
Practitioner:	*It's trying, that link between home isn't it, and school.* [red]
Researcher:	*So what's the result of that?*
Practitioner:	*A child's biggest teacher is their home environment.* [pink] *I keep saying that, they, they come to us, they don't come as a blank slate, they come with three years of knowledge, don't they?*

Throughout the process, the literature search enabled the emerging categories to be compared with existing theories and understandings.

3.19   The researchers remained open to further possibilities especially as it was anticipated that Reflective Dialogues in Layer 2 would enable the practitioners to talk at greater depth not only to affirm the emerging practice statements but to offer insights into why practice was undertaken in

this way. What appeared from Layer 1 was a set of competences/criteria – things that practitioners actually **do** which they feel supports children's learning and development within the FS curriculum with hints (e.g. *'the child's biggest teacher is their home environment'*) about principles and philosophies/theories. The research then needed to explore more about practitioners' perceptions and thinking which lay beneath, but informed, practice, as well as validating the Practice-level components. Approaching Layer 2 analysis in this way, with the beginning framework from Layer 1 as a guide, helped to ensure the voluminous data emerging particularly from RDs did not overwhelm the analysis.

Layer Two

3.20   As we have seen, it was apparent that the Framework was going to be more complex in its development than first envisaged. The diverse range of settings and practitioners' individual language from Layer One resulted in 287 statements being identified related to effective early years pedagogy at Practice level only.

3.21   Interviews with 9 managers/head-teachers involved at Level 2, included statements from the Level 1 analysis used so as to substantiate the evolving thinking about Practice. Approximately 16.5 hours of transcription revealed manager's/head-teacher's corroboration of the selected examples shown in Figure 14 and extension of many of the concepts.

Figure 14: Statements from Initial Framework used within Layer 2 Head-teachers'/Managers' Interviews

Q5.   **In what ways do you agree/disagree with the following statements about effective pedagogy?**

(*Text in italics* are statements from Layer 1 practitioners, non-italic text are some ideas to draw out discussion.)

Construction of the learning environment:

'Children need to feel secure, comfortable, confident and happy if they are to learn. The right kinds of attitudes (motivation, interest, excitement, concentration) to learning can be encouraged through open-ended activities.'

- How important is children's sense of security etc. to their learning? Are there any other pre-requisites to learning?
- In what ways can children be helped to feel secure, comfortable, confident, happy etc.?
- How important to effective pedagogy is it to encourage positive attitudes to learning?
- How or in what ways are positive attitudes to learning encouraged and planned for?

Collaboration:

'*Knowing, understanding and appreciating children's families and their lives and relating that to the teaching is important - it also builds parents' confidence, helps when uncomfortable issues are discussed and children see staff are interested in their families.'*

- How much difference does an appreciation of families' lives make to effective pedagogy?
- What sort of knowledge is valuable e.g. families' values?
- How or in what ways does the effective pedagogue relate knowledge and understanding to teaching?

Teaching:

'Talking with children – so that children can be in partial control of their own learning – it's about not just giving them the answers, it's about giving them little bits of information, posing them questions, getting them to think it through.'

- How far is teaching children through supporting their learning (scaffolding) important to effective pedagogy?
- Can further examples be given of practitioners teaching through scaffolding?
- How or in what ways is this type of teaching planned for?
- In what other ways can practitioners teach children?

Assessment:

Planning opportunities to assess…
> **children's learning**
> *whether children can apply learning or knowledge*
> *quality of play*
> *progression*
> *strengths*
> *weaknesses*
> *difficulties*
> *concerns*
> *well-being*
> *development*
> *needs*
> *values*
> *interests.*

- Are all of these important to assess and why?
- In what ways can they be assessed?
- How or in what ways are assessment opportunities planned for in your setting?

Evaluation:

> *"Constantly striving to improve - be reflective about one's own practice and on children's learning, plan after reflection and make observations on decisions in planning."*

- How far is being reflective or reflective practice important to effective pedagogy?
- How or in what way is provision evaluated/reflected and acted upon?
- How or in what ways are practitioners reflective about their own practice?

3.22 During Layer 2 the first round of video observations and Reflective Dialogues was undertaken with the 18 practitioners. These sought to deepen and extend our Practice-level Framework as well as to probe practitioners' underpinning perceptions, principles and philosophies/theories to establish the effects of these upon the types of practice that was observed.

3.23 The second stage of analysis attempted to deepen understanding and to conceptualise the 'non-practice' categories emerging within the initial Framework. The interviews and Reflective Dialogues from Layer 2 were again transcribed (approx. 8 hours), initially manually coded and then transferred to Nud*Ist. With the experience from Layer 1, this aspect proceeded reasonably smoothly. The '4Ps' Model' worked appropriately, with the exception that it became more and more difficult (as fewer practitioners actually articulated philosophies/theories except in the context of specifying principles for their practices) to retain 'philosophies' as a separate category. It was, therefore, during Layer 2 analysis that our model was reduced to Practice, Perception and Principles, with the latter subsuming theories and philosophies (see Figure 15).

3.24 Significant discussions occurred at this time on several key issues, for example: the links between assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation (part of Practice) very strongly evidenced in the practitioner literature and in CGFS but which had not emerged strongly in Layer 1 or Layer 2 analysis on Practice. In fact, when we delved into the Principles level analysis the importance of planning then emerged but, even on a re-analysis of the Practice Area of Focus,

practitioners appeared to have said little about planning and the links with assessment, monitoring and evaluation. The EAG advised that in the final Framework closer links should and must be made as being vital to effective pedagogical practices.

Figure 15: The reduced '3Ps' Model

```
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   EFFECTIVE     │
                    │  PEDAGOGY IN    │
                    │   THE EARLY     │
                    │    YEARS        │
                    └─────────────────┘
           ┌───────────────┼───────────────┐
           ▼               ▼               ▼
   ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
   │  Principles  │ │  Perception  │ │   Practice   │
   └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
           │               │               │
           ▼               ▼               ▼
   ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
   │ Beliefs      │ │ Knowledge    │ │ Teaching     │
   │ Values       │ │ Reflection   │ │ Creating     │
   │ Theories     │ │ Consciousness│ │   context    │
   │ Relationships│ │ Awareness    │ │ Assessment   │
   │ Equal Opps   │ │              │ │ Collaboration│
   └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
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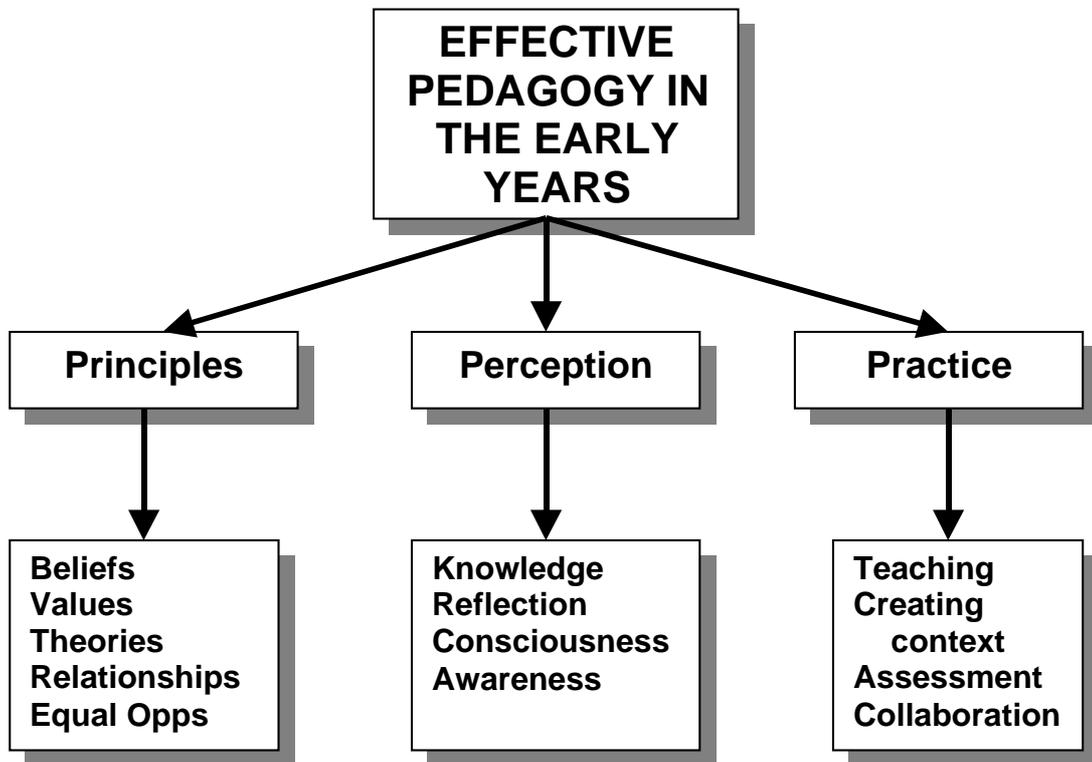
3.25   It was also at the point of Layer 2 analysis that we moved to the idea of 'Key Statements' within the Framework to make the concepts more user-friendly and to shift the emphasis on to the effective pedagogue. These were also intended to relate to the notion of 'core competences' identified within the literature on effectiveness. Both the EAG and the Steering Group agreed that this would offer greater clarity to the Framework.

3.26   From this point, it was decided that Layer 3 data would mainly be used to refine and consolidate all previous findings. Saturation had, on the whole, been reached with Layer 2 data analysis and it was felt that few further Key Statements were likely to be added. This was also confirmed through analysis of the literature, which we continually used to check for omissions.

Parent Questionnaires

3.27   The Parent Questionnaire is shown in Appendix E. As we have seen in Section 2, questions were designed to include 18 statements which would confirm, or otherwise, the emerging views of practitioners and managers/head-teachers from Layer 1 data analysis which emphasised the importance of close links and relationships with parents as part of effective pedagogy. In addition, 3 open-ended questions were formulated (numbers as on the Questionnaire):

    19. What special qualities do you like your child's early years teachers to have?
    20. What makes early years provision 'special' as far as you and your child are concerned?
    21. What are the three most important things you look in pre-school/early years education and care?

3.28   Parents answers to Qu: 19 were used alongside managers'/head-teachers' responses at interview, and practitioner information on their own qualities, to generate the early draft of part of the Framework, thus validating it from a 'user' perspective. Analysis of the responses to Qu.19 revealed the qualities shown in Table 3a.

Table 3a – Parents' responses to an open-ended question about 'special qualities' of early years teachers (Qu.19)

Special qualities identified	% response
Caring attitude / kindly / sympathetic / loves children	86%
Thoughtful / kind / sensitive / warm / tolerant / understanding / compassionate	36%
Good authority / fair / firm / understands children's behaviour / discipline	35%
Patient / calm / gentle / relaxed / tolerant	30%
Interest and enjoyment in children / makes child feel special / child-centred	30%
Attentive / good listener / makes time to listen / observant aware	30%
Happy / good humoured / cheerful / fun to be with / positive / 'sunny'	28%
Imaginative / creative / flexible / innovative / musical	28%
Open / approachable / honest / friendly / co-operative	26%
Shows cultural awareness / understands equality / treats all children the same	25%
Give children confidence / encouraging / keeps child safe and secure	24%
Good communicator / is articulate	22%
Interesting person / stimulating / sincere / trustworthy	22%
Energetic / involved / outgoing / good attitude / confident	20%
Conscientious / hard-working / committed / excellent teacher	18%
Interact with parents regularly / co-operative	14%
Welcoming / supportive (of parents/children)	14%
Good manners / courteous / considerate	14%
Builds good relationships with children/parents	10%

3.29   As can be seen, parents' views dwell almost exclusively on what could be termed the 'personal' qualities of the practitioners, parents appeared to have interpreted 'special qualities' as personal rather than professional qualities. Our analysis at this time included these aspects within the Perception level of the Framework but it became clear in the analysis of Layer 2 data from managers'/ head-teachers' interviews and the RDs that such personal qualities were quite significant in determining effective pedagogy. Are effective practitioners certain kinds of people with certain kinds of personalities? This was raised clearly in Layer 2 by managers/head-teachers as an issue which we needed to address.

3.30   The Parents' Questionnaire informed other developing aspects of the Framework and confirmed and extended the evolving Key Statements. As examples, in answer to Qu.20, many parents commented on their child's *'interaction with other children and other adults'* as important, as well as the provision for *'a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities'*. From Qu.21 *'a safe and secure environment'*, *'being tuned into the individual needs of kids'*, and *'combining play with learning'* were identified by parents as important areas. All these appeared in some form at that time within the Practice Key Statements.

3.31   Taking the average response scores, overwhelmingly parents wanted similar things for their children and from their relationships with practitioners as did the practitioners themselves (see Graphs 1). Only very small differences emerged. For example, in answer to the questions:

   5. It is important to me to be able to talk with the teacher at least once a week about how my child is getting on.

16. It is important to me that the teacher treats my child differently according to her/his individual needs.

the level of agreement, whilst still high, was lower on these questions than on others (variance of 25% and 26% respectively). Virtually all parents, however, rated very highly the importance of the teacher telling them if the child is having problems of any kind (Qu.3 – only 8% variance).


GRAPH 1   Average of all Parents' responses

GRAPH 2   Female/Male Parents' Response Comparison
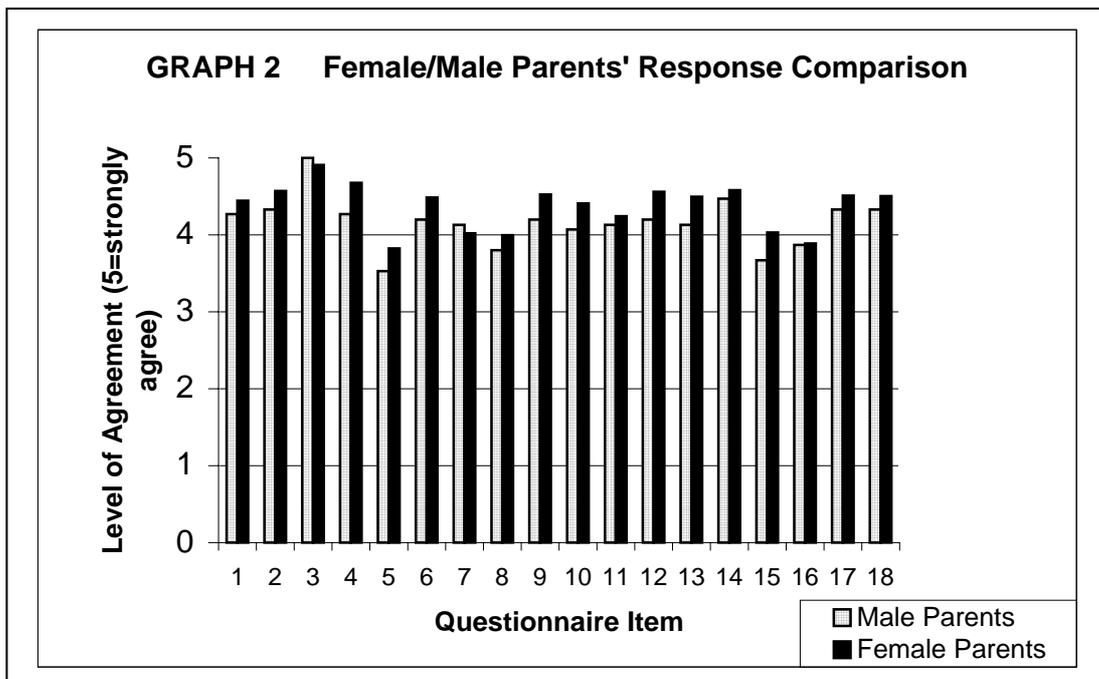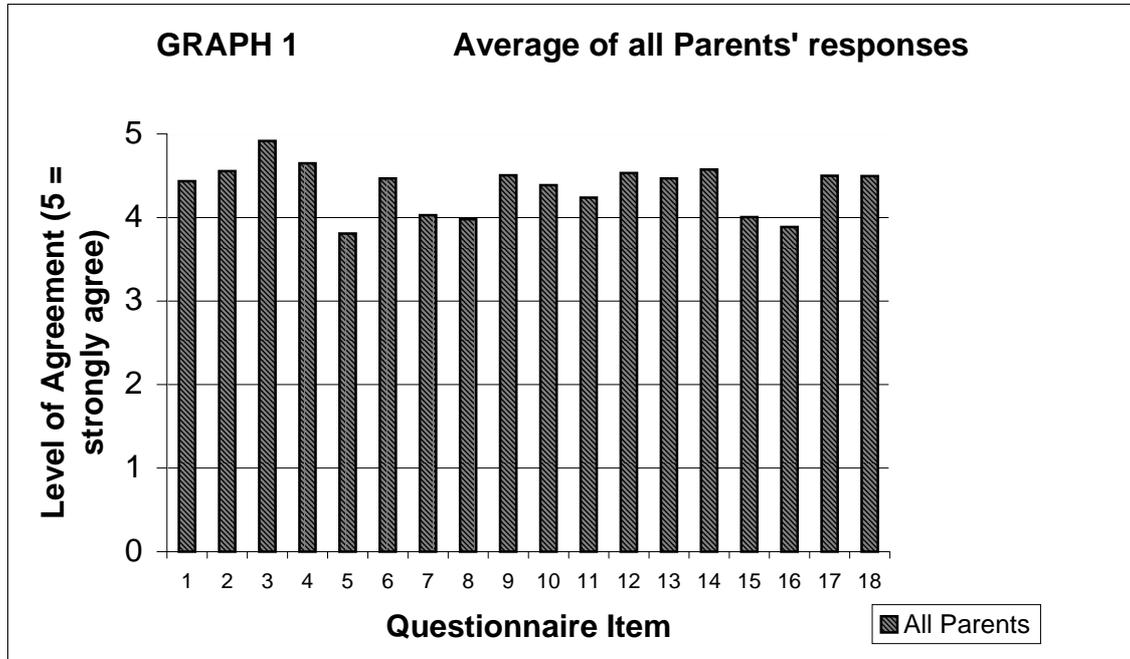
3.32   Fewer parents in general wanted their child to be seen by the practitioner as an individual and treated differently (Qu.5). This was probably because of the sentiment expressed in the open-ended questions that they wanted practitioners to treat all children 'the same' or 'equally'. This reflects something of the 'same dilemma' which appears to be experienced by practitioners in understanding the full implications of 'equality'. On the whole, however, practitioners, it appears, are well 'tuned-into' parents' perspectives at least in terms of how the issues were represented in the questionnaire.

3.33   The data were also analysed to establish whether the male and female respondents held differing views. No statistical significance was evident (see Graph 2), although in all questions (except Qu.3) mothers were in slightly higher agreement than fathers.

3.34   The data was also analysed to see whether married/partnered parents offered different views from single parents. Again, differences were generally not statistically significant but single parents felt slightly more need (Qu.5) to talk to the teacher each week (see Graph 3).

3.35   Finally we looked to see whether differences might exist between the views of parents overall and those in settings where there was a greater proportion of minority ethnic parents (Gr 4). Other than for Qus. 2 and 16 (2. A good early years teacher understands a lot about children's general growth and development: 16. It is important to me that the teacher treats my child differently according to her/his individual needs.) where they had an exactly similar levels of agreement, minority ethnic parents were in slightly higher agreement on all questions.

GRAPH 3   Married/Partnered Parents compared with Single Parents
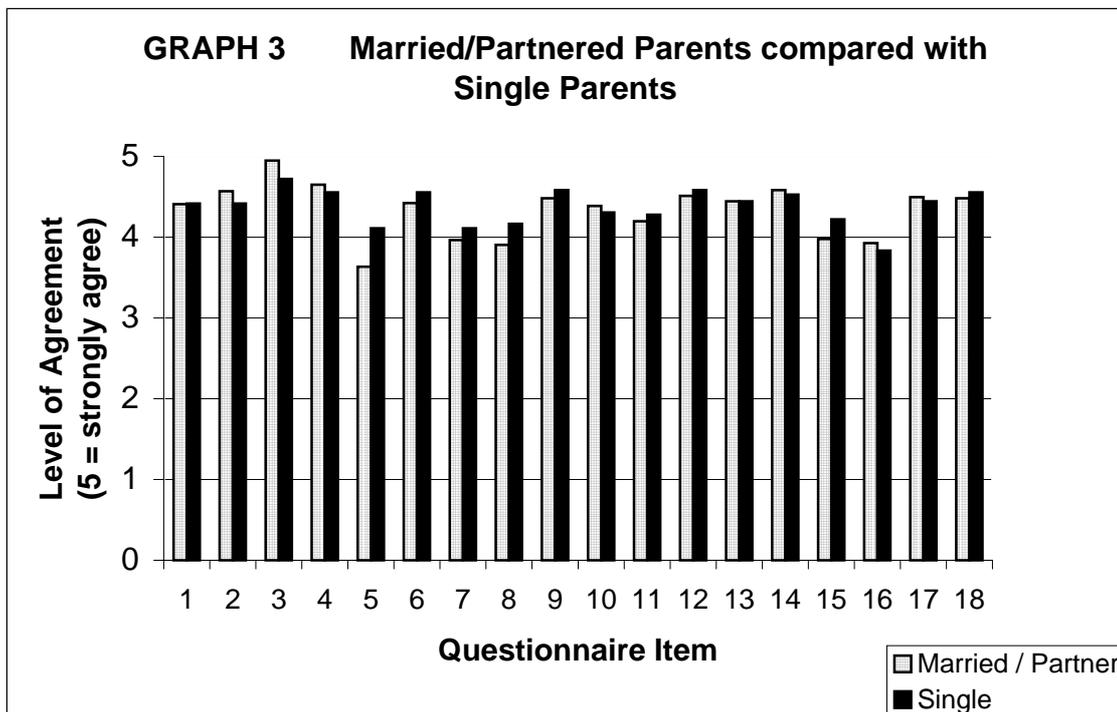
3.36   Analysis of the Questionnaires thus revealed high levels of agreement from parents about the very issues that practitioners had highlighted so positively during Layer 1 data analysis. This appeared to us to show that practitioners have a good and developing understanding of parents' views about early education and care and that true partnership with parents is developing well in the high quality settings with whom we undertook the research and parental partnership appears to be one aspect of effective pedagogy.

GRAPH 4   Overall Parent responses compared with 60% minority ethnic parent responses

Y-axis: Level of Agreement (5 = strongly agree), scale 0 to 5

X-axis: Questionnaire Item, 1 to 18

Legend:
☐ All Parents
■ Parents in settings with 60% minority ethnic parents
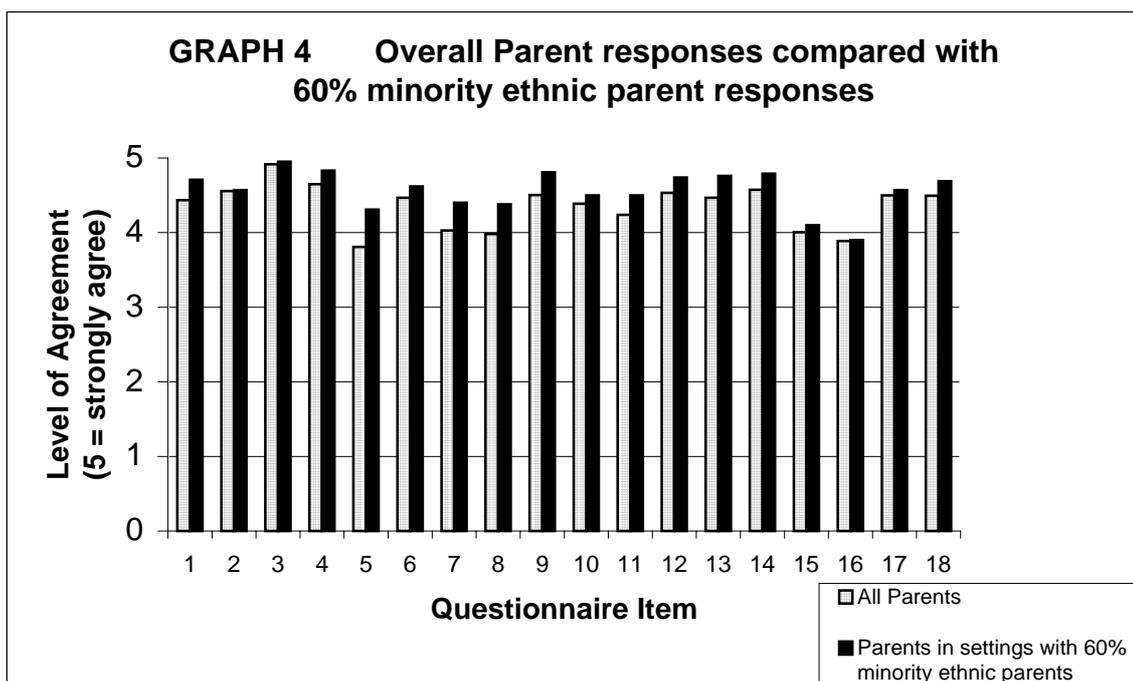
3.37   Additionally, the question of the personal qualities of effective practitioners was brought into sharp focus, creating a review of the Perception level of the Framework. This was redefined temporarily at this time as 'Personal Dimensions' which included practitioners' abilities to reflect upon practice, understand themselves as pedagogues and also related to their knowledge of children and curriculum.

Layer Three

3.38   Following full analysis of the Layer 2 data including the parent questionnaires, we were in a position to interrogate our data very fully and to review and revise earlier findings in the light of that analysis in order to decide on areas for deeper investigation within Layer 3 data collection.

3.39   The final 9 settings' managers/head-teachers were interviewed, again producing around 16 hours of transcription. The Layer 3 interview schedule is shown in Appendix B (ii). The focus for questioning within this Layer was related, in particular, to the Principles that underpin practice in settings and, specifically, the principles held by what managers/head-teachers perceived to be effective practitioners. We also used elements from Perception to establish the security of using this categorisation. Direct quotes from analysis in the previous Layers were presented and managers'/head-teachers' opinions sought. The following shows examples:

Q5.   In what ways do you agree/disagree with the following statements about principles of effective pedagogy? *(Statements in italic are direct quotes from practitioners)*

Key Statement: [The effective practitioner] …values and makes full use of play as a process in teaching and learning
        'It's about building up the learning through lots of structured play and first hand experience and actually embedding all of that in.'

Key Statement: [The effective practitioner] … constantly evaluates practice
> *'We've got teachers here who are constantly thinking and we have quite a lot of dialogue going on. I've not got people who are resistant to change at all.'*

3.40   We also raised the role of subject knowledge as part of early years practitioner effectiveness with managers/head-teachers through the question:

Q3.   In what ways do you think effectiveness in teaching is determined by the Area of Learning being covered, i.e?
- Language/literacy/communication
- Maths/numeracy
- Personal/social/emotional
- Creative
- Physical
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World

As we have seen in Section 1, the overwhelming view of managers/head-teachers is that subject knowledge is secondary to knowledge about children and the processes of early childhood education. This area needs further investigation as, having drawn little with our lines of questioning and through our analysis, no more time was available to examine this issue in any depth.

3.41   We had also recognised that during Layers 1 and 2 data analysis, practitioners had raised little by way of the 'DfES 5 areas'. To the Reflective Dialogue documentation, we therefore added a question to raise with practitioners following the video stimulated RD:

From what we have just seen on the video, what might be an effective way of incorporating ….
- ICT
- Thinking Skills
- Individual/Special Needs/Gender
- Outdoor Learning
- Education/Care?

It was interesting that, despite the directness of the question, analysis added only marginally to our existing data. As an example to use within this Report, we have taken the area of 'thinking skills'. In Figure 16, we have identified comments from three practitioners showing, we believe, practitioners who were beginning to explore this area. These practitioners were three of the very few able to consider the issue of thinking skills to any extent. Other practitioners found significant difficulty in explaining this area.

Figure 16: Conceptualising and articulating young children's thinking skills

Qu: What do you understand by the term thinking skills?

In terms of young children…perhaps solving problems, understanding what is being said and to be able to carry out instructions, it might be strongly linked to listening skills. Quite often people underestimate how much thinking children probably are doing…we don't know what's going on in their heads. Children are very complex. And again it's not just the observational skills [teachers'

skills] in terms of seeing but observational skills in terms of listening [to children] which are a very important aspect [of pedagogy] and when you're listening to children talking you can hopefully then get some idea of the thinking that's going on.

At the heart of High/Scope is building children's self-esteem...that they can do things themselves, that they can be in control of their own learning and make decisions albeit decisions that are appropriate for a 3 year old – but kind of recognising that and acknowledging that is important for the child.

I'm just thinking in terms of....let's think....the woodwork table and thinking that obviously one would think that's just about skills but a lot of thinking has to go on with an activity like that in terms of understanding about the use of the tools and thinking about how they're going to hold the nail still while they try and tap it in and so on. And staff would be working alongside making the right kind of comments...often giving what we call verbal feedback, which is not direct teaching but is actually describing what the children are doing which helps them work out in their own brain...it's almost like they know what they're doing but you're putting words to it and that helps them to think on to the next stage.

3.42   Observational data from Layers 2 and 3 covered a range of curriculum areas, although we were somewhat surprised that few of the 36 practitioners chose to have a 'teaching through play' episode put on to video for discussion and reflection (see Table 3b). We conjecture that practitioners felt that a more formal aspect of their role was required given the word 'pedagogy' was used, with its previous connotations of more formal teaching. Hence the need we felt to describe pedagogy in the terms identified in Section 1.

3.43   The continued analysis of these interviews and RDs, including the opportunity they gave for further saturation of categories already defined, contributed significantly to our understanding and decisions about the Areas of Focus and the Key Statements which would constitute the final draft Framework which would appear on the web-site for evaluation and validation (see Section 5).

3.44   Examining and exploring the data overall, it was recognised that Practice as a category was 'secure' in the sense that participants throughout the 3 layers had continually referred to elements which were now an integral part of this Area of Focus, in particular the concepts of a) interactions; b) the learning and teaching context/environment; and c) planning, assessment and evaluation. All previous categories were now collapsed into these sub-headings.

3.45   Principles was also a well-honed category provided that it was viewed as all those things which underpinned practice in relation to what practitioners believed in and valued about a) their own roles; b) teaching and learning practices; and c) children's entitlements.

3.46   The Area of Focus called 'Perception' was more problematic. What had arisen from all sources and within all Layers of the research was the notion that practitioners who, for example, thought clearly about their own practices and reflected upon them, evaluated their practices, understood child development and were conscious of their own impact on children and other adults, were more likely to be effective practitioners engaging in effective pedagogy. But it was clear from parent questionnaire responses and managers/head-teachers interview data, as well as comments from the EAG, that the personal qualities of the practitioner were also vitally important to employers and stakeholders. Thus, the notion of 'Personal Dimensions' evolved. This included a) qualities; b) knowledge; and c) reflection/thinking. However, the difficulty of expressing this 'personal' dimension appropriately within a professional context resulted in the term 'Professional' being used to define this area (Professional Dimensions, with the same 3 sub-categories).

3.47   The final Draft Framework, with its 3 Areas of Focus, each with its 3 sub-headings, and containing 100 Key Statements was placed in separate sections on a specially designed (limited access) SPEEL web-site. The site included a designed logo (see Diagram A in Section 1) and an on-line questionnaire-style feedback form in which respondents were asked to comment in general on the Framework and specifically about its use. We invited 102 practitioners and experts – including all those who had been involved with the Framework so far – to comment in a variety of ways about content and use. The responses to the Practice level Area of Focus indicated:

> Nearly 80% thought the Framework:
> * offers an objective overview of effective pedagogy;
> * will support practitioners' developing knowledge;
> * appears to be concise and clear in terms of Key Statements.
>
> The Framework is useful as a self-assessment tool:
> * Over 90% would use for reflection on practice/staff discussion on pedagogy;
> * Over 80% would use for identifying training needs.
>
> No respondents felt there was inconsistency or that statements were confusing or unclear but queries were raised about:
> * the level of repetition;
> * some of the relative language (e.g. what constitutes 'balance');
> * the denseness of some Key Statements and the need for them to be 'unpacked'.

Respondents also suggested that there was a need for brief exemplification to ensure that some of the Key Statements were fully understood. Very useful individual comments were received from some of the respondents which were also fed into the final version of the Framework. The full version of the web-site analysis is given in Table 5a. The web-site also served as a validation for the final version of the Framework (see Section 5).

3.48   The final Framework contains 129 Key Statements many of which have been bullet-pointed to remove the density of language. The root sentences for each of the Areas of Focus have been changed to reflect the content of the descriptors (see Section 1) of each of the Areas of Focus. For example, initially each root sentence read: 'The effective early years pedagogue ...' Whilst we feel that the use of the word 'pedagogy' should be promoted, 'pedagogue' is a difficult word (even to pronounce accurately!) and may confuse rather than support practitioners. For this reason, the root sentences in the final version have used 'effective practitioners' where appropriate. This Framework appears in Section 4 integrated with an exemplification document as requested by respondents to the web-site!

Table 3b: Activities observed over Layers 2 and 3

Group Size	Initiated	Adult Role	Focused/ Play activity	Description	Primary Learning Intentions/Aims
Small group (2-6)	Adult initiated	Adult Led	Focused	Making masks	Creative development, fine motor skills development, design
Small group (1-4)	Adult initiated	Adult Led	Focused	Painting full-sized child cut-outs	Creative development, colour and shape recognition, PSE development
Small group (3)	Adult initiated	Adult Led	Focused participation	Visiting Milk Bar for snack and drink	Language and PSE development, choice
Small group (5)	Adult initiated	Adult Led	Focused participation	Shopping for vegetables and making soup	Language and PSE development, fine motor skills development
Small group (4/5)	Adult initiated	Adult led and supported	Focused	Creating collaborative picture on slabs of clay	Language and PSE development
Small group (8)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused participation	Lunch time	PSE and language development, promoting independence
Small group (4 come/go)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused participation	Snack time	PSE and language development
Small group (4)	Adult initiated	Adult support and modelling	Play	Block play	Concept, language and mathematical development, 2D shapes
Individual and pairs	Child initiated	Adult support and modelling	Play	Play	Modelling language skills, valuing children
Small group (4)	Adult initiated	Adult led and supported	Focused participation	Creative activities	Language and social development
Large group	Child initiated	Adult supported	Focused participation	Children's choice related to topic	Creative development and independence
Small groups	Child initiated	Adult supported	Focused participation	Children's choice related to topic	Creative development and independence
Whole class	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Singing with guitar	All areas of learning development
Whole class	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Circle time (news)	Speaking and listening, PSE, K and U of World development[1]
Large group (8)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Act out sea adventure	Creative and physical development
Small group	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Exploring real fish	Language and cognitive development
Small group	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Role-play in shoe shop	All areas of learning, learning to play
Small group	Adult initiated	Adult led and supported	Focused	Bricks	Texture, thinking skills
Small group (4)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Programmable toys	ICT, language and mathematical development
Small group	Adult initiated	Adult led and supported	Focused	Construction	Classification, mathematical development, encouraging girls
Small group (6: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Story sequencing	Develop literacy skills (sequencing, recall, articulation, vocabulary)
Whole group (25: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Circle time	PSE development (sharing, co-operation, listening and valuing others)
Small group (4: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Painting task	Develop fine motor skills, eye-hand co-ordination, colour mixing and painting skills
Small group (3: come/go)	Adult initiated	Adult supported, individual child targeted	Play	Jigsaw puzzle	Develop fine motor skills, eye hand co-ordination, cognitive and thinking skills

[1] Personal/Social/Emotional and Knowledge and Understanding of the World

Group Size	Initiated	Adult Role	Focused/ Play activity	Description	Primary Learning Intentions/Aims
Small group (3: come/go)	Adult initiated	Adult supported, individual child targeted	Play	Water tray with animals	Develop co-operative working skills, consolidation of previous work on animals
Small group (8: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led and supported	Focused	Observing worms in classroom	Develop observation skills and Knowledge and Understanding of the World
Small group (4: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led and supported	Focused	Walk to supermarket to buy cooking ingredients	Develop language skills (speaking and understanding) and Knowledge and Understanding of the World
Small group (6 key worker group: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused participation	Snack time	Develop language skills (speaking, listening and understanding), PSE development (listening to and valuing others)
Small group (6 key worker group: come/go)	Adult initiated	Adult supported	Play	Play-doh	Develop manual dexterity, knowledge of shape, size and colour, physical properties
Whole group (26: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Story-time – books read to whole group	Develop listening skills and Knowledge and Understanding of the World
Small group (8: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Looking at treasure map as part of topic work	Develop literacy skills (vocabulary, creative/imaginative writing), thinking skills (making connections)
Pair (with onlookers)	Child initiated	Adult supported	Play	Spontaneous counting opportunity from children's drawing	Learning and development through child-initiated, purposeful and collaborative play. Take advantage of spontaneous opportunities to extend skills and thinking
Individual child	Child initiated	Adult supported	Focused	Writing story	Refine handwriting skill, practise imaginative writing
Small groups	Child initiated	Adult supported	Play	Working outdoors - painting, water play, imaginative play, washing clothes, trikes	Learning and development through child-initiated, purposeful and collaborative play. Take advantage of spontaneous opportunities to extend skills, knowledge and thinking
Small group (6: come/go)	Adult initiated	Adult supported	Focused participation	Dressing a tree	Creative and language development
Large group (12 key worker group: fixed)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Circle time	Develop PSE (valuing others), language skills (speaking and listening) and thinking skills (problem solving)
Individual children (1:1: invited)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Writing as part of a book topic	Develop and refine writing skills (left to right direction, letter formation)
Small group (2:1: invited)	Adult initiated	Adult led	Focused	Observing and drawing a fish as part of topic work	Develop observation skills and Knowledge and Understanding of the World through multi-sensory activity
Small group (6 invited)	Adult initiated	Adult supported	Play	Washing 'babies'	Develop language skills (speaking) and collaborative play
Small group (8: come/go)	Child initiated	Adult supported, individual child with SEN targeted	Play	Playing in sand with cooking and eating utensils	Learning and development through purposeful and collaborative play. Develop language skills (speaking and listening), fine-motor skills and manual dexterity

SECTION 4

A Framework for Effective Pedagogy in Early Years

A Framework for Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years

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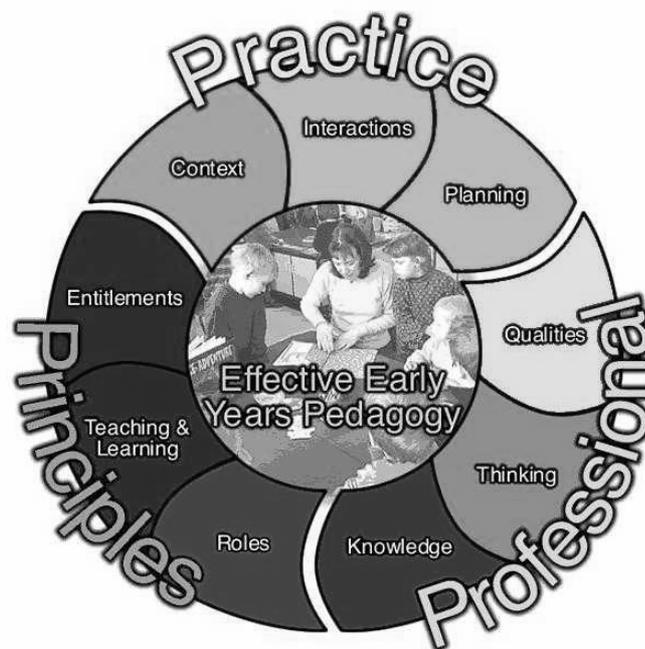
**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

in collaboration with ..

DfES

**EARLY YEARS AND
CHILD CARE UNIT**

PRACTICE Code - Pc: INT
Key Statements

During <u>teaching and learning interactions</u> effective practitioners …

1. build on children's existing:
   - capabilities
   - interests and experiences
   - learning styles

2. play alongside children, scaffolding and extending children's learning

3. communicate with children at their level, listen to and talk with children, valuing what they say

4. engage and direct children's attention, interest and motivation in focused teaching activities through:
   - telling
   - describing
   - demonstrating
   - instructing
   - explaining

5. pose meaningful, challenging questions and answer children's questions succinctly, honestly and accurately

6. guide and support children through activities and teach children to make connections across learning experiences

7. teach and model:
   - language and communication skills
   - playful behaviours
   - thinking skills
   - collaborative working
   - positive attitudes
   - behavioural/social expectations

8. enable children to initiate their own activities, making choices and being responsible for their own learning

9. engage with children's own thinking and decision-making, supporting children in working things out and asking questions for themselves

10. know when (and when not) to intervene in children's learning experiences

11. adapt both open-ended and focused activities according to children's abilities, interests and learning styles

12. actively seek opportunities to give positive feedback to children, offering praise for stated achievements and celebrating children's genuine successes

13. clarify and convey to children learning expectations, intentions, outcomes and targets

14. use children's experiences and theories and share own experiences and learning with children.

PRACTICE   Code - Pc: CXT
Key Statements

Within the <u>teaching and learning context</u> effective practitioners …

1. provide a positive learning atmosphere and ethos which:
   - has a sense of purpose
   - fosters enjoyment
   - generates care and support for others

2. establish a rhythm and routine to each session which supports children and adults

3. provide an environment which is pleasant, safe, orderly and planned

4. promote children's learning through carefully conceived room arrangements and displays

5. supply equipment and resources which are:
   - selected with differentiated learning intentions in mind
   - stimulating
   - accessible
   - attractive

6. make available non-discriminatory and non-stereotypical resources and experiences which reflect differing:
   - linguistic
   - social
   - cultural
   - religious
   - ethnic aspects of the community

7. ensure a balance and variety of activities and experiences across all areas of learning and over time

8. balance individual, small group and large group learning opportunities, using knowledge of the children to group variously according to recognised capabilities

9. promote children's learning through provision of play-based, active, hands-on, multi-sensory and meaningful experiences

10. allow time for sustained play, exploration and chance to complete activities

11. ensure consolidation of learning through well-conceived repetition and through varied presentations of each learning intention

12. provide situations in which children can:
    - play individually and collaboratively
    - facilitate and stimulate each other's learning and thinking
    - listen to others and learn to respect other viewpoints

13. establish respectful relationships with parents and carers that are reciprocal and collaborative

14. build parents' and carers' trust and confidence and enable two-way exchanges of information

15. share children's successes with parents and carers and provide accessible information about teaching and learning.

16. cultivate and foster collaborative team-working through planned communication systems

17. have good working relationships and links with other agencies, receiving schools or classes, other Foundation Stage settings and the local community

PRACTICE   Code - Pc: PEA
Key Statements

Effective practitioners ensure they <u>plan for, assess and evaluate</u> …

1. the learning and development needs of all children through their:

    - individual learning styles
    - dispositions to learning
    - levels of knowledge and understanding
    - concepts and process skills
    - thinking and reflection
    - strengths and special abilities
    - well-being
    - behaviour
    - language and communication skills
    - values and interests
    - difficulties and concerns

2. the specific learning and development needs of both boys and girls

3. the range and balance of differentiated teaching and learning opportunities and experiences across all six areas of learning

4. short-, medium- and long-term teaching and learning intentions and outcomes

5. learning objectives that extend children's experiences individually and collectively

6. the range of assessment strategies used in both planned and spontaneous situations which inform:
    - knowledge and understanding of the child's progress
    - the identification of learning needs and next steps
    - on-going development of effective practice

7. their own impact on children's learning and progression and their understanding of the effects of environment on learning

8. the collection and recording of evidence of learning outcomes and progress through;
    - observing children's responses to learning activities
    - listening to and talking with children

9. target setting for achievement and progression towards the Early Learning Goals

10. evidence that has been systematically and regularly gathered to support:
    - monitoring and improvement of the overall quality of the teaching and learning environment
    - their own ability to provide for differentiated teaching and learning
    - equality of opportunity for all children
    - collaborative working structures

11. their work in involving parents and carers in:
    - the identification of their child's achievements and experiences
    - identifying the next steps for individual children

12. communication systems for working with parents and others within the setting and community

PRINCIPLES   Code – Pp: ENT
Key Statements

Effective practitioners believe in, and value, the <u>entitlement</u> of all children to …

1. high quality education and care through a broad, balanced, meaningful and integrated Foundation Stage curriculum

2. early childhood as a specific, valid and important stage of a child's life and education

3. quality time with interested adults

4. time to explore and develop friendships with other children and adults

5. be taught by practitioners who:
    - consider children's learning and overall development holistically
    - build on each child's potential as an individual
    - differentiate learning experiences
    - build upon, encourage and extend children's prior learning

6. favourable conditions for learning in which children feel secure, included, valued and respected

7. play as a vital process in:
    - cognitive/intellectual development
    - physical development and motor skills
    - personal, social and emotional development
    - linguistic development
    - mathematical development
    - creative development

8. have all areas of their learning and development seen as of equal significance

9. opportunities to work and play with practitioners who:
    - encourage children's curiosity and exploration
    - enhance children's natural learning and development
    - use praise for worthy achievement
    - understand how children become learners
    - are playful and inspiring teachers

10. recognition, respect and equality of opportunity, with consideration for:
    - ethnicity
    - culture
    - religion
    - home language
    - family background
    - special educational need
    - gender or ability

PRINCIPLES   Code – Pp: T/L
Key Statements

Effective practitioners value and believe in <u>teaching and learning practices</u> which …

1. maximise learning and teaching opportunities both indoors and outdoors

2. are well planned, well managed, stimulating and visually appealing

3. promote positive learning and socially acceptable behaviour

4. ensure time is available for children fully to explore and extend concepts, ideas and interests and complete tasks to their own satisfaction

5. incorporate experiences designed to promote independence, perseverance and concentration

6. enable children to:
   - make choices
   - take measured risks
   - talk and think for themselves
   - have some responsibility for articulating and evaluating their own learning

7. make full use of a range of open-ended, active, hands-on, multi-sensory learning experiences through which children can:
   - exploit their innate capacity for learning
   - explore concepts, ideas and interests
   - apply knowledge and skills
   - practise and refine skills
   - reinforce and consolidate knowledge
   - learn to handle tools and equipment with care

8. make full use of collaborative and co-operative ways of learning

9. commit adults and children to having realistic but high expectations of progression, behaviour and self-management

10. incorporate systems for critical analysis and examination of children's play, learning and progression

11. use a combination of adult interactions, the learning environment and the assessment of children's responses to inform daily practice and medium- and long-term planning.

PRINCIPLES   Code – Pp: R
Key Statements

Effective practitioners value and believe in the importance of their <u>own role</u> and capacity to …

1. engage, intervene and partner children in the learning process

2. establish and build sensitive teaching and learning relationships with children

3. model appropriate social, emotional and intellectual behaviours

4. teach children as well as care for their welfare

5. be firm but fair in dealing with each child's demands

6. interact and communicate with children positively, enthusiastically, flexibly and thoughtfully

7. actively seek and promote equality of opportunity for each child, parent, carer and colleague

8. build positive, supportive and collaborative family relationships, working with the family to ensure each child achieves her or his full potential

9. establish and develop effective team work and collaboration within and beyond the setting

10. identify and understand the principles which underpin early years pedagogy

11. reflect regularly on current thinking about teaching young children, their learning and development

12. ensure they are up-to-date in their understanding of local and national initiatives and the impact upon their work

13. engage in training and on-going development of professional learning

14. take initiative and trust their own judgements

PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS   Code – Pf:K
Key Statements

Effective practitioners have <u>knowledge and understanding</u> of …

1. each child's background and dispositions to learning

2. all aspects of child development including theories of, and approaches to, learning

3. how to combine and apply pedagogic knowledge and understanding so that teaching and learning experiences are congruent with children's development

4. multi-sensory learning and teaching approaches for young children

5. the rationale for selection of high quality equipment and resources to benefit learning and teaching

6. the role and skills of the teacher and a wide variety of teaching strategies

7. the curriculum and its implementation both in general and specifically in relation to the CGFS, Early Learning Goals and the setting of developmentally appropriate targets

8. how to assess, evaluate, monitor and manage children's learning in relation to the Foundation Stage

9. how and when to intervene, mediate and interact in children's learning activities and experiences

10. when and why children find learning challenging

11. children's conceptions and misconceptions through
    - observation
    - encouraging children to articulate their own learning processes

12. when and how to introduce new concepts in familiar contexts and experiences

13. working with children with special needs

14. child protection issues and procedures

15. safety issues and application to practice

16. self-as-teacher and learner including their own need for extension of professional knowledge and when, how and who to access for information, support and guidance, including training courses

17. how to help parents and carers understand early education processes and content through direct knowledge of family and community background

18. how to utilise other pedagogues' skills and abilities for the benefit of the team, children and families

19. Foundation Stage/Key Stage One links and the continuity, progression and communication needed for on-going extension of children's learning and development

PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS   Code – Pf:TH
Key Statements

Effective practitioners are <u>reflective and thoughtful</u> people who …

1. perceive each child holistically, as an individual and as part of a family and community

2. respect children's ideas, culture, family and community background and past and current experiences

3. review, challenge and improve their own pedagogy through critical and informed reflection

4. acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses and use these to instigate necessary change

5. are able to give and receive constructive criticism in order to enhance professional development and practice

6. examine, question and evaluate all aspects of effective early years pedagogy and child development

7. are clearly aware of their own impact as teachers on children's learning and development

8. understand the need to develop cycles of planning, monitoring, assessment and evaluation which move their own and children's thinking forwards

9. conceive of self as both teacher and learner and understand own professional thinking and ways of understanding (metacognition)

10. are aware of their own professional well-being, professionalism and self-efficacy

11. are self-aware committed to developing themselves as effective pedagogues

12. are professionally, morally and contractually accountable to the setting and its managers and governors

PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS   Code – Pf:QU
Key Statements

The <u>personal qualities</u> of effective early years practitioners include …

1. self-motivation and the ability to motivate others

2. the ability to:
   - be reflective
   - be questioning
   - be analytical
   - be committed to learning and professional development.
   - welcome and initiate constructive, critical engagement with peers and others

3. being confident and secure in the role of teacher

4. an informed interest in young children and their development and caring about how children think, learn and behave

5. high expectations of self and children

6. being positive and realistic about what can be achieved, and with positive attitudes and approaches to children and adults

7. friendly, amenable, open and welcoming relationships

8. a sense of humour, fun and enjoyment and enthusiasm

9. a caring, nurturing, calm and sensitive approach

10. being intuitive, receptive, empathetic, responsive and able to 'tune in' to children

11. open-mindedness, adaptability and flexibility with children and adults

12. vision, innovation and imagination

13. having flair and bringing creative thinking to the professional role

14. being able to take initiative and use common sense

15. being organised and able to maintain an organised environment

16. fairness and consistency in handling children and adults

17. having patience and tolerance but also the ability to set clear parameters for, e.g. children's behaviour

18. being articulate and an able communicator who understands the effects of body language and posture on others

19. having skills in being both an independent and collaborative worker

20. being reliable and emotionally stable in the working environment

A Framework for Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years

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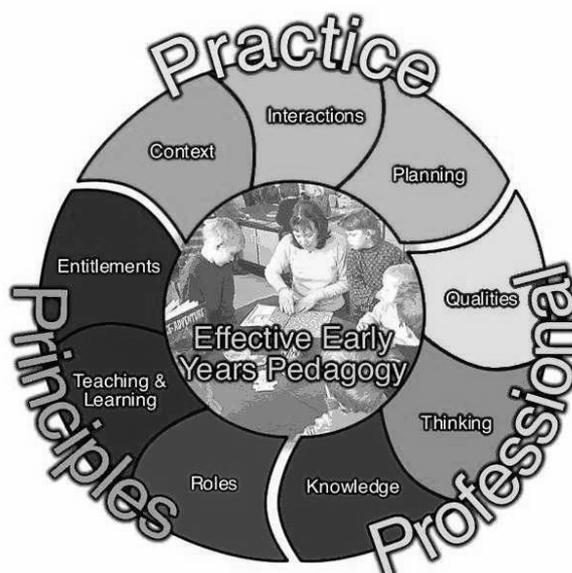
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

in collaboration with ..

DfES

EARLY YEARS
CURRICULUM TEAM

What is this Guidance?

The purpose of this guidance is to give some background information about the development of the Framework for Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years and an indication of its use to define effective pedagogy. The Framework was developed by a team of researchers from Anglia Polytechnic University working with practitioners, managers and headteachers from a range of different backgrounds, working in a variety of effective settings across England. The researchers also drew on the knowledge of a group of early years experts, the responses of parents to a questionnaire and a review of national and international literature.

Why do we need a Framework for Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years?

The *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage* (CGFS) places emphasis on the importance of the role of the practitioner in early years teaching and learning and the idea of good practice underpinning effective early education.

> All settings that receive nursery education grant funding are required to offer high-quality provision. Most children are expected to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage. Practitioners should plan a curriculum that helps children make good progress towards, and where appropriate beyond, these goals … Children aged three, four and five … learn in many different ways. Practitioners have a crucial role in this learning and should draw on a range of teaching and care strategies and knowledge of child development. Children deepen their understanding by playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and to each other. Practitioners need to plan learning experiences of the highest quality, considering both children's needs and achievements and the range of learning experiences that will help them make progress.   (QCA/DfEE 2000: 6-7)

The Framework

The Framework for Effective Pedagogy is intended to complement the CGFS. It establishes the range of competencies, values, beliefs and characteristics that constitute early years pedagogy and represents the things practitioners need to consider to implement the curriculum most effectively. As such it can be used to help define, refine and develop pedagogy for individuals or teams.

Early years pedagogy is extremely complex and difficult to define precisely. It is more than 'practice' alone, for it is what practitioners THINK about as well as DO, and the principles, theories, knowledge and qualities that inform and shape their practice. Pedagogy encompasses working with children, their families, the team and the setting within the whole community. This complex role is represented within the Framework's Key Statements: they define the components of effective early years pedagogy.

The Key Statements are organised within three 'Areas of Focus': Practice, Principles and Professional Dimensions and each Area of Focus is further divided into three sub-sections. These are all represented in the diagram on the front cover of this Guidance. Each of the Areas of Focus, together with the terms 'pedagogy' and 'effectiveness', are described in Appendix A.

There are 129 Key Statements altogether, reflecting the complexity of early years pedagogy. The three Areas of Focus and all the Key Statements are interconnected and interdependent. Practitioners demonstrate many Key Statements across the Areas of Focus at any given moment, such is the complexity of the role. As the CGFS is based on a set of principles for early years education, so the Framework is underpinned by principles of effective early years pedagogy and these beliefs and values affect practitioners' practice and thinking. The CGFS emphasises knowledge and understanding of children in general and each child in particular, and this too is reflected within the Framework.

Each of the Key Statements carries what is called a *root sentence*, for example, under 'Practice: Interactions' the statements are prefaced with 'During <u>teaching and learning interactions</u> effective practitioners …' Under 'Principles: Entitlements' the root sentence is: 'Effective practitioners believe in, and value the <u>entitlement</u> of all children to …' It is vital that practitioners read these root sentences carefully in order to understand clearly what follows because sometimes they will be asked to look at practice and practical aspects and at others, to examine underpinning values and beliefs that may or may not appear in the actual practice (as can be seen from the cameo stories which have been used to exemplify this Framework Guidance).

Using the Framework

It must be emphasised that the Framework is 'aspirational' in that it represents a set of quality assurance criteria. Effective practitioners value and believe in the importance of reflecting regularly on current thinking about teaching young children and reviewing, challenging and improving their own pedagogy through critical and informed reflection. In other words, effective practitioners continuously strive towards improving the quality of their pedagogy. It is intended that the Framework provides a structure through which can be considered.

In order to develop the effectiveness of their pedagogy, practitioners should:

> ➢ discuss and consider the Key Statements with others
> ➢ identify the links within and between the Areas of Focus
> ➢ if relevant, extend the Key Statements to fulfil the particular circumstances of an individual setting
> ➢ identify personal beliefs and values
> ➢ identify personal strengths and weaknesses
> ➢ identify range of own knowledge and understanding
> ➢ consider the links between the Framework and the CGFS (Chart included at the end)
> ➢ consider the meaning of 'effectiveness' and evidence for effectiveness of practice
> ➢ identify training needs
> ➢ draw up and consider 'stories' of pedagogy (Examples included on the following pages)
> ➢ consider, reflect upon and analyse actual teaching and learning episodes in relation to Framework

Many of the practitioners involved with the research to develop the Framework reported the immense value of having a small portion of their practice filmed on video and then reflecting with a research-partner upon the effectiveness of their pedagogy. The practitioner explored what and why they had acted and reacted in the way they had, the thinking, knowledge and principles that had informed that, and the ways they may act differently on another occasion. The filming was used as a springboard for discussion, and is useful in promoting discussion, but the value lay in the reflective discussion that was shared between the research-partners. Practitioners wishing to develop their pedagogy using the Framework can reflect upon and critique their practice using teaching and learning episodes independently or collaboratively with good effect and:

> ➢ identify the Key Statements involved
> ➢ analyse and reflect upon their own impact
> ➢ reflect on the effectiveness and evidence of effectiveness of practice
> ➢ identify and consider the quality of specific strategies used within activities, e.g. quality of questioning
> ➢ consider the outcomes in relation to intentions
> ➢ consider how and in what ways quality could be improved
> ➢ identify training needs

Cameo stories of teaching and learning episodes and reflection on these from actual practitioners are given below. Key Statements have been identified from across the Framework. They are intended to show that consideration, reflection and analysis of teaching and learning episodes can help define, refine, develop and so improve the effectiveness (and quality) of pedagogy. The Framework itself is appended to this.

CAMEO STORY ONE
Painting at the Day Nursery

Jeni, just 4 years of age, has lain on a large piece of paper on the floor and been drawn around by two other children supported by Melissa, a nursery nurse. Jeni is amused by the life-sized outline of herself and remarks that it has 'no clothes on'. This is a prompt for Melissa to suggest that they carry the large paper to a table alongside which has paints and large brushes laid out. There is also a full-length safety mirror on a stand nearby. Melissa knows that many young children love to look at themselves in the mirror and it will also serve to help Jeni and others make decisions about the colours and textures of their clothes.

After they have shared the careful carrying of the large paper to the table, Jeni starts by picking up the black brush. Melissa asks, "What are you going to paint with black?". Jeni hesitates, then looks down and says, "My shoes are black". "They are indeed", says Melissa. Jeni carefully colours in her shoes and then returns the black to the side table. As she is returning (without any paint), Melissa suggests that she might look in the mirror to see what other colours she can see in her clothes. Jeni, however, becomes fixed on her own face. She asks Melissa, "What colour is my face?". "It is a sort of browny colour", she says. "Can you see a browny skin colour on the paint table?"

Jeni returns to the paints and selects a light brown, which she carefully paints on the to the back of her hand to check the match. The painting continues for nearly 30 minutes, with Jeni going backwards and forwards between the paints, the mirror and the large figure of herself. During that time, Melissa and she continue their communication, discussing Jeni's appearance and clothing and occasionally adding comments about things in the room and their colours.

Melissa talks afterwards about the careful preparation of colours, especially of the children's skin colours, which went into the activity. Next time, she indicates, children will be developmentally ready to think about mixing their own colours but, on this occasion, the activity was a colour-matching rather than a colour-mixing experience. She relates to 'doing it the Reggio way' as a reason for the choice of activity.

She's keen to share the outcome with Jeni's mum when she collects the child at lunchtime because Melissa knows that the mother is quite anxious about the child not apparently concentrating. The outcome will also be photographed for Jeni's records. They will put Jeni's picture in the library, with others, when they next do their community display.

Her own role, she explains, was one of supporting Jeni very directly without doing everything for her. She wanted the child to think beyond the basic colour vocabulary, which she already knows and to have time to get into the process of close observation. She expresses joy at her level of concentration not, in her experience, usual for this child. She thinks that it may well have been the one-to-one focus of the activity, which enabled her to concentrate for so long, plus the child's direct interest in replicating 'herself'. She had intervened only once when Jeni had, according to Melissa, been going to paint her mouth on her forehead, for the simple reason that the paper had been orientated 'upside-down' according to where Jeni was standing and she got confused. That was the fault of the table layout, she concluded. Jeni, she knows, has learned much from this experience which Melissa has recorded so that when the staff team are considering more activities, they can take the children's responses into account.

In this teaching and learning episode and her discussion about it, Melissa shows evidence of working within a range of Key Statements as follows:

During teaching and learning <u>interactions</u> effective practitioners …

- build on children's existing capabilities; interests and experiences; learning styles   Pc:INT (1)

- communicate with children at their level, listen to and talk with children …   Pc:INT (3)

- engage and direct children's attention, interest and motivation in focused teaching activities … Pc:INT (4)

- pose meaningful…questions…   Pc:INT (5)

- guide and support children through activities and teach children to make connections across learning experiences   Pc:INT (6)

- know when (and when not) to intervene in children's learning experiences Pc:INT (10)

Within the teaching and learning <u>context</u> effective practitioners …

- provide a positive learning atmosphere and ethos which …fosters enjoyment… Pc:CXT (1)

- provide an environment which is …safe, orderly… Pc:CXT (3)

- supply equipment and resources which are selected with differentiated learning intentions in mind; stimulating, accessible… Pc:CXT (5)

- make available non-discriminatory and non-stereotypical resources and experiences which reflect differing… ethnic aspects of the community   Pc:CXT (6)

- balance individual, small group and large group learning opportunities, using knowledge of the children to group variously according to recognised capabilities   Pc:CXT (8)

- promote children's learning through provision of play-based active, hands-on…experiences Pc:CXT (9)

- allow time for sustained play, exploration and chance to complete activities   Pc:CXT (10)

- …share children's successes with parents and carers…   Pc:CXT (15)

- … collaborative team-working through planned communication systems Pc:CXT (16)

- have good…links…with… the local community Pc:CXT (17)

Effective practitioners ensure they <u>plan for, assess and evaluate</u> …

- the learning and development needs of all children through their: individual learning styles; dispositions to learning; levels of knowledge and understanding; concepts and process skills; thinking and reflection… behaviour… …interests…difficulties… Pc:PEA (1)

- the range and balance of differentiated teaching and learning opportunities and experiences across all six areas of learning   Pc:PEA (3)

- learning objectives that extend children's experiences individually and collectively   Pc:PEA (5)

- the range of assessment strategies used in both planned and spontaneous situations which inform: knowledge and understanding of the child's progress; the identification of learning needs and next steps… Pc:PEA (6)

- the collection and recording of evidence of learning outcomes and progress through: observing children's responses to learning activities; listening to and talking with children   Pc:PEA (8)

Effective practitioners believe in, and value, the <u>entitlement of all children</u> to …

- quality time with interested adults   Pp:ENT (3)

- be taught by practitioners who: consider children's learning and overall development holistically; build on each child's potential as an individual; differentiate learning experiences; build upon, encourage and extend children's prior learning   Pp:ENT (5)

Effective practitioners value and believe in <u>teaching and learning practices</u> which …

- incorporate experiences designed to promote independence, perseverance and concentration   Pp:T/L (5)

- enable children to: make choices …talk and think for themselves   Pp:T/L (6)

- make full use of a range of open-ended, active, hands-on, multi-sensory learning experiences through which children can: exploit their innate capacity for learning; explore concepts, ideas and interests; apply knowledge and skills; practise and refine skills; reinforce and consolidate knowledge; learn to handle tools and equipment with care   Pp:T/L (7)

- use a combination of adult interactions, the learning environment and the assessment of children's responses to inform daily practice and medium- and long-term planning Pp:T/L (11)

Effective practitioners value and believe in the importance of their <u>own role</u> and capacity to …

- engage, intervene and partner children in the learning process   Pp:R (1)

- teach children as well as care for their welfare   Pp:R (4)

- interact and communicate with children positively, enthusiastically, flexibly and thoughtfully   Pp:R (6)

- build positive, supportive and collaborative family relationships, working with the family to ensure each child achieves her or his full potential   Pp:R (8)

- establish and develop effective team work and collaboration within…the setting   Pp:R (9)

Effective practitioners have <u>knowledge</u> and understanding of …

- each child's background and dispositions to learning   Pf:K (1)

- how to combine and apply pedagogic knowledge and understanding so that teaching and learning experiences are congruent with children's development   Pf:K (3)

- multi-sensory learning and teaching approaches for young children   Pf:K (4)

- the role and skills of the teacher and a wide variety of teaching strategies   Pf:K (6)

- how and when to intervene, mediate and interact in children's learning activities and experiences Pf:K (9)

- children's conceptions and misconceptions through: observation; encouraging children to articulate their own learning processes   Pf:K (11)

- when and how to introduce new concepts in familiar contexts and experiences   Pf:K (12)

Effective practitioners are <u>reflective and thoughtful</u> people who …

- perceive each child holistically, as an individual and as part of a family and community Pf:TH (1)

- respect children's ideas, culture, family and community background and past and current experiences Pf:TH (2)

- review, challenge and improve their own pedagogy through critical and informed reflection Pf:TH (3)

- acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses and use these to instigate necessary change Pf:TH (4)

- are clearly aware of their own impact as teachers on children's learning and development Pf:TH (7)

The <u>personal</u> qualities of effective early years practitioners include …

- the ability to be: reflective; questioning; analytical… Pf:QU (2)

- an informed interest in young children and their development and caring about how children think, learn and behave   Pf:QU (4)

- being positive and realistic about what can be achieved positive attitudes and approaches to children and adults   Pf:QU (6)

- being intuitive, receptive, empathetic, responsive and able to 'tune in' to children   Pf:QU (10)

- being organised and able to maintain an organised environment   Pf:QU (15)

- having skills in being both an independent and collaborative worker Pf:QU (19)

CAMEO STORY TWO
Story-telling at the Playgroup

Nicky, a playgroup playleader, calls all 26 children together for 'story and song time'. This is part of the regular routine at the end each session. The children can choose to sit either on chairs or on the mat in front of Nicky, who sits poised and silent, waiting. The children quieten quickly.

She reads a story from one of two books she has ready, first pointing at the title and saying, 'This book is called…' and asking questions about the cover picture. She tells the story with the book held up for the children to see; she knows the text well. Sometimes she points to the text or the pictures. Sometimes she holds the book further forward and moves it around so the children can see more clearly. She moves forwards and backwards to emphasise the rhythm of the text.

Nicky's voice varies in tone, volume and pitch, adding dramatic intonation to make the story exciting. She uses gestures, actions and dramatic sounds, such as a sharp intake of breath. Nicky looks animated, her eyes wide and sparkly, eyebrows raised. She opens her mouth as in surprise and smiles a great deal. She continuously scans the group. She appears confident and her approach is warm, calm and animated. The children are immersed in the story, silent and still. Speaking clearly and relatively slowly, Nicky maintains the pace and rhythm, accentuating particular words.

At various points she asks questions, such as, 'What animals can you see?', 'What does that one look like?' and 'Which animals do you know that have long necks?' Sometimes she leaves a sentence unfinished with an expectant pause. Sometimes she asks for meanings of words e.g. 'It's vanished. What does 'vanished' mean?' [many children shout out] 'Yes it's disappeared…she can't find it.' At other times she asks questions to promote thinking such as, 'What colour is it?' 'What colour should it be?' 'What has happened?' At several points Nicky asks questions such as, 'Now she's looking for something with a sound beginning with 'C', can you see?'. She asks questions that connect the two stories she is telling e.g. 'This one's about an animal as well, what sort of animal?' [looking around expectantly} 'It begins with the sound 'Z''. The children answer when invited and Nicky repeats what a child has said so that all of the children have heard and understood. She waits patiently for children's responses, acknowledging ones but carrying on. She controls the response to questions and maintains the pace and rhythm of the story telling.

Occasionally she makes a deliberate mistake, e.g. 'Shall we look behind the *red* door?' 'It's blue!' [shouts a boy] 'You're right Bobby, well done, it is a *blue* door!' At the end of each story she summarises the plot in two or three sentences and allows the children to ask questions.

To finish off this part of the session, Nicky leads the children through an action rhyme which some children seem to know well and others watch and join in where they can. She suddenly says 'Do you know, I'm beginning to feel a bit hungry now. Guess what I am eating!' [acts out peeling a banana] 'What do I do with the skin? Shall I throw it over there?' [acts out throwing it over her shoulder] 'Throw it in the bin?' [leaning forward to hear child's response]. 'Yes you were right Tim, well done, throw it in the bin.' After looking at her watch she leads the children through some short rhymes of their choice until parents collect the children.

Discussing the session later, Nicky talks about voice control. The way that she uses her voice, helps to gain and keep children's attention, particularly at the beginning of the story and song time. Nicky feels it is important to draw the children and to engage their attention. This is why she asks questions about the book before reading it to them – something to think about and kick start the imagination. They're interested then and anticipating what might happen next. Nicky thinks it is very important always to give children something to which they can relate from their own experience and gives examples of balloons and colours. She thinks that children particularly like to compare colours. She says she can sense when they are absorbed and taking things on board and it's usually when they are relating to what they are hearing and seeing directly.

Nicky suggests that adding drama to storytelling keeps the children really listening and taking it in, really getting into the mood and enjoying it. Being caught up in the stories helps their concentration to develop, their listening skills and their patience and turn taking too – it helps them realise there are other children as

well as themselves. These things are particularly important to teach children at this stage of their development.

Nicky believes in setting a good example of e.g. the way you express yourself confidently, as the children can come to feel more confident in their play, role, feelings and expression. Using hand gestures helps children's development of vocabulary, so for example she emphasises 'floatiness' with her hands to describe 'floating'. Gestures and facial expressions are vital, she thinks, as they add other dimensions to the story, make it more interesting and help children understand words and meaning. She says she deliberately emphasises more difficult or unusual concepts. Actions and gestures are also important when connected with singing, Nicky says as an example she uses her body to emphasise counting. She deliberately uses action to prompt children's thinking when acting out eating the banana.

When talking about the questions, Nicky feels it important to be careful in posing question, i.e. not to ask questions that are going to give a straight, direct answer – open questions help children elaborate. She doesn't like to question too much as she thinks the children can get bored; the playleader has to judge the number of times when asking questions and how far to extend the story. You can gauge it, she says, by observing children's responses. When she feels she's extended enough she'll move on. She uses sound matching questions to both help develop children's phonic awareness and to assess individual children's capability, recorded later.

Nicky talks about managing a very large group. Engagement is important, she thinks, and so is making sure that the children feel included and involved. 'I feel you shouldn't contradict children when they answer incorrectly, so I may say, "Oh *maybe* it could be" emphasising the 'maybe'. I've put the idea in their head and they might think, "Oh well maybe it isn't". If you contradict them they might lose self-esteem and confidence to take part. Being positive and encouraging children to be positive is so important, so is encouraging children to learn more and work with each other.'

Nicky tries at stages during the story to show children that letters and words have meaning – to try and teach the difference between letters, words and pictures and impress on children the importance and fun of reading stories. She reports that children take the role from her – they gather round and pretend to tell stories, they hold the books like she does, and tell stories which are familiar to them, while others sit and listen.

Delivery of the curriculum across all 6 areas of learning, in this case through the story and song time, is important too, says Nicky. She had planned the activity with a linked theme; the stories, songs and pretend banana eating were connected. 'I am always aware how important it is to use every opportunity for learning experiences …. It wasn't just stories and songs, it was a learning experience for the children and me'.

In this teaching and learning episode and her discussion about it, Nicky shows evidence of working within a range of Key Statements as follows:

During teaching and learning <u>interactions</u> effective practitioners …

- communicate with children at their level … Pc:INT (3)

- engage and direct children's attention, interest and motivation in focused teaching activities … Pc:INT (4)

- pose meaningful, challenging questions… Pc:INT (5)

- …teach children to make connections across learning experiences Pc:INT (6)

- teach and model: language and communication skills…thinking skills… Pc:INT (7)

- actively seek opportunities to give positive feedback to children, offering praise for stated achievements… Pc:INT (12)

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Within the teaching and learning <u>context</u> effective practitioners …

- provide a positive learning atmosphere and ethos which …fosters enjoyment… Pc:CXT (1)

- establish a rhythm and routine to each session which supports children… Pc:CXT (2)

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Effective practitioners ensure they <u>plan for, assess and evaluate</u> …

- …learning opportunities and experiences across all six areas of learning   Pc:PEA (3)

- learning objectives that extend children's experiences individually and collectively   Pc:PEA (5)

- their own impact on children's learning and progression…Pc:PEA (7)

- the collection and recording of evidence of learning outcomes and progress through: observing children's responses to learning activities… Pc:PEA (8)

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Effective practitioners value and believe in the importance of their <u>own role</u> and capacity to …

- engage…children in the learning process   Pp:R (1)

- model appropriate social, emotional and intellectual behaviours   Pp:R (2)

- teach children as well as care for their welfare   Pp:R (4)

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Effective practitioners have <u>knowledge</u> and understanding of …

- the role and skills of the teacher and a wide variety of teaching strategies   Pf:K (6)

- the curriculum and its implementation…Pf:K (7)

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The <u>personal</u> qualities of effective early years practitioners include …

- …the ability to motivate others   Pf:QU (2)

- being confident and secure in the role of teacher Pf:QU (3)

- being positive and realistic about what can be achieved and having positive attitudes and approaches to children and adults   Pf:QU (6)

- a sense of humour, fun and enjoyment and enthusiasm   Pf:QU (8)

- being…receptive…responsive and able to 'tune in' to children   Pf:QU (10)

- being articulate and an able communicator who understands the effects of body language and posture on others Pf:QU (18)

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CAMEO STORY THREE
Woodwork in the Reception Class

Jack has chosen to sit outdoors at a table laid with a variety of woodwork tools and materials in labelled boxes. The nursery teacher, Patsy, is sitting alongside Jack handling the different materials herself and giving a commentary on what is happening. 'Oh, look. Rubbing the wood with the sandpaper is making it smoother.' and 'Doesn't this metal bolt feel cold?'

Jack wants to hammer a nail into a piece of wood but has difficulty holding the nail upright. Patsy said, 'I see your nail is wobbling about a lot, what can you do about that?'. Patsy gives Jack sufficient time to think through the problem, make suggestions and try out different strategies. When Jack had worked out a way to his own satisfaction, Patsy comments, 'Good thinking! You've worked out that you can hold the nail steady if you rest your hand on the block of wood - that's great!'

Jack suddenly asks Patsy about the hand drill. Patsy demonstrates how to use the drill whilst describing the process. She then offers it to the child and watches (taking notes on physical development) as Jack experiments with it.

</div>

As Jack plays on, Patsy comments, 'Look at the way you've lined up those hooks.' and, later, 'I do like the way you have used the different coloured string for that pattern!'. Patsy gently encourages Jack to talk about the materials, how he used them, how he might have worked differently and what he might like to do next time. Later she encourages Jack to share this with the other children.

Patsy said afterwards said that she was looking for opportunities to support and extend the child's developing thinking skills throughout the activity. This she did through; encouraging Jack to talk about what he was doing; giving 'verbal feedback'; asking open-ended questions; and scaffolding Jack's thinking through encouraging him to think about what he had done, how he had solved problems and other courses of action he might have taken. Patsy thought that talking about this with other children later on would help to consolidate his learning. She felt it very important to give the child the opportunity of choosing and experimenting with the tools and materials and time to do so. The orderliness, attractiveness and type of equipment set out for children to use are other important factors, according to Patsy, as they encourage children to use them and be stimulated by them.

Patsy described the commentary she had made as 'verbal feedback' and that part of her role was to support and extend Jack's language as well as his thinking. She said she had tried to respond in an interested manner to dialogue the child initiated, making eye contact, as well as answering questions concisely and accurately.

Patsy was also looking for opportunities to offer Jack positive feedback, particularly to praise the child, as this supported him developing confidence, self-esteem and disposition to learn. She was careful to be specific, calling this 'descriptive praising'. The notes taken on physical development would later be used to feed back information to other staff and to Jack's parents, who had expressed some concern about the child's 'clumsiness'.

In this teaching and learning episode and her discussion about it, Patsy shows evidence of working within a range of Key Statements as follows:

During teaching and learning <u>interactions</u> effective practitioners …

- build on children's existing capabilities; interests and experiences; learning styles   Pc:INT (1)

- play alongside children, scaffolding and extending children's learning   Pc:INT (2)

- communicate with children at their level, listen to and talk with children, valuing what they say   Pc:INT (3)

- engage and direct children's attention, interest and motivation… through: …describing; demonstrating …explaining   Pc:INT (4)

- pose meaningful, challenging questions and answer children's questions succinctly, honestly and accurately   Pc:INT (5)

- guide and support children through activities and teach children to make connections across learning experiences   Pc:INT (6)

- teach and model: language and communication skills; playful behaviours; thinking skills…positive attitudes… Pc:INT (7)

- enable children to initiate their own activities, making choices and being responsible for their own learning   Pc:INT (8)

- engage with children's own thinking and decision-making, supporting children in working things out and asking questions for themselves   Pc:INT (9)

- know when (and when not) to intervene in children's learning experiences   Pc:INT (10)

- adapt both open-ended and focused activities according to children's abilities, interests and learning styles   Pc:INT (11)

- actively seek opportunities to give positive feedback to children, offering praise for stated achievements and celebrating children's genuine successes   Pc:INT (12)

Within the teaching and learning <u>context</u> effective practitioners …

- provide a positive learning atmosphere and ethos which: has a sense of purpose; fosters enjoyment; Pc:CXT (1)

- provide an environment which is … orderly and planned   Pc:CXT (3)

- supply equipment and resources which are selected with differentiated learning intentions in mind; stimulating, accessible; attractive   Pc:CXT (5)

- promote children's learning through provision of play-based active, hands-on…meaningful experiences Pc:CXT (9)

- allow time for sustained play, exploration and chance to complete activities   Pc:CXT (10)

- provide situations where children can play individually…listen to others… Pc:CXT (12)

- …share children's successes with parents and carers… Pc:CXT (15)

Effective practitioners ensure they <u>plan for, assess and evaluate</u> …

- the learning and development needs of all children through their: individual learning styles; dispositions to learning; levels of knowledge and understanding; concepts and process skills; thinking and reflection… language and communication skills …interests…difficulties… Pc:PEA (1)

- the range of assessment strategies used in both planned and spontaneous situations which inform: knowledge and understanding of the child's progress; the identification of learning needs and next steps… Pc:PEA (6)

- their own impact on children's learning and progression and their understanding of the effects of environment on learning   Pc:PEA (7)

- the collection and recording of evidence of learning outcomes and progress through: observing children's responses to learning activities; listening to and talking with children   Pc:PEA (8)

Effective practitioners believe in, and value, the <u>entitlement of all children</u> to …

- quality time with interested adults   Pp:ENT (3)

- be taught by practitioners who: consider children's learning and overall development holistically; build on each child's potential as an individual; differentiate learning experiences; build upon, encourage and extend children's prior learning Pp:ENT (5)

- play as a vital process in: cognitive/intellectual development; physical development and motor skills; personal, social and emotional development; linguistic development; mathematical development; creative development   Pp:ENT (7)

- opportunities to work and play with practitioners who: encourage children's curiosity and exploration; enhance children's natural learning and development; use praise for worthy achievement; understand how children become learners… Pp:ENT (9)

Effective practitioners value and believe in teaching and learning practices which …

- maximise learning and teaching opportunities both indoors and outdoors Pp:T/L (1)

- are well planned, well managed, stimulating and visually appealing Pp:T/L (2)

- promote positive learning… Pp:T/L (3)

- ensure time is available for children fully to explore and extend concepts, ideas and interests and complete tasks to their own satisfaction   Pp:T/L (4)

- incorporate experiences designed to promote independence, perseverance and concentration Pp:T/L (5)

- enable children to: make choices; take measured risks; talk and think for themselves; have some responsibility for articulating and evaluating their own learning   Pp:T/L (6)

- make full use of a range of open-ended, active, hands-on…meaningful learning experiences through which children can: exploit their innate capacity for learning; explore concepts, ideas and interests; apply knowledge and skills; practise and refine skills; reinforce and consolidate knowledge; learn to handle tools and equipment with care Pp:T/L (7)

▪	use a combination of adult interactions, the learning environment and the assessment of children's responses to inform daily practice and medium- and long-term planning Pp:T/L (11)

Effective practitioners value and believe in the importance of their <u>own role</u> and capacity to …

- engage, intervene and partner children in the learning process   Pp:R (1)

- model appropriate…intellectual behaviours   Pp:R (3)

- teach children as well as care for their welfare   Pp:R (4)

- interact and communicate with children positively, enthusiastically, flexibly and thoughtfully Pp:R (6)

- build positive … collaborative family relationships   Pp:R (8)

- establish and develop effective team work and collaboration within…the setting Pp:R (9)

Effective practitioners have <u>knowledge</u> and understanding of …

- each child's background and dispositions to learning   Pf:K (1)

- how to combine and apply pedagogic knowledge and understanding so teaching and learning experiences are congruent with children's development   Pf:K (3)

- the rationale for selection of high quality equipment and resources to benefit learning and teaching Pf:K (5)

- the role and skills of the teacher …. Pf:K (6)

- how and when to intervene, mediate and interact in children's learning activities and experiences Pf:K (9)

- children's conceptions and misconceptions through: observation; encouraging children to articulate their own learning processes   Pf:K (11)

Effective practitioners are <u>reflective and thoughtful</u> people who …

- perceive each child holistically, as an individual and as part of a family and community   Pf:TH (1)

- respect children's ideas, … family and community background … Pf:TH (2)

- are clearly aware of their own impact as teachers on children's learning and development   Pf:TH (7)

The <u>personal</u> qualities of effective early years practitioners include …

- an informed interest in young children and their development and caring about how children think, learn and behave   Pf:QU (4)

- being positive and realistic about what can be achieved …. positive attitudes and approaches to children and adults   Pf:QU (6)

- being intuitive, receptive, empathetic, responsive and able to 'tune in' to children   Pf:QU (10)

- being organised and able to maintain an organised environment   Pf:QU (15)

CAMEO STORY FOUR
Sandplay at the Combined Centre

Sally, a qualified teacher working at an early years combined centre, has planned to involve a child with special educational needs, Obi, in sand play. Her aim is to encourage him to join in with a group of children playing and the specific learning intentions for Obi included the development of his fine motor skills. She knew that other children would join her in the sand pit and had general teaching intentions for these children which included the development of language skills. She has placed a box of equipment such as scoops, funnel, spoons, sieves, spades and cups in the sand.

Sally invites Obi to the sand pit by saying, 'I want you to come and play in the sand with me.' He is not keen. Sally reports afterwards that without any intervention he would ride a trike all day as it's easy,

predictable, he knows he can do it and it is therefore not too challenging for him. He avoids all other types of play.

Obi eventually goes with Sally to the sand-pit but stands watching on the periphery. A group of children soon gather and start playing. Sally re-positions herself so she is sitting on the sand closer to Obi. She says later that she wanted to draw him into the activity as he had chosen to sit on a box away from the group of children. Playing alongside with the equipment, pouring, spooning and sieving sand, Sally responds and joins in with the children's talk, supporting and extending their language and thinking. She perseveres in encouraging Obi to become involved through eye-contact and body-language and saying such as, 'Look how fast the sand flows throw this funnel!', 'Feel how warm this sand is' and 'I wonder what will happen if I shake this?'. Eventually Obi picks up one of the sieves and mimics Sally's action. Sally praises Obi and includes him in the talk as often as she has the opportunity. Gradually, as Sally and the other children continue their play and talk, Obi becomes more involved. He listens and watches intently as he plays.

Sally talks later about how delighted she is that Obi stays in the sand-pit and eventually becomes involved in playing with the equipment and thus developing his physical skills. He hadn't joined in directly with the other children, but he had been listening and watching closely and she felt that he would have learned through this. She attributed his involvement to several factors including the attractiveness and appeal of the equipment and sand and the calm manner in which the other children were playing and talking. She thought it was important for her to be seen playing and talking alongside with the equipment as this modelled the play and contributed to it looking enjoyable. She also talked about her role in engaging with him through what she called 'her encouraging attitude' and her body language, which she thought helped him to feel accepted as part of the group. The questions and comments were designed to encourage his involvement.

Sally was enthusiastic about the other children's learning. Obi had been her 'focus child', but she felt she was able to help extend and develop other children's language. She believes strongly that children learn a good deal through playing and working with each other and tries to plan such opportunities.

In this teaching and learning episode and her discussion about it, Sally shows evidence of working within a range of Key Statements as follows:

During teaching and learning interactions effective practitioners …

- play alongside children, scaffolding and extending children's learning   Pc:INT (2)

- communicate with children at their level, listen to and talk with children … Pc:INT (3)

- guide and support children through activities   Pc:INT (6)

- teach and model: language and communication skills; playful behaviours…collaborative working… Pc:INT (7)

Within the teaching and learning context effective practitioners …

- provide a positive learning atmosphere and ethos which …fosters enjoyment; generates care and support for others   Pc:CXT (1)

- provide an environment which is pleasant… Pc:CXT (3)

- supply equipment and resources which are selected with differentiated learning intentions in mind; stimulating, accessible; attractive… Pc:CXT (5)

- promote children's learning through provision of play-based active, hands-on; multi-sensory…experiences   Pc:CXT (9)

- provide situations where children can play…collaboratively; facilitate and stimulate each other's learning and thinking; listen to others… Pc:CXT (12)

Effective practitioners ensure they plan for, assess and evaluate …

- the learning and development needs of all children through their: individual learning styles; dispositions to learning; levels of knowledge and understanding; concepts and process skills … behaviour; language and communicational skills…difficulties… Pc:PEA (1)

- their own impact on children's learning and progression and their understanding of the effects of environment on learning   Pc:PEA (7)

Effective practitioners believe in, and value the entitlement of all children to …

- quality time with interested adults Pp:ENT (3)

- favourable conditions for learning in which children feel secure, included, valued and respected Pp:ENT (6)

- play as a vital process in: …physical development and motor skills; personal, social… development; linguistic development…Pp:ENT (7)

- opportunities to work and play with practitioners who;…are playful and inspiring teachers Pp:ENT (10)

Effective practitioners value and believe in teaching and learning practices which …

- make full use of a range of open-ended, active, hands-on, multi-sensory learning experiences through which children can: exploit their innate capacity for learning; explore concepts, ideas and interests; apply knowledge and skills; practise and refine skills; reinforce and consolidate knowledge; learn to handle tools and equipment with care   Pp:T/L (7)

- make full use of collaborative and co-operative ways of learning   Pp:T/L (8)

Effective practitioners value and believe in the importance of their own role and capacity to …

- engage, intervene and partner children in the learning process   Pp:R (1)

- establish and build sensitive teaching and learning relationships with children   Pp:R (2)

- model appropriate social…intellectual behaviours   Pp:R (3)

- teach children as well as care for their welfare   Pp:R (4)

- interact and communicate with children positively, enthusiastically, flexibly and thoughtfully   Pp:R (6)

Effective practitioners have knowledge and understanding of …

- each child's background and dispositions to learning   Pf:K (1)

- how to combine and apply pedagogic knowledge and understanding so that teaching and learning experiences are congruent with children's development   Pf:K (3)

- multi-sensory learning and teaching approaches for young children   Pf:K (4)

- the rationale for selection of high quality equipment and resources to benefit learning and teaching   Pf:K (5)

- the role and skills of the teacher and a wide variety of teaching strategies   Pf:K (6)

- how and when to intervene, mediate and interact in children's learning activities and experiences Pf:K (9)

- working with children with special needs   Pf:K: (13)

Effective practitioners are reflective and thoughtful people who …

- perceive each child holistically…Pf:TH (1)

- are clearly aware of their own impact as teachers on children's learning and development   Pf:TH (7)

The personal qualities of effective early years practitioners include …

- …the ability to motivate others   Pf:QU (2)

- an informed interest in young children and their development and caring about how children think, learn and behave   Pf:QU (4)

- being positive and realistic about what can be achieved and with positive attitudes and approaches to children… Pf:QU (6)

- friendly, amenable, open and welcoming relationships   Pf:QU (7)

- being intuitive, receptive, empathetic, responsive and able to 'tune in' to children   Pf:QU (10)

- being articulate and an able communicator who understands the effect of body language and posture on others   Pf:QU (18)

SECTION 5

Validation of the Framework

SECTION FIVE
Validation of the Framework

The issue of validation within ethnographic research of this kind is significant in establishing the robustness and integrity of any outcomes produced. In this section we explore both from a practical and theoretical perspective how validation of the data and findings has been approached and the significance these strategies have had in offering good levels of confidence in the outcomes.

5.1   Ethnographic research has as a key element the use of the constructs of the participants to structure the investigation. Empirical data have been gathered in the naturalistic arena of the early years setting. The research is 'holistic' in that it has sought a description and interpretation of a 'total phenomena' (Cohen *et al* 2000: 138) – in this case effective pedagogy. The views of the participants have been investigated and represented and we have undertaken a process of theory generation in relation to effective pedagogy. This has involved a commitment to trying to capture the diversity, variability and individuality of settings and practitioners and to explore patterns of similarity and, where relevant, differences across settings and order them into a form which will make sense to practitioners from diverse backgrounds. The outcome Framework represents a synthesis of a vast range of statements made by practitioners and drawn from background literature, classified using that same literature and the views of experts. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) suggest that 'educative authenticity' is present in research of this kind in that it should 'generate a new appreciation of these understandings' (p.323), in the case of SPEEL, understanding of effective pedagogy.

5.2   From both a theoretical and practical perspective, several measures of validity have been relevant during the research: *interpretive, theoretical, external, internal, predictive* and *construct* validity. For example, reflective dialogues allow a significant level of *interpretive* validity, that is, through RDs it is possible to 'catch the meaning, interpretations, terms, intentions that situations and events, i.e. data, have for the participants themselves ..' (Cohen et al 2000: 107). *Theoretical* validity – the extent to which the research explains the characteristics and components of effective early years pedagogy – is secured because the constructs are those of all participants. This is also the case with *external* validity of the Framework, which should be established similarly because of the broad range of practitioners and settings involved.

5.3   In the SPEEL research, *internal* validity was established by using three participating researchers whose data were then capable of interpretation and analysis by the other two. Peer examination of the data also occurred in the form of RDs. Video and audio recordings allow a return to the data over time and check observations against drafts of the evolving Framework. They also allow the opportunity to show both video and Framework to others, as occurred with both the practitioners and the EAG, to validate our own perspectives on the practice observed. Peer examination of data spontaneously occurred on some occasions when practitioners also shared their video with colleagues. This also links with the concept of *respondent* validation in that it was possible to assess intentionality, correct errors, add further information and check the adequacy of analysis at each of the final two Layers of data collection and interpretation.

5.4   Certain levels of *predictive* validity emerged as each draft Framework was reviewed against the data from each of the three Layers of the research within the 'constant comparison' methodology. *Construct* validity was similarly achieved by ensuring that all elements of the Framework were checked against the literature review, practitioners' own understandings and against the EAG knowledge. In ethnographic research of this type a clear demonstration of construct validity is that the categories the research uses are meaningful to the participants

themselves (Eisenhart and Howe 1992: 648), a factor emerging from the final web-based evaluation.

5.5   *Evaluative* validity is that which we have sought to secure within the Framework, that is, its capability to be 'judgemental' of effective pedagogy. However, as we will point out in Section 7, the Framework cannot be used as a stand-alone instrument: it requires directions for use, exemplification and evaluation.

5.6   Throughout the research, validity of outcome has also been secured through **triangulation** within and between methods of data collection. Triangulation (and, therefore, *concurrent* validity) has occurred in different ways, i.e. triangulation of the participants' perceptions (researchers, practitioners, EAG), triangulation of methods and triangulation of data sources (settings documents, literature review, meetings) (see Figure 17).

Figure 17 – Triangulation of Methods
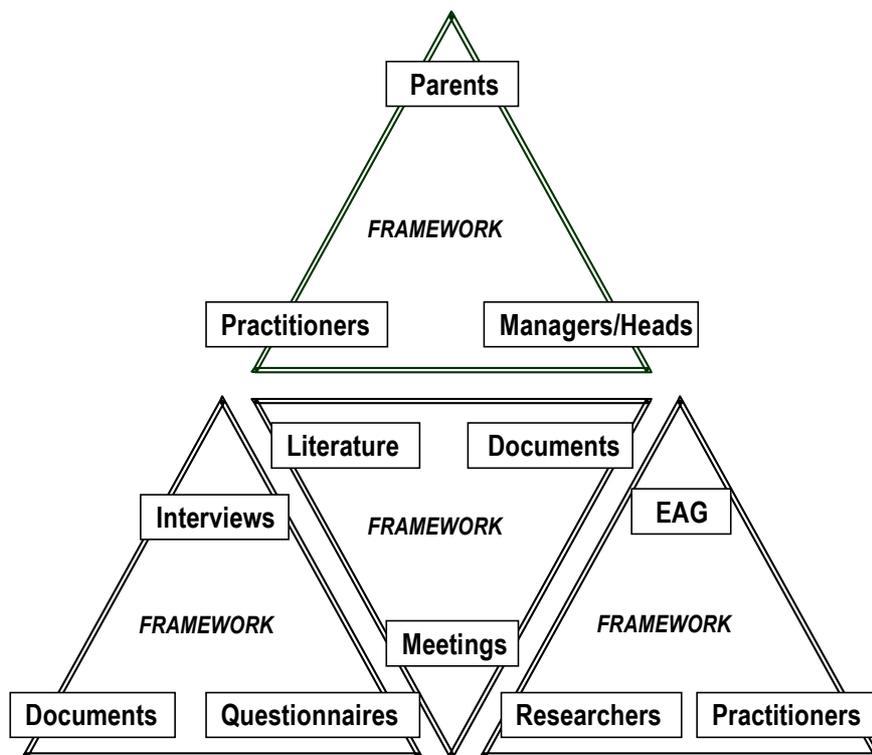
5.7   The tenets of positivistic research, i.e. 'comparability' and 'translatability' (LeCompte and Preissle 1992: 47) can be applied to SPEEL research in as much as the characteristics of the settings and individuals are made explicit, and the analytic categories used in the research have been overt to practitioners and experts throughout so that meaningful comparisons with their own existing knowledge and understanding have been generated. Whilst we have every reason to believe that the issue of 'generalisability' is inherent within the Framework, the sheer quantity of early years providers and settings and the small scale nature of this research (i.e. only 27 settings) and the fact that they have been selected as "effective settings" suggests that the broader community require access to the Framework before generalisability can be verified. At present, the Framework is generalisable to the 'inside' community of effective settings, practitioners and experts who have been engaged in the process of developing it.

5.8   From a practical perspective, several measures were inbuilt into the research design to ensure that the research could be validated in a number of ways and from a variety of perspectives, not least that involved in data from the research instruments (interviews, RDs/ video analysis, questionnaires). In addition, the on-going input of the EAG (and additionally, the Steering Group), SPEEL meetings and the development of the web-site feedback have all meant the involvement by a broad range of interested and knowledgeable personnel in the final Framework document.

5.9   Project meetings when analysing data and making constant comparison with what each participant in each Layer was indicating about effective pedagogy (including their lack of understanding of the term 'pedagogy'!) were conducted. Researchers were in a position of constant interpretation of data during analysis, sustaining rigour through the checks and balances implicit with the design. Nud*Ist software supported the development of a conceptual framework which could inform and challenge the Framework developed which was evolving initially through manual coding.

5.10   Managers/headteachers during both Layers 2 and 3 were asked to respond to sections of the Practice and Principles Key Statements respectively, and give feedback on the evolving content and terminology.   They were asked to comment on existing Framework Key Statements and whether there were aspects they would wish to add.

5.11   Video has been used fairly extensively to validate the Framework, particularly in establishing what it is possible to observe from the developing Key Statements. The use of **reflective dialogues** and video in both Layers 2 and 3, enabled practitioners as research-partners to examine their own practice, enabling the researchers then to compare this against drafts of the Framework.   The research team then used these videos as individuals and as a group to establish content validity of the framework. Partial transcriptions of the videos were made where these were used to exemplify particular aspects of practice, principles or professional dimensions. Three clips from video were also used with the EAG to validate framework and between the team in attempting to validate the framework both individually and as a group. Video stills have been included in exemplification materials to support case studies.

5.12   Short cameos were developed from earlier video and reflective dialogue situations, which were then, in themselves, interrogated by the researchers and EAG alongside the Framework. On-going meetings between researchers used similar techniques to define, categorise and refine areas of focus and Key Statements within the Framework.

5.13   In addition, short case studies of individual practitioners and of pedagogical episodes were selected as epitomising aspects of the draft Framework which were then examined by the EAG and by the researchers for 'fitness for purpose' – see Figure 17 for examples. These have been deliberately selected in order to show different types of setting and differentially qualified practitioners. It seems apparent that detailed narrative analysis of the transcripts would be extremely useful in identifying differences, for example, in the practitioners' differing abilities to articulate their understanding of, and reflection on practice. It would appear, with a brief and tentative analysis, that the qualified teacher is more capable of critiquing her own practice than the playgroup leader. Other case studies, we anticipate, would show similar differences. There has not been time in this investigation to pursue this aspect as fully as we would wish.

5.14   Parent questionnaires were used fairly directly to validate particularly the Personal Qualities within the Professional Dimension Key Statements as has been shown in Section 3 and in Table 5b (end of this Section).

5.15   The web-site (set up with the support of UltraLab - http://speel.apu.ac.uk) proved a useful source of feedback as validation of the content of the Framework – see Table 5a. 102 selected

respondents were invited to access the web-site, representing all 27 settings, all 16 local authority personnel, the EAG, the Steering Group, plus 52 others who were known to have an interest in effective pedagogy and its identification. Open-ended comments made by respondents suggest general enthusiasm for the Framework:

> *Great, there has been a real pedagogy gap!!*
>
> *I feel this is a sound piece of work which will be very useful to our setting.*
>
> *I found the statements clear and concise but detailed. I immediately began using them as a means of self-audit! Liked the balance of the pedagogy with learning through play but the adult supporting, leading, intervening and challenging.*

5.15   We also established the reliability of the draft Framework, through using inter-rater reliability firstly with the three researchers and slightly later through a similar procedure with five of the EAG members. However, because the final Framework was not completed until the very end of the project with all feedback and evaluation up to that date, the inter-rater reliability procedure needs to be repeated with the final Framework and with other raters to fully establish reliability. That said the outcome in terms of the <u>three researchers</u> was:

Practice:	86%
Principles:	80%
Professional Dimensions:	82%

<u>EAG</u> outcomes showed:

Practice:	80%
Principles:	76%
Professional Dimensions:	79%

It is fair to say that reliability was inevitably higher with the 3 researchers because they are more familiar with the Framework. On all counts, however, the tolerances on a document of this type are acceptable.

5.16   As a further check on the final Framework, we returned to our data from all 3 Layers (interviews, RDs, observations and questionnaire) and identified the sources of each of the 129 Key Statements. Table 5b gives full details of percentages of inclusion from each of the main sources of data and also succinctly links the Key Statements with the literature review. We calculated the percentage of respondents across all our data whose responses indicated their concurrence with each particular Key Statement. Alongside these, we have also shown the literature source for these statements. In Section 4, the Key Statements have already been shown with their direct links to the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage.

Table 5a: Response to Web-based Feedback

	%age (39 Respondents)
Feedback on the overall framework…	
Offers an objective overview of early years pedagogy	74%
Has a clear structure	79%
Is concise and clear	67%
Has language which is understandable for all e.y. practitioners	56%
Will support practitioners' developing knowledge of their own pedagogy	74%
Reflects what practitioners do as pedagogues	78%
Is consistent with practitioners' knowledge and understanding of e.y. pedagogy	62%
The focus/emphasis is balanced	60%
Is confusing and/or unclear	0%
Is unbalanced	0%
Is limited and/or limiting	0%
Is not consistent with practitioners' knowledge and understanding of e.y. pedagogy	0%
The Key Statements….	
Have a clear structure	75%
Are concise and clear	77%
Have language which is understandable for all e.y. practitioners	56%
Will support practitioners' developing knowledge of their own pedagogy	79%
Reflect what practitioners do as pedagogues	78%
Are consistent with practitioners' knowledge and understanding of e.y. pedagogy	72%
Are confusing and/or unclear	2%
Are limited	0%
Are unbalanced	0%
Have too much content or are unwieldy	5%
Are not consistent with practitioners' knowledge and understanding of e.y. pedagogy	0%
The Key Statements would be useful….	
For auditing pedagogical effectiveness	58%
For self-assessment	74%
For reflection on practice	83%
For evaluation of practice	60%
In performance management	51%
For explaining e.y. pedagogy to parents	64%
In identifying training needs	75%
To facilitate staff discussion in settings on pedagogy	80%
As a training document	63%
Should the Key Statements be more detailed?	
Yes	10%
No	90%
Should the Key Statements be exemplified with 'story'/cameo examples?	
Yes	75%
No	25%
Should the Key Statements be exemplified by video examples?	
Yes	70%
No	30%

Case Study One

Case Study 1 Setting:	Maintained Infant School (without nursery unit) FS Number on roll = 55
	Rural – no ethnic minority children in FS
	Purpose built Victorian accommodation, traditional tarmac playground
	Socio-economic background: 25% prof., 35% skilled/non-manual, 27% skilled-manual, 6% semi/unskilled, 6% un-employed or student
	Only 3 children deemed SEN but non-statemented
	2 combined reception classes in Foundation Stage (n=55)
	One qualified teacher per class
	One nursery nurse per class
	One classroom learning assistant

A group of the reception class children from this maintained infant school are washing and pegging out clothes outdoors in the playground. This is part of the daily, free choice, 'workshop' session within which children are free to move between the classrooms and the playground. There is a wide range of easily accessible resources organised within 'workshop' areas indoors for the children to choose to work with and take outdoors if they wish. The practitioner had set out soapy water, rinsing water, pegs, clothes and a washing line. Other activities, such as painting and water play, had also been set up in the playground.

The practitioner is an experienced, qualified teacher who works outside during the morning free choice workshop sessions on alternate weeks. She moves between groups of children involved in a variety of activities.

The following is an excerpt from the video transcript (all names are pseudonyms)

Practitioner: **Wow, you're doing a good job of washing these!** (*walking towards the washing activity*) **What are you doing with them?**

Sarah: Squeezing, squeezing them.

Practitioner: **You're washing them are you? Pushing them in the water? They're going up and down in the water…**

Sarah: It's warm.

Practitioner: **Is it?** (*to Amy*) **And what are you doing with your one now?** (*to Jo, who dripped water*) **Ooh, I've got a very wet leg!** (*laughing*)

Amy: Turning it round and round.

Practitioner: **You're turning it round and round, why are you doing that, Amy?**

Amy: Because I can get the water on the other side.

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[1] It was against these two Case Studies and their video tapes that inter-relater reliability measures were used.

Practitioner:	**Oh, that's a clever idea, because you need to wash the inside as well as the outside. Do you think the water would soak all the way through the material?**
Amy:	No.
Sarah:	No.
Practitioner:	**Do you need to turn it inside out?**
Amy:	Yes.
Practitioner:	**Do you think you might have to find a dry piece of clothing and see if it does?**
Amy:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**Maybe, we'll do that…**(*to Sarah*) **Ooh, do you think that's going to drip all the way! What do you need to do before you hang it on the line?**
Sarah:	Squeeze.
Practitioner:	**Squeeze it. Are you going to show me how you're going to squeeze it?** (*Sarah, Amy and Jo all squeeze their washing*)…**That's very good. Mind you, it's quite hard to squeeze all the water out isn't it?**
Mary:	Can I help then?
Practitioner:	**You certainly may, there are other things to wash aren't there?** (*to Jo*) **It's very hard getting all that water out**.
Jo:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**It's still dripping, isn't it?…**
Jo:	(*still trying to squeeze out water*)
Sarah:	I don't think there's many pegs left.
Practitioner:	**Aren't there?**
Amy:	There's only three more left.
Practitioner:	**Oh dear! How many have already been used up on the line, Amy?**
Amy:	(*looking at washing line*) Loads!
Practitioner:	**Loads? Can you count to see how many have been used up on the line?**
Jo:	seven…eight…nine…ten…eleven…twelve…thirteen…fourteen…FIFTEEN!
Practitioner:	**Fifteen? Is that right? Did you check, Sarah?**
Sarah:	Yes. There's not enough.
Mary:	Miss, it's still dripping.
Practitioner:	(*to Mary*) **Perhaps you haven't squeezed it out enough.**
Practitioner:	**Amy, do you remember we were going to see if the water could soak all the way through the material?**
Amy:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**Shall we see if we can do it with this?** (*a cotton shirt*)
Amy:	Yes.
Practitioner:	**Because if we open it up, so we could see the inside and outside at once.**

Mary:	I'm going to wash, I'm going to wash this.
Practitioner:	(*to Mary*) **Are you? That's a good idea.** (*to Amy*) **Do you think the water could make this bit wet if we put it into soak?**
Amy:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**Let's have a look.** (*places shirt into water*)
Amy:	(*starts washing shirt*)
Practitioner:	**Has it made it wet on the inside? It has! It's soaked all the way through the material, hasn't it?**
Amy:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**It's all wet isn't it? (*to the group*) Do the clothes feel any different when you put them in the water?**
Jo:	Yes.
Sarah:	Yes.
Mary:	Yes.
Practitioner:	**When you pick them up, do they feel…?**
Amy:	Yes, they feel a bit wet.
Practitioner:	**They feel wet. Do they feel anything else that's different?**
Sarah:	It feels a bit bigger.
Practitioner:	**You can feel the material, because it feels, it feels a bit different when it's wet, the material, does it?**
Amy:	Feels soft.
Practitioner:	**Does it? Yes it does, it's not so stiff when it's wet. (*to Mary*) Does your T-Shirt feel any different when you pick it up?** (*helping Mary pick it out of the water*) **Does it feel any different? How does it feel when it's, it's wet?**
Mary:	Heavy.
Practitioner:	**It does feel heavy! Why do you think that is?**
Mary:	Because it's full of water.
Practitioner:	**That's right, the water's been absorbed into the material, hasn't it?**
Mary:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**That's right, it feels heavier….**(*to Amy*) **what do you need to do with it now?**
Sarah:	Squeeze it.
Amy:	Squeeze it.
Practitioner:	**Squeeze it and then what do you need to do?**
Sarah:	There's no more pegs left, though.
Practitioner:	(*to Amy*) **What do we put it into this water for?** (*pointing at rinsing bowl*)
Sarah:	It's so it gets washed.
Practitioner:	**This one's for washing.** (*pointing at washing bowl*)

Amy:	So all the bubbles get from it.
Practitioner:	**That's right! You're rinsing it aren't you? In the clean water, that's right.** **You managed to find a partner for your sock, didn't you, Jo?**
Jo:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**You found its partner? Because they're all in pairs, aren't they?** (*pointing to the paired socks on the washing line*)
Jo:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	(*to Jo*) **Which is the partner of this one?** (*pointing to a lone sock on the line*)
Jo:	(*points to the correct sock*)
Practitioner:	**That's right. Do you want to hang it with this peg? Oh, I'm sorry, haven't you rinsed it yet? I beg your pardon, rushing you along there.** (*to another child*) **Hello Mark, all right?**
Sarah:	Where can I put this? (*holding up washed item*)
Practitioner:	**Oh dear, we've run out of pegs, what shall we do? There we are…** (*handing peg to Jo for sock*)
Mary:	I don't know where the, I don't know where the partner is of this (*holding up a T-Shirt*)
Practitioner:	**Well, no, T-Shirt's don't have a pair. We just wear one T-Shirt, don't we? Could we wear a pair of T-Shirts?**
Mary:	(*shaking her head*)
Practitioner:	**No? Why not?**
Mary:	Because it's too wet.
Practitioner:	**Well, yes this one is too wet to wear, you're right, but could you wear two T-Shirts like this?**
Mary:	(*shaking her head*)
Practitioner:	**Why not?** (*patiently listening*)
Mary:	Um, don't know.
Practitioner:	**You don't know? What would happen if I wore two T-Shirts, do you think?** (*patiently listening*)
Amy:	You would get too hot.
Practitioner:	**I probably would get too hot, because I'd have to wear them on top of each other, wouldn't I?**
Amy:	Yes.
Practitioner:	**Why is it I would wear a pair of socks, but I'd only wear one T-Shirt?**
Sarah:	Because you've got two feet.
Practitioner:	**That's right! Because I've got two feet but I've only got one body, haven't I?**
Mary:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**So I only need one T-Shirt, so that one won't have a partner probably, will it?**
Mary:	(*shaking her head*)

Practitioner:	**Sometimes we do have matching T-Shirts, if I hung your T-Shirt on the line, and Mark hung his T-Shirt on the line, they'd be a pair of matching T-Shirts, but you wouldn't wear a pair, would you?**
Mary:	(*shaking her head, laughing*)
Practitioner:	(*laughing*) **Do you want to hang that up then?**
Amy:	There's lots of socks up here.
Practitioner:	**How many socks are there then, Amy?**
Amy:	There's two pairs there.
Practitioner:	**There's a yellow pair.**
Jo:	There's three pairs.
Practitioner:	**Three pairs, so how many socks is that altogether then in three pairs?**
Jo:	Five.
Practitioner:	**Is it? Are you sure?**
Jo:	No, six.
Practitioner:	**Have a check, and see if you're right.**
Jo:	One…two…three…four…five…SIX.
Amy:	Six, yes.
Practitioner:	**Oh look!** (*spotting another pair further down the washing line*) **I've found another pair, how many is it now?**
Jo:	Six…seven…EIGHT.
Practitioner:	**Well done, it's eight now. How many pairs?**
Amy:	Eight.
Practitioner:	**How many pairs though, Amy?**
Amy:	Um…five.
Practitioner:	**Have a look, there's a yellow pair, a grey pair, a pink pair, and a dark grey pair, how many pairs is that?**
Amy:	Er, four.
Practitioner:	**Good girl, well done.** (*walking away to next activity*)

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The following is an excerpt from the Reflective Dialogue session with the practitioner.

P = Practitioner   R = Researcher   *** = Child's name**

P: There are quite a lot of different subject areas within that, a lot of maths, science going on, with the properties and material. I focused on properties and material because of the misconception that was coming out at the beginning while **** was working, that she was turning the material inside out to make the inside and the outside of the jumper wet. So I

said at that point in time, "Perhaps we could try with a dry one." and brought it back to that. The time to get rid of misconceptions is at that moment, to actually be able to build on it from then, rather than actually come back to it at a later time.

One thing that I was unhappy about was that I was monopolising a lot of the conversation, so I was actually stopping the interaction between the children. But sometimes you have to acknowledge that that's going to happen in order to bring out different aspects. However, the children had already been discussing it together.

I had the vocabulary identified that I wanted to encourage them to use, and we were able to use most of that vocabulary I had identified within that session, with that group of children. I modelled the use of vocabulary and encouraged the use of it from them. So if they used a word that was close to the vocabulary I wanted to introduce, that was the opportunity to actually bring it in.

It was a special activity during this term because we're focusing on water, it's an ideal time to do it. The weather was ideal for it because there was a lot of learning opportunities, putting the clothes out to dry on the line and discussing how long they were going to take. But that's slightly harder to manage because the children are so keen to wash the clothes, they usually pull them back off the line before they're dry to rewash. A different group will come along and take them down. So that's one aspect that doesn't get followed through very often, but we can talk about the qualities of it in the morning when it's hanging on the line still and it's quite stiff from hanging.

R: *So might you return to that activity with those children as a group, or would you do that with a whole class?*

P: We haven't done it as a whole class but it might be something that will come up later on, if it doesn't come up enough within the actual pre-activities. Within the mathematical work, the work on the pairs and counting pegs was initiated because the children noticed there were only three pegs left in the basket. So it was extending their mathematical language through that. Relating the feel of the clothes according to weight and measures, for example the jumper felt heavy because it had absorbed the water.

R: *So you had these learning intentions in mind for the activity?*

P: Yes. The children could do what they liked with the activity. They put the socks in pairs because children have a natural inclination to sort things. They thoroughly enjoy sorting things, so then to bring in the vocabulary for pairs and partners and counting in twos, that will be my next step for **** who's now ready to actually begin to count in twos, rather than counting individually. So to add on the extra pair on the end, she still said "…seven, eight…". Whereas, I would now be building up for her to say "…six…eight…", rather than go through the single number process.

R: *The children were presumably at different ages and stages, how did you cope with the different needs there?*

P: With individually aimed questions from previous knowledge of the children's experience and understanding, to know where to begin questioning. I brought **** into the conversation at the end when we were looking at the T-shirt, when we were talking about the 'two feet, but only one body', in order to get him to join into the activity. This was because the activity was very dominated by the girls and I usually make a deliberate act in order to introduce the boys to that activity as I would the other way around.

R: *How do you do that?*

P: By joining them in with the activity, getting them interested and sometimes just by saying "Well, have you done that activity yet? Why don't we go over and do that?" will be enough to encourage them to join in that activity.

R: *What would you say are the underlying principles here?*

P: I had specific learning intentions that I wanted to achieve and by putting out the resources: soapy water, rinsing water, the basket of pegs, the basket of clothes and the line, gave them the opportunities to access them through play. My intervention ensured that the children's vocabulary was extended, and formalised the activity to cover my learning intentions.

R: *Do you ever make the learning intentions explicit? Do you say to the children "This is what I want you to learn from this."?*

P: I didn't on this one because there are so many different ways that this particular activity can go, that it's nicer to take it individually from what the children are doing. The day before, the work that came from it was on the size of the clothes, because we've got baby-wear as well as the children's clothes, asking questions like "Who do you think that dress would be appropriate for? Would it fit a baby or…?". So there was a lot of work on chronology, and size related activities there. So it really feeds from the children's interest, it's spontaneous but I have in mind the different learning intentions that possibly could come out of it. If I were to do the activity again, I may concentrate on a different learning intention, for example, communication and interaction between the children. Their co-operative side when they were squeezing out the jumper suggested that the children had worked together, and collaboration would be another aspect for a different day. You can't cover everything within one visit to the activity.

R: *Do you ever tell the children "This is what we've learnt?"*

P: Yes, I didn't on that occasion, but it depends on where they're going with the activity.   The children were very busy, they were buzzing with the activity and I had to be careful not to take that spontaneity from them as well.

R: *What about problem solving within the activity?*

P: Yes, finding the partners for the socks was problem solving in itself, because one of the children had taken just one sock off because it had needed to be re-washed. She wasn't satisfied it was clean enough. So we were discussing where it would need to go to match in with the other sock.

R: *How did you support that?*
P: By questioning and checking that she was actually going along those lines. I would be introducing vocabulary, so I would begin by talking about its partner, which would be something she would be familiar with, and then describing it as a pair once she'd pegged it in position. The misconception of the little girl looking for a partner for the T-shirt, she couldn't understand why she couldn't find its partner as we'd been talking about pairs. In a way, it was my intervention talking about the pairs that had created that, but then I wouldn't have known she hadn't known about only needing one T-shirt without it.

R: *Would you maybe check at a later time that she had understood that?*

P: Yes, maybe in the same area, or maybe in a completely different setting.

R: *What happens next?*

P: It becomes a point of discussion between staff when they're setting up an activity, if we wanted to concentrate on pairs, I would put some other items in like gloves or something else where they'd start needing partners, and perhaps take away some of the single items so they'd be counting in twos much more freely. I would put in different types of materials, particularly if I was concentrating how long it was taking something to dry. So the reaction from the activity would dictate what we put in there for the extra resources. Within that activity, I had set up the hot water, the soapy water and the clean water, but the rest of the resources the children managed independently.

During the activity we weren't disturbed by any other children apart from the ones who wanted to come along and join in the activity, because the children were working so independently, and there were other activities. You can really spend quite a comfortable amount of time just concentrating on one group and reacting closely to what they were doing.

R: *When you were talking to the child about the T-shirt, a lot of the other children stopped and were listening in, weren't they...?*

P: Yes, and one of them in particular, was itching to give the answers, she knew where we were going with it, was able to help in actually explaining what was happening and why the situation is as it is. There is a lot of interest from other children, we do have bystanders that people may be concerned weren't actually doing the activity. And you would make sure that they were actually interacting within the group.

R: *Is there anything you'd do differently on reflection?*

P: I would not have intervened quite so quickly, I would have waited and watched what they were doing first. I did impose the learning intentions that I wanted to put onto the activity on that occasion, rather that feeding from their own interest.

R: *Although it did come from their own interest...the absorption of the material...but perhaps not quite so fast...?*

P: Yes, and if I'd waited before I joined in at the beginning, the learning may have taken a completely different theme. I was happy with what we'd covered, but I had in a way dictated the direction of the play, whereas next time I would step back and take it from their lead, rather than choosing the theme of the discussion.

R: *Is it about having a balance between letting the children dictate it and taking them where they want to go and...?*

P: And giving them what I want them to learn as well.

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Case Study Two

Case Study 2 Setting:	Pre-school playgroup FS Number on roll = 40
	Urban – 8% minority ethnic background
	Hall accommodation (set up each session required - 4 morning sessions a week)
	Socio-economic background – 50% prof, 40% skilled/non-manual, 10% skilled/manual
	1 children deemed SEN non-statemented

All children are encouraged to visit the 'Milk Bar', a table set up and 'open' for one and a half hours once during the session activities period. The number of chairs around the table is restricted to three plus one for the adult, so that a high adult to child ratio can be maintained. One practitioner sits at the Milk Bar table for the whole time, interacting solely, as far as possible, with each child at the table. The set up of the Milk Bar is changed periodically according to the theme or topic and to reinforce learning through other activities, but the routine remains the same. The children are encouraged to keep a look out for a free space at the Milk Bar and sometimes they are called when there is a space free. Each child has a card with her/his full name written in large letters for him/her to identify – the name of the child's key-worker, dietary needs, special needs, and key words are also written on the back of the card. The practitioner decides how much support is needed for each child to be able to identify his/her own name card, for example by offering a small selection to the child or by discussing the sounds of the letters in the names. The children keep their name card in front of them while they are at the Milk Bar. The children are asked what they would like to eat and drink and which colour cup they would like to use; the practitioner encourages the children to say rather than point to their choices. The practitioner's aim is to encourage and seek 'natural' conversation whilst the children are at the Milk Bar. The practitioner is also the playgroup manager, a post which she has held for 12 years. She has a Pre-school Practice Diploma.

The following is an excerpt from the video transcript (all names are pseudonyms)

Practitioner: **What would you like to drink, Ian?**

Ian: A glass of water.

Practitioner: **Some water. And which colour beaker would you like?**

Ian: Green.

Practitioner: **A green one, water in a green one** (*pouring water*)**. Do you like the vegetables I've got on the table? We've got chopped up carrot, it's hard and crispy before its cooked, do you like it like that?**

Ian: Uh huh.

Practitioner: **And when it's boiled it goes soft, doesn't it? I like it both ways, but I think I prefer them raw, actually. And what are these? Do you know what's inside these pea pods?**

Ian: Yes, peas.

Practitioner: **Peas, so you can have a look and see how many peas are inside, you can choose a pea pod, and see how many peas. Do you like them like that?**

Ian:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**I think they're delicious, really yummy.** (*offering to other child*) **Do you want any more carrots?**
Ian:	I, I, I, I know a rhyme about um, peas,
Practitioner:	(*patiently listening to Ian*)
Ian:	Pea pods…peas…peas…
Practitioner:	**Are you telling, saying the rhyme "Five pea pods in a pea pod press"?**
Ian:	Yes…peas…pods…
Practitioner:	(*singing*) **Grew and grew, up and up, until one day the pods went…?**
Ian:	Pop! Pop!
Practitioner:	**That's right! You've got five pea pods and they all go down in a pea pod press. We'll have to remember that for singing, won't we?**
Ian	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**I think I'm on singing with Katie.**
Ian:	Can you open this for me? (*pea pod*)
Practitioner:	(*guiding opening the pea pod*) **Pop the end open, hold it that way, press the end a bit, that's it, now see if you can finish it off, you've got it, eh, ooh, they're all popping out, look! You've got one there, and ooh, one in your mouth, and another one in your mouth, so you've eaten the two, and how many more? That's three gone…four gone…five! So you had five in that pod!**
Ian:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**Do you want another pod?**
Ian:	Yes.
Practitioner:	**Would you like another pod?**
Ian:	(*nodding*)
Practitioner:	**Sit down and see if you can open it**. (*to another child*) **Are you coming, Amy? Do you want a pea pod?**
Ian:	Like this? (*trying to open pea pod*)
Practitioner:	**Pardon?**
Ian:	Is this right? (*still trying to open pea pod*)
Practitioner:	(*directing Ian about how to open the pea pod*) **Try it that way…yes…press, press it together and it will come apart… that's it!** (*to another child*) **Do you want your card? Right, there's your card**. (*to Ian*) **See how many you've got in that one.** (*counting*) **One…**
Girl:	When can I come on?
Practitioner:	**When I've got space you can come and sit down, O.K? Do you want to go and play with the playdough or do some drawing while you're waiting?**
Ian:	I, I, I've got three!
Practitioner:	**How many was in that one? I missed it because you've eaten them all!**

Ian:	Three.
Practitioner:	**Three? So you had less in that one didn't you?**
Ian:	Yes.
Practitioner:	**All gone?**
Ian:	Yes.
Practitioner:	**I've found somebody who likes peas in the pea pod…**

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The following is an excerpt from the Reflective Dialogue session with the practitioner

P = Practitioner   R = Researcher   ***** = Child's name

P: The other week, it was a restaurant, and that was fun, because they had to take their place and they had a menu... And they had to say, and we, we wrote it and we brought it back to the table, it was very good. And we could have breakfast alongside, with cereal, so it's a lot of personal and social, you know, background and life…and all the language that goes with it. Because I mean, it's, it's our chance to try and get to know them, initially, and for them to get to know us because everybody takes a turn. So they don't just get to know one member of staff, they, they should get to know every member of staff. So, yes, I mean, it just sort of…we can reinforce everything that's going on, you get some wonderful conversations…and if they're not partaking, they're listening to what's going on. So it encourages the quiet ones to open up…so it's just evolved into a very nice activity, and it gives us a chance to do observations…

P: …we were counting out triangle crisps the other week….we had healthy eating for teeth on one session, we had toast...

P: …I think children like routine…I think there needs to be some sort of routine, but not perhaps a rigid routine. And they then… build up with the repetition of things, and knowing where they are, and where things are placed…and the underlying rules, if you like, to the simple…'We don't throw things, unless it's a ball'…

R: *Do you think routine enables… the adults to be more effective?*

P: Yes, yes, yes I think it does, because otherwise, you might just go off and do something because it takes your fancy with a group of children, that doesn't fit in, with what you're aiming to get from that session. And if everybody just went off and did their own thing, you wouldn't be pulling together… as a body of people.

R: *What did you think was … effective about what you were doing?*

P: …I thought I was speaking clearly, but I always do anyway…   I mean, I'm trying to include everybody, going round, I'm trying to draw ***** out, because I'm conscious that she doesn't….but she does sit and listen. So, I mean, sometimes I noticed that when I was talking to some children, I had eye contact with others to see if they were, if they'd gone off in a daydream or whatever…. I mean, you can have some brilliant conversations, but at the

moment, *[videotape is playing]* it's me doing the talking and they're doing the listening. I'm telling them that my father used to grow them…

R: *How do you make decisions when you're sitting there about what you'll do?*

P: If it's, if it's set with a specific reinforcement for an activity, then that gives you a sort of an outline of what the conversation might take.

R: *You mean like vegetables with a 'V'?*

P: Yes, so you can include that in the conversation. I mean, if I'm on the milk bar, I always explain to all the children what's there, what's on offer that's extra to the biscuit and water, biscuit and drink. I mean, sometimes, it's nice not to have anything extra in because then you've just got a free range of, you know, sitting, talking.

R: *Discussion for the children?*

P: Hopefully, drawing out the quiet ones, getting the odd word out of them.

R: *So knowledge of the families is here when you're doing these conversations? How important is this knowledge of families to you?*

P: It's important, I think it's important with a child who is perhaps a bit reserved. It gives you a sort of, an opening for them to try and get them to start talking.

[child starts singing a rhyme]

P: Yes, now the thing is, I know that he's not quite got it, but I know he knows in his mind what he wants to get out…

R: *He just can't articulate it.*

P: …so I wait for him to have his, his go, and then he does the 'pop' noise at the end. So I'm pausing purposely to try and prompt him…

[child is trying to open a pea pod]

P: …..I'm trying to help him, but not do it for him. And he does, he can pull them apart, rather than….

P: And this is very much the thing, well she listens, she listens so although she's not partaking….it may appear, I do ask her questions, but I don't ask her all the questions, because I know she'll just shrivel and die.

R: *You seem to be very aware of individual needs when you're doing this...*

P: Yes, I mean, I think we have to be because if, if we're doing it in too much of a hurry, you don't get…it's just not worth doing it. You have to allow the children to take their time, whether it be a quick time or a slow time, or whatever. And you do tend to know who likes to spend more time. **** was very quick and gone.

R: *What would you say was the most effective thing on your video and the most effective thing that you get out of the Milk Bar, the children get out of the Milk Bar?*

P: Well… I still think it's on the personal and social side, I still, I mean, the language and literacy comes up very, very close, because you can't do, you can't operate the milk bar without the language that goes with it. And… when it's changed into different areas, it just brings in, so like if we're doing breakfast, we talk about what they've had for breakfast. So you can bring in all the background of the children…so you can give those children your undivided attention…

P: I'm very passionate about it. *[the milk bar activity]* I do think…it's, if we didn't have it, I think it would be, you know, there'd be a big void…

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Table 5b: Key Statements and Sources of Data

Number	Key Statement	H/M	Prac	Doc	Prnt[1]	Literature
Practice	**During teaching and learning interactions effective practitioners …**					
Pc: INT (1)	build on children's existing: • Capabilities • interests and experiences • learning styles	78%	71%	73%	25%	Bruce (1987)
Pc: INT (2)	play alongside children, scaffolding and extending children's learning	89%	94%	54%	45%	Wood and Attfield (1996)
Pc: INT (3)	communicate with children at their level, listen to and talk with children, valuing what they say	56%	76%	46%	25%	Bredecamp and Copple (1997)
Pc: INT (4)	engage and direct children's attention, interest and motivation in focused teaching activities through: • telling • describing • demonstrating • instructing • explaining	56%	41%	31%	25%	Brenna (1994)
Pc: INT (5)	pose meaningful, challenging questions and answer children's questions succinctly, honestly and accurately	56%	35%	27%		Pramling and Samuelsson (2001)
Pc: INT (6)	guide and support children through activities and teach children to make connections across learning experiences	78%	82%	31%	20%	-
Pc: INT (7)	teach and model: • language and communication skills • playful behaviours • thinking skills • collaborative working • positive attitudes • behavioural/social expectations	67%	41%	62%	10%	Pramling and Samuelsson (2001) Wood (1998) Macbeath and Mortimore (2001) Ghaye and Ghaye (1998)
Pc: INT (8)	enable children to initiate their own activities, making choices and being responsible for their own learning	67%	41%	62%	-	Hohmann and Weikart (1995)
Pc: INT (9)	engage with children's own thinking and decision-making, supporting children in working things out and asking questions for themselves	67%	35%	31%	-	Wood (1998)
Pc: INT (10)	know when (and when not) to intervene in children's learning experiences	67%	65%	31%	-	Athey (1990)
Pc: INT (11)	adapt both open-ended and focused activities according to children's abilities, interests and learning styles	67%	41%	27%		Alexander, Rose and Woodhead (1992)
Pc: INT (12)	actively seek opportunities to give positive feedback to children, offering praise for stated achievements and celebrating children's genuine successes	45%	24%	46%	20%	Hohmann and Weikart (1995)
Pc: INT (13)	clarify and convey to children learning expectations, intentions, outcomes and targets	22%	12%	27%	-	Pascal and Bertram (1997)

1 Responses taken from Parent Questionnaire Layer Two only
H/M: Heads/Managers
Prac: Practitioners
Doc: Documentation
Prnt: Parents (open-ended questions + multiple-choice responses)
Literature: Literature Source

Number	Key Statement	H/M	Prac	Doc	Prnt[1]	Literature
Pc: INT (14)	use children's experiences and theories and share own experiences and learning with children	33%	29%	31%	-	Malaguzzi (1996)
Practice	**Within the teaching and learning context effective practitioners …**					
Pc: CXT (1)	provide a positive learning atmosphere and ethos which: • has a sense of purpose • fosters enjoyment • generates care and support for others	67%	76%	85%	25%	MacBeath and Mortimore (2001)
Pc: CXT (2)	establish a rhythm and routine to each session which supports children and adults	22%	29%	35%	-	Malaguzzi (1996)
Pc: CXT (3)	provide an environment which is pleasant, safe, orderly and planned	67%	59%	85%	70%	Griffiths and Davies (1995)
Pc: CXT (4)	promote children's learning through carefully conceived room arrangements and displays	22%	24%	77%	-	Moyles (1992)
Pc: CXT (5)	supply equipment and resources which are: • selected with differentiated learning intentions in mind • stimulating • accessible • attractive	67%	59%	77%	10%	Siraj-Blatchford (1998)
Pc: CXT (6)	make available non-discriminatory and non-stereotypical resources and experiences which reflect differing: • linguistic • social • cultural • religious • ethnic aspects of the community	22%	12%	65%	5%	Nutbrown (1996)
Pc: CXT (7)	ensure a balance and variety of activities and experiences across all areas of learning and over time	45%	41%	77%	10%	Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997)
Pc: CXT (8)	balance individual, small group and large group learning opportunities, using knowledge of the children to group variously according to recognised capabilities	33%	18%	73%	-	Blenkin and Kelly (1992)
Pc: CXT (9)	promote children's learning through provision of play-based, active, hands-on, multi-sensory and meaningful experiences	89%	76%	85%	-	Wood and Attfield (1996) Hohmann, Banet and Weikart (1979) Beardsley and Harnett (1998)
Pc: CXT (10)	allow time for sustained play, exploration and chance to complete activities	33%	24%	62%	35%	Bowman, Donovan, and Burns (2001)
Pc: CXT (11)	ensure consolidation of learning through well-conceived repetition and through varied presentations of each learning intention	22%	24%	62%	-	Bowman, Donovan, and Burns (2001)
Pc: CXT (12)	provide situations in which children can: • play individually and collaboratively • facilitate and stimulate each other's learning and thinking • listen to others and learn to respect other viewpoints	22%	24%	58%	20%	Pramling and Samuelsson (2001) Bruner (1983)
Pc: CXT (13)	establish respectful relationships with parents and carers that are reciprocal and collaborative	89%	71%	77%	25%	Abbott and Pugh (1998)
Pc: CXT (14)	build parents' and carers' trust and confidence and enable two-way exchanges of information	78%	59%	77%	90%	Siraj-Blatchford (1992)

Number	Key Statement	H/M	Prac	Doc	Prnt[1]	Literature
Pc: CXT (15)	share children's successes with parents and carers and provide accessible information about teaching and learning	78%	59%	77%	90%	Adams and Moyles (1999)
Pc: CXT (16)	cultivate and foster collaborative team-working through planned communication systems	67%	41%	58%	-	Penn (2000)
Pc: CXT (17)	have good working relationships and links with other agencies, receiving schools or classes, other Foundation Stage settings and the local community	33%	18%	31%	-	Penn (2000) QCA (2000)
Practice	**Effective practitioners ensure they plan for, assess and evaluate …**					
Pc: PEA (1)	the learning and development needs of all children through their: • individual learning styles • dispositions to learning • levels of knowledge and understanding • concepts and process skills • thinking and reflection • strengths and special abilities • well-being • behaviour • language and communication skills • values and interests • difficulties and concerns	89%	88%	85%	95%	Pramling and Samuelsson (2001) Anning (1991) Clay (1979) Ghaye and Ghaye (1998)
Pc: PEA (2)	the specific learning and development needs of both boys and girls	33%	29%	65%	-	Bredecamp and Copple (1997)
Pc: PEA (3)	the range and balance of differentiated teaching and learning opportunities and experiences across all six areas of learning	67%	18%	96%	10%	Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997)
Pc: PEA (4)	short-, medium- and long-term teaching and learning intentions and outcomes	67%	18%	92%	-	Moyles (1992)
Pc: PEA (5)	learning objectives that extend children's experiences individually and collectively	78%	53%	92%	-	Moyles and Adams (2001)
Pc: PEA (6)	the range of assessment strategies used in both planned and spontaneous situations which inform: • knowledge and understanding of the child's progress • the identification of learning needs and next steps • on-going development of effective practice	89%	59%	92%	-	Gipps, McCallum and Hargreaves (2000)
Pc: PEA (7)	their own impact on children's learning and progression and their understanding of the effects of environment on learning	33%	12%	54%	*Implied*	-
Pc: PEA (8)	the collection and recording of evidence of learning outcomes and progress through: • observing children's responses to learning activities • listening to and talking with children	78%	41%	96%	-	Bruner (1983)
Pc: PEA (9)	target setting for achievement and progression towards the Early Learning Goals	45%	18%	46%	-	QCA (2000)
Pc: PEA (10)	evidence that has been systematically and regularly gathered to support: • monitoring and improvement of the overall quality of the teaching and learning environment • their own ability to provide for differentiated teaching and learning • equality of opportunity for all children • collaborative working structures	45%	29%	46%	10%	Siraj-Blatchford (1998)

Number	Key Statement	H/M	Prac	Doc	Prnt[1]	Literature
Pc: PEA (11)	their work in involving parents and carers in: • the identification of their child's achievements and experiences • identifying the next steps for individual children	78%	35%	81%	95%	Abbott and Pugh (1998)
Pc: PEA (12)	communication systems for working with parents and others within the setting and community	56%	41%	81%	*Implied*	Abbott and Pugh (1998)
Principles	**Effective practitioners believe in, and value, the entitlement of all children to …**					
Pp: ENT (1)	high quality education and care through a broad, balanced, meaningful and integrated foundation stage curriculum	33%	18%	81%	-	Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997) Penn (2000) QCA (2000)
Pp: ENT (2)	early childhood as a specific, valid and important stage of a child's life and education	7%	18%	38%	-	-
Pp: ENT (3)	quality time with interested adults	67%	65%	35%	25%	-
Pp: ENT (4)	time to explore and develop friendships with other children and adults	19%	22%	46%	20%	-
Pp: ENT (5)	be taught by practitioners who: • consider children's learning and overall development holistically • build on each child's potential as an individual • differentiate learning experiences • build upon, encourage and extend children's prior learning	67%	59%	85%	35%	Siraj-Blatchford (1992)
Pp: ENT (6)	favourable conditions for learning in which children feel secure, included, valued and respected	33%	47%	81%	-	-
Pp: ENT (7)	play as a vital process in: • cognitive/intellectual development • physical development and motor skills • personal, social and emotional development • linguistic development • mathematical development • creative development	96%	98%	92%	35%	Wood and Attfield (1996)
Pp: ENT (8)	have all areas of their learning and development seen as of equal significance	29%	25%	27%	-	-
Pp: ENT (9)	opportunities to work and play with practitioners who: • encourage children's curiosity and exploration • enhance children's natural learning and development • use praise for worthy achievement • understand how children become learners • are playful and inspiring teachers	56%	59%	58%	45%	Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001)
Pp: ENT (10)	recognition, respect and equality of opportunity, with consideration for: • ethnicity • culture • religion • home language • family background • special educational need • gender or ability	52%	31%	65%	15%	Nutbrown (1996) Middleton (1992) Siraj-Blatchford (1992)
Principles	**Effective practitioners value and believe in teaching and learning practices which …**					
Pp: T/L (1)	maximise learning and teaching opportunities both indoors and outdoors	78%	71%	62%	-	Whitehead (1999)

Number	Key Statement	H/M	Prac	Doc	Prnt[1]	Literature
Pp: T/L (2)	is well planned, well managed, stimulating and visually appealing	81%	65%	65%	-	Malaguzzi (1996)
Pp: T/L (3)	promote positive learning and socially acceptable behaviour	45%	35%	58%	45%	Webster-Stratton (1999)
Pp: T/L (4)	ensure time is available for children fully to explore and extend concepts, ideas and interests and complete tasks to their own satisfaction	33%	24%	38%	*Implied*	Wood (1998)
Pp: T/L (5)	incorporate experiences designed to promote independence, perseverance and concentration	33%	29%	54%	10%	Hohmann and Weikart (1995)
Pp: T/L (6)	enable children to: • make choices • take measured risks • talk and think for themselves • have some responsibility for articulating and evaluating their own learning	56%	53%	62%	10%	Pramling and Samuelsson (2001) Anning and Edwards (1999)
Pp: T/L (7)	make full use of a range of open-ended, active, hands-on, multi-sensory learning experiences through which children can: • exploit their innate capacity for learning • explore concepts, ideas and interests • apply knowledge and skills • practise and refine skills • reinforce and consolidate knowledge • learn to handle tools and equipment with care	78%	82%	81%	*Implied*	Hohmann, Barnet and Weikart (1979)
Pp: T/L (8)	make full use of collaborative and co-operative ways of learning	26%	18%	31%	-	-
Pp: T/L (9)	commit adults and children to having realistic but high expectations of progression, behaviour and self-management	45%	24%	27%	-	Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001)
Pp: T/L (10)	incorporate systems for critical analysis and examination of children's play, learning and progression	48%	31%	42%	-	Wood and Attfield (1996)
Pp: T/L (11)	use a combination of adult interactions, the learning environment and the assessment of children's responses to inform daily practice and medium- and long-term planning	78%	41%	23%	-	Blenkin and Kelly (1992)
Principles	**Effective practitioners value and believe in the importance of their own role and capacity to …**					
Pp: R (1)	engage, intervene and partner children in the learning process	67%	71%	62%	20%	Athey (1990)
Pp: R (2)	establish and build sensitive teaching and learning relationships with children	66%	71%	77%	65%	Webster-Stratton (1999)
Pp: R (3)	model appropriate social, emotional and intellectual behaviour	59%	49%	46%	-	Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001)
Pp: R (4)	teach children as well as care for their welfare	33%	29%	31%	-	-
Pp: R (5)	be firm but fair in dealing with each child's demands	22%	18%	50%	35%	Cartwright (1999)
Pp: R (6)	interact and communicate with children positively, enthusiastically, flexibly and thoughtfully	45%	59%	62%	28%	-
Pp: R (7)	actively seek and promote equality of opportunity for each child, parent, carer and colleague	4%	2%	65%	25%	-

Number	Key Statement	H/M	Prac	Doc	Prnt[1]	Literature
Pp: R (8)	build positive, supportive and collaborative family relationships, working with the family to ensure each child achieves her or his full potential	67%	71%	81%	95%	Penn (2000)
Pp: R (9)	establish and develop effective team work and collaboration within and beyond the setting	56%	29%	27%	-	Penn (2000)
Pp: R (10)	identify and understand the principles which underpin early years pedagogy	59%	31%	19%	20%	MacBeath and Mortimore (2001)
Pp: R (11)	reflect regularly on current thinking about teaching young children, their learning and development	33%	41%	19%	-	Ghaye and Ghaye (1998)
Pp: R (12)	ensure they are up-to-date in their understanding of local and national initiatives and the impact upon their work	33%	18%	19%	10%	Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001)
Pp: R (13)	engage in training and on-going development of professional learning	78%	41%	19%	-	Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001)
Pp: R (14)	take initiative and trust their own judgements	30%	14%	15%	-	-
Profess'al Dimens'ns	**Effective practitioners have knowledge and understanding of …**					
Pf: K (1)	each child's background and dispositions to learning	78%	76%	62%	90%	Malaguzzi (1996)
Pf: K (2)	all aspects of child development including theories of, and approaches to, learning	89%	88%	31%	20%	Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001)
Pf: K (3)	how to combine and apply pedagogic knowledge and understanding so that teaching and learning experiences are congruent with children's development	67%	71%	19%	-	Bredekamp and Copple (1997)
Pf: K (4)	multi-sensory learning and teaching approaches for young children	22%	2%	19%	*Implied*	Wood and Attfield (1996)
Pf: K (5)	the rationale for selection of high quality equipment and resources to benefit learning and teaching	7%	24%	12%	-	Rodger (1998)
Pf: K (6)	the role and skills of the teacher and a wide variety of teaching strategies	33%	24%	31%	18%	-
Pf: K (7)	the curriculum and its implementation both in general and specifically in relation to the CGFS, Early Learning Goals and the setting of developmentally appropriate targets	78%	41%	31%	-	QCA (2000)
Pf: K (8)	how to assess, evaluate, monitor and manage children's learning in relation to the Foundation Stage	63%	35%	31%	-	Anning and Edwards (1999) Penn (2000)
Pf: K (9)	how and when to intervene, mediate and interact in children's learning activities and experiences	52%	53%	23%	-	Athey (1990)
Pf: K (10)	when and why children find learning challenging	7%	18%	12%	-	Wood (1998)
Pf: K (11)	children's conceptions and misconceptions through - observation - encouraging children to articulate their own learning processes	4%	2%	4%	-	Wood (1998) Day (1999)
Pf: K (12)	when and how to introduce new concepts in familiar contexts and experiences	4%	29%	4%	-	Wood (1998)
Pf: K (13)	working with children with special needs	22%	29%	23%	30%	Clay (1992)
Pf: K (14)	child protection issues and procedures	11%	4%	46%	-	-

Number	Key Statement	H/M	Prac	Doc	Prnt[1]	Literature
Pf: K (15)	safety issues and application to practice	4%	2%	23%	35%	Penn (2000)
Pf: K (16)	self-as-teacher and learner including their own need for extension of professional knowledge and when, how and who to access for information, support and guidance, including training courses	56%	12%	15%	-	Webb and Vulliamy (2001)
Pf: K (17)	how to help parents and carers understand early education processes and content through direct knowledge of family and community background	56%	53%	15%	15%	Abbott and Pugh (1998)
Pf: K (18)	how to utilise other pedagogues' skills and abilities for the benefit of the team, children and families	22%	5%	8%	-	Penn (2000)
Pf: K (19)	Foundation Stage/Key Stage One links and the continuity, progression and communication needed for on-going extension of children's learning and development	45%	12%	46%	-	Penn (2000) Anning (1991) QCA (2000)
Profess'al Dimens'ns	**Effective practitioners are reflective and thoughtful people who …**					
Pf: TH (1)	perceive each child holistically, as an individual and as part of a family and community	70%	41%	73%	*Implied*	Bruce (1991)
Pf: TH (2)	respect children's ideas, culture, family and community background and past and current experiences	56%	41%	65%	25%	Nutbrown (1996)
Pf: TH (3)	review, challenge and improve their own pedagogy through critical and informed reflection	45%	12%	31%	-	MacBeath and Mortimore (2001) Ghaye and Ghaye (1998) Dean (2000)
Pf: TH (4)	acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses and use these to instigate necessary change	4%	4%	31%	-	Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001)
Pf: TH (5)	are able to give and receive constructive criticism in order to enhance professional development and practice	37%	12%	31%	-	Ghaye and Ghaye (1998)
Pf: TH (6)	examine, question and evaluate all aspects of effective early years pedagogy and child development	22%	4%	31%	-	Anning and Edwards (1999) Anning (1991)
Pf: TH (7)	are clearly aware of their own impact as teachers on children's learning and development	7%	16%	15%	-	Bredekamp and Copple (1997) Turner-Bisset (2001)
Pf: TH (8)	understand the need to develop cycles of planning, monitoring, assessment and evaluation which move their own and children's thinking forwards	45%	24%	31%	-	Pramling and Samuelsson (2001) Wood (1998)
Pf: TH (9)	conceive of self as both teacher and learner and understand own professional thinking and ways of understanding (metacognition)	33%	22%	15%	-	Jensen, Foster and Eddy (1997)
Pf: TH (10)	are aware of their own professional well-being, professionalism and self-efficacy	37%	41%	8%	-	Dean (2000)
Pf: TH (11)	are self-aware and committed to developing themselves as effective pedagogues	22%	29%	8%	-	McIntyre (1992)
Pf: TH (12)	are professionally, morally and contractually accountable to the setting and it managers and governors	4%	0%	23%	-	Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001)

Profess'al Dimens'ns	The personal qualities of effective early years practitioners include …					
Pf: QU (1)	self-motivation and the ability to motivate others	22%	0%	19%	18%	Smith and Langston (1999)
Pf: QU (2)	the ability to: • be reflective • be questioning • be analytical • be committed to learning and professional development. • welcome and initiate constructive, critical engagement with peers and others	45%	24%	31%	-	Turner-Bissett (2001)
Pf: QU (3)	being confident and secure in the role of teacher	45%	12%	23%	20%	Turner-Bissett (2001)
Pf: QU (4)	an informed interest in young children and their development and caring about how children think, learn and behave	56%	47%	42%	86%	Pramling and Samuelsson (2001)
Pf: QU (5)	high expectations of self and children	33%	12%	38%	14%	Edwards and Knight (1994)
Pf: QU (6)	being positive and realistic about what can be achieved positive attitudes and approaches to children and adults	60%	29%	58%	26%	Donnelly (2000)
Pf: QU (7)	friendly, amenable, open and welcoming relationships	30%	41%	73%	26%	Lindon and Lindon (1994)
Pf: QU (8)	a sense of humour, fun and enjoyment and enthusiasm	45%	47%	65%	28%	Moyles and Adams (2001)
Pf: QU (9)	a caring, nurturing, calm and sensitive approach	33%	59%	62%	36%	Webster-Stratton (1999)
Pf: QU (10)	being intuitive, receptive, empathetic, responsive and able to 'tune in' to children	48%	41%	77%	30%	Fisher (1996) Suschitzky and Chapman (1998)
Pf: QU (11)	open-mindedness, adaptability and flexibility with children and adults	30%	18%	38%	28%	Boström (1998)
Pf: QU (12)	vision, innovation and imagination	22%	12%	19%	28%	Banks, Leach and Moon (1999) Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999)
Pf: QU (13)	having flair and bringing creative thinking to the professional role	4%	4%	15%	28%	Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (1999)
Pf: QU (14)	being able to take initiative and use common sense	30%	14%	15%	-	Simon (1999)
Pf: QU (15)	being organised and able to maintain an organised environment	22%	18%	19%	10%	Moyles (1995)
Pf: QU (16)	fairness and consistency in handling children and adults	11%	4%	54%	35%	Griffiths and Davies (1995)
Pf: QU (17)	having patience and tolerance but also the ability to set clear parameters for, e.g. children's behaviour	19%	18%	54%	35%	Dean (2000)
Pf: QU (18)	being articulate and an able communicator who understands the effects of body language and posture on others	45%	41%	46%	22%	Day (1999)
Pf: QU (19)	having skills in being both an independent and collaborative worker	67%	59%	31%	10%	Ghaye and Ghaye (1998)
Pf: QU (20)	being reliable and emotionally stable in the working environment	5%	3%	15%	10%	-

SECTION 6

The Literature Review

SECTION SIX
The Literature Review

In this Section, we outline how research participants developed aspects of the current Framework for Effective Pedagogy through the merger of observations and perceptions of pedagogy with elements from the literature review. The process of Framework development was one of taking individual statements from transcriptions of video and audiotapes and listing them. We then used literature and expert knowledge to categorize and verify the items. Extensive lists of related items were developed which were eventually amalgamated into more condensed Key Statements because it was anticipated that the detailed statements would be overwhelming for practitioners.

Each of the Areas of Focus (Practice, Principles and Professional Dimensions) is taken in turn and outlined. The full Framework is shown in Section 4.

The literature has been interrogated in four categories:
  - Research (R);
  - Development of contemporary theories of learning (Th);
  - Policies and reports from UK and other countries (Po);
  - A wide range of literature developed to guide and inform practice (Pr).

This review does not attempt to discuss each one of the references but summarises and presents a synthesis of the key texts. For this reason, it has not been possible to follow the layout and format of previous sections. The references are accompanied by an extended bibliography providing opportunities for readers to explore the related texts. Like all literature reviews, it remains open to additional contributions.

The Review begins with an outline of the purpose of the project as relevant to the literature review, followed by the aspects of pedagogy which are reflected in the Framework, namely:

- PRACTICE (the skills and competencies identified by practitioners as indicators of effective practice) within the domains of

    o Teaching and learning interactions;
    o The learning and teaching context;
    o Planning, evaluation and assessment.

- PRINCIPLES (the values, beliefs and knowledge which underpin practice).

    o Children's entitlements;
    o Context for teaching and learning;
    o Practitioners' roles.

- PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS (the conscious personal and professional characteristics and processes of interpretation and reflection and their influences on practice).

    o Knowledge;
    o Thinking;
    o Qualities.

As suggested in the third Report to the Steering Group, the concept of pedagogy has been explored with the Expert Advisory Group (EAG) and through the literature. For the purpose of this review and the SPEEL project, the working definition remains as first suggested and approved by the EAG, i.e. that effective pedagogy is:

- Practice-based (Siraj-Blatchford 1998);
- Dependent on reflective pedagogical perceptions (Mailhos 1999); and
- Informed by consciously articulated principles and philosophy (Moyles and Adams *et al.* 2001).

(See descriptors on p.5 and p.8.)

6.1   The Basis of the SPEEL Research

The SPEEL project is based on the belief that excellent practitioners can – and should – be involved in the drive for understanding existing pedagogy and ultimately raising standards for teaching and learning (Sutton *et al.* 2000). During the 1990s, educational research was subjected to mounting criticism that its conclusions were of minimal relevance to practitioners (Foster 1999). Increasingly, practitioners are more fully engaged in the organisation and conduct of educational research (Adams and Moyles 1999, Moyles and Adams *et al.* 2001). Within the SPEEL project, their involvement ensures that expert practitioners contribute to the authentic discovery and articulation of effective pedagogy.

It has been noted that competencies in themselves are not sufficient to ensure successful practice (Whitty and Willmott 1991). The SPEEL framework acknowledges that teaching is highly complex and demands an extensive set of competencies and skills that are underpinned by the personal judgments, beliefs and values of practitioners. Successful, effective pedagogy also includes the promotion of reflective practice, which encourages critical evaluation of practice with regard to its effectiveness and appropriateness (Reynolds 1999; Muijs and David 2001; Mailhos 1999). It is important to distinguish between the technician and the reflective practitioner for, as stated by Day (1999: 39), 'when technical competence ceases to involve reflection … the quality of teaching is likely to suffer'.

Alexander (1995) suggests that the effective practitioner develops a comprehensive range of pedagogical techniques, as represented in the SPEEL framework. Using professional judgment, practitioners select appropriate competencies from an expansive repertoire of skills and strategies in response to the learning and developmental needs of children. The framework is not intended to be prescriptive but a guide, a framework, which respects and supports practitioners' autonomy.

Findings from the research have been based on practitioners' professional documentation triangulated (Figure 17) by personal justification – ensuring that the evidence is both subjective and objective and based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data (Foster 1999). The exploration of practitioners' personal justifications and considerations of their practice have been achieved through a process of reflective dialogue (Moyles and Paterson 2001 - see Appendix Ci; Adams, Moyles and Musgrove 2001).

6.2   PRACTICE

This section examines the practice element of pedagogy - i.e. the actions, behaviours and responses of the effective pedagogue. The SPEEL definition of practice has emerged from the synthesis of data obtained in various ways as we have seen. Evidence suggests that whilst practitioners have great difficulty in surfacing their rationale for practice, talking about what they actually do is a quality of early years practitioners, often characterized by their eagerness to talk about individual or groups of children and sharing recent, significant anecdotes or events (Bernstein 1975; Spodek 1988). Talking about practice within SPEEL has been encouraged through interviewing. Thinking and levels of language have been deepened through engaging in Reflective Dialogues.

The initial findings within the SPEEL project revealed 286 broad ranging and detailed statements relating to practice that appeared to represent the diversity of early years provision. It has been found that even though settings are very different, and children's perceived cultural, emotional, social, learning and developmental needs vary, there are commonalities within pedagogy. In talking about practice, early years pedagogues revealed many strategies that are frequently adopted

Figure 19: Triangulation through Data Collection
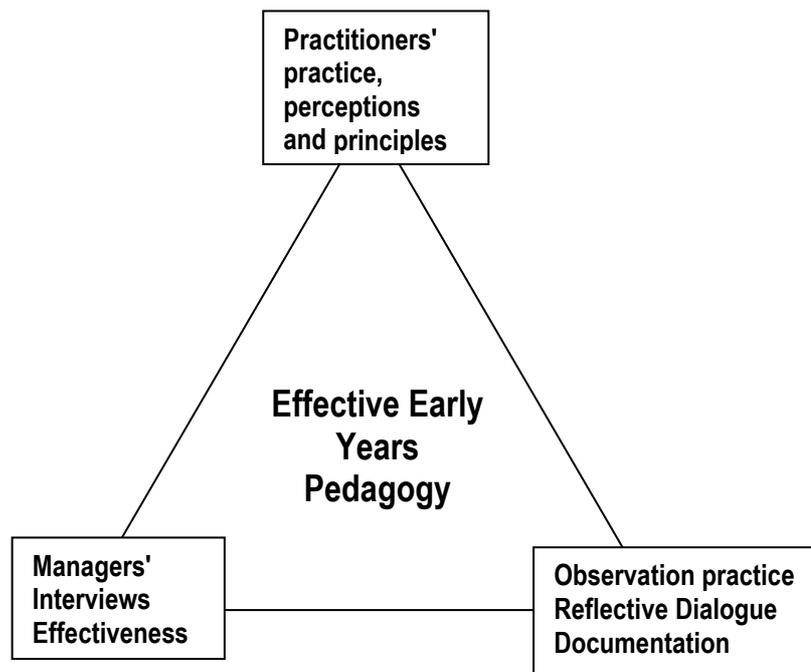
within their settings. Through a process of data reduction, conceptualisation and categorisation, the original wealth of statements was condensed into three distinct (although not discrete) categories:

- Teaching and learning interactions;
- The learning and teaching context;
- Planning, evaluation and assessment.

It is on these three categories that the literature review for this section focuses.

PRACTICE – Teaching and Learning Interactions
Siraj-Blatchford (1999: 21) states that 'the curriculum does not necessarily determine pedagogy'. It has been noted that whilst most, if not all, practitioners work within the Foundation Stage, the ways in which they interpret the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage (CGFS) varies as they 'respond to the particular needs of the children, families and community with whom they work' (QCA 2000). Practitioners' perceptions and their construct of being a teacher will determine the ways in which they establish effective relationships with children, their families and the wider community. These perceptions will also inform the ways in which interactions occur. The relationships developed between practitioner and learner is critical in promoting effective pedagogy. Children need to feel valued, included and secure if practitioners are to ensure an ongoing process of effective learning and development (QCA 1999).

The literature suggests that the quality of the relationship between teacher and learner underpins subsequent interactions, for example, in providing feedback to children, encouraging an ethos of enquiry, being sensitive and supportive to young children's responses.

One practitioner within the SPEEL project, a reception teacher in a Roman Catholic primary school, articulated the dilemmas experienced when balancing the dislocation between her own beliefs, a central belief in 'starting with the child' and being sensitive to children, her own feelings of accountability and the need for 'evidence' in her planning and assessment procedures. In ensuring she had evidence of the processes of learning, high expectations of children's achievements and ongoing reflective and evaluative approaches to her teaching, she felt secure in this belief:

> *All of this project work … I try very much to do from the Reggio philosophy, really. The proposal system where the children sit down, because this is their own, they chose this topic, so everything we do in this topic, I propose things and try and take [their learning] forward. But everything really comes from them, if they're really not interested in it, then we'll say, well we, we don't have to do that. But all of the notes we've kept, we go through every week and say, well, you know, you really wanted to find out about this part.* (Practitioner in Layer 2)

providing informed feedback she ensured children were clear about the ways in which their own learning might progress. Her surfaced articulation was informed by a recent visit to, and study of, Reggio Emilia centres together with what she described as '*all those early theories of yesteryear*' which informed the way in which she *proposed* further learning and *negotiated* additional activities through *respectful* interactions (Bowman *et al*. 2001: 117).

Hopkins *et al*. (1998) identified six conditions, embedded in all aspects of the Framework, and central to all of the conditions is the quality of interaction within pedagogical relationships. Hopkins suggested that effective relationships are required to sustain the 'interaction and differentiated attention' of the learner (Day 1999).

In their research, Gipps *et al*. (2000) found that interactions between learner and teacher needed to be sustained and accompanied by feedback or 'debriefing' (see also Day 1999: 75). The 'Three Wise Men' Report on primary education also paid attention to the range of teaching approaches including providing feedback and 'explaining, instructing, questioning, observing, assessing and diagnosing' (Alexander *et al*. 1992; OfSTED 1994). A crucial element of feedback is the detail which offers pupils the information needed to 'close the gap' between actual performance and desired performance (Alexander *et al*. 1992:35; Gipps *et al*. 2000).

The skilled interactions between teacher and learner are considered critical in determining effective learning because young children are highly dependent on the adults with whom they interact (Bowman *et al*. 2001). Strategies for interaction are included in the many teaching styles and models available to practitioners (Bennett *et al*. 1997; Day 1999). For instance, the ORACLE project, which studied primary teaching, suggested that encouraging a culture of enquiry, through interaction, contributed to the effectiveness of teaching (Galton and Croll 1980; Croll 1996). This concept is developed by Bowman *et al*. (2001: 45) which refers to the adult role in promoting skills of thinking and enquiring:

> The adult does not actually help the child do the more difficult aspects of the task. Rather, the child observes through example or modelling more developmentally sophisticated approaches to a task, which changes his or her performance.

The informed adult can encourage, help, scaffold and support children's learning, provide constructive criticism, reinforce desirable, positive behaviours, show sensitivity in encouraging children's independence and also provide direction, guidance and – teaching (e.g. Bredekamp and Copple 1997). Effective practitioners listen to children, question and promote further thinking: they model ways of learning and interacting through listening, engaging and supporting children's responses to learning. Blank *et al.* (1978) suggested that practitioners' questions encourage children to listen and think. Wood (1998) argues that if questioning is to be effective in promoting thinking skills then the questions must be developmentally appropriate. Research suggests that closed questions are often asked in settings – where the answers are known and the purpose is to assess children's current knowledge. If questions are being asked in order to promote children's thinking and metacognition and their awareness of the processes of developing ideas and uncertainties, then children must have authentic opportunities to reason, to hypothesize and to generate their own theories (Wood 1998).

Questions may be posed in structured, adult-directed periods and also in playful contexts. The ways in which adults support and interact in playful episodes have a significant influence on children's learning. The practitioners' understanding of play will inform the ways in which they interact and intervene. Practitioners ensure a balance of adult-directed and child-initiated activities when planning for playful teaching and learning (Fein and Wiltz 1998).

The ways in which practitioners negotiate the balance between children's choice and their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum will also influence the ways in which they interact with children. Practitioners frequently express concerns that play should be 'educationally worthwhile' whilst also meeting developmental needs of children (Bennett *et al.* 1997: 119). Many of these concerns are addressed by ensuring that practitioners have realistic expectations of children especially in the light of the diverse experiences and prior learning and especially if there are conceptual tensions within those experiences. It is critical that adults take account of children's cultural backgrounds and that they are gradually introduced, step-by-step, to the particular relationships and interactions within the setting's culture (Bowman *et al.* 2001).

The DfEE (1999) also suggest that effective teaching consists of interaction through directing, instructing, demonstrating, explaining, questioning and discussing, consolidating, evaluating and summarising. Primary Matters (OfSTED 1994) listed the most significant teacher factors linked to children's high achievement. These included satisfactory or good knowledge of the subject; good questioning skills; effective use of exposition, instruction and direct teaching; good balance of grouping strategies; effective use of ability teachings and whole class, small group or individual activities as appropriate to children's developmental stage and interests.

Interaction is considered the key to effective teaching in which practitioners are responsive and flexible to children's learning and behaviour. Although their study was in the context of working with older children in schools, Mortimore *et al.* (1988) also suggested that interaction includes questioning, making provision for focused activities and effective communication with the whole class. Challenging children in this way contributes to the development of metacognitive skills of planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

The SPRINT Project (Study of Primary Interactive Teaching: Moyles *et al.* 1999-2001) investigated primary teachers' understanding and use of interactive teaching within the literacy hour. The study used the 1996 ORACLE (Galton *et al.* 1999) (teacher schedule to compare classroom interactions before and after the advent of the National Literacy Strategy). It was found that, in KS1 classrooms, young children were being subjected to more task supervision (that is, tasks supervised by the teacher rather than child initiated) and to less cognitively challenging questioning during Literacy Strategy teaching than in 1996 or currently in other areas of the curriculum. It was felt by the researchers that this was indicative of the nature of 'pace' within

Literacy Strategy interactions. Young children appeared to be given insufficient time to think through responses to tasks by teachers who felt under pressure to 'get through the work' rather than allowing time for scaffolding children from their current levels of understanding and engaging in higher-order questioning. [The use of Reflective Dialogues in this study revealed that a majority of the 15 teachers felt that the experience of reflecting on videos of practice caused them to make more substantive shifts in practice – see section on Thinking later.]

The nature of supportive interaction is explored by Wang *et al*. (2001) who researched the effects of practitioners' verbal and non-verbal scaffolding on the everyday classroom performances of children with Down Syndrome. It was discovered that the use of body language and non-verbal behaviours such as hand gestures often spontaneously accompanied interactions. In this way, through both conscious and spontaneous, fluent interactions, practitioners are able to scaffold children's learning (*ibid.* 2001:73) although Borich (1996) argues that scaffolding is more effective if conducted within the context of clearly structured lessons. The use of body language in adults and children contributes a significant role in effective practice. Observations made by practitioners, of children at play, provide evidence of the signals, messages, negotiation and body language which children use when establishing playful learning (Sutton-Smith and Bryne, 1984). Practitioners' interpretations of these observations are used to inform and plan for future interactions with learners.

Aspects of interaction continue to be discussed in the following sections. It will be found that relationships are a recurring theme throughout this review.

Within these many aspects of teaching is a 'considerable array of alternative approaches to teaching' which have been studied by Joyce *et al*. (1997:14). They argue that the most powerful models of teaching adapt flexibly to a wide spectrum of curriculum areas and types of learners. This is made possible by drawing on an extensive range of skills, including:

- Managing learning (and designing an appropriate curriculum);
- Facilitating
- Counselling
- Evaluating
- Disciplining.

An important element of being challenged and questioned is metacognition – the process of developing knowledge and understanding about one's own thought processes (Muijs and Reynolds 2001). McGuinness (1999: 1) reports that children must be taught how to think, to acquire and use metacognitive skills, if they are to make judgments and decisions:

> Raising standards requires that attention is directed not only on what is learned but on how children learn and how teachers intervene to achieve this.

Various strategies are suggested to develop an awareness of children's thinking processes for it is suggested that these processes of metacognition lead to the development of more effective thinking skills. Joyce *et al*. (1997) investigated directive teaching models in which the child is informed of the teaching objective, and, through considered interaction, explicitly challenged and questioned. Often recalling prior learning supports further learning. In an on-line publication, Science for All Americans (2000:4), it is suggested that effective teaching of science is enhanced when practitioners:

- insist on clear expression;

- plan for group work in which children can talk with each other, negotiate findings and assess how their activities are progressing;
- present children with a stimulus, which may be designed to increase and sustain children's attention;
- 'separate knowing from finding out';
- welcome and plan for the promotion of children's curiosity, encouraging and questioning;
- promote aesthetic responses to the 'beauty of ideas, methods, tools, structures, objects and living organisms' (*ibid.* 2000: 6).

An alternative to this directive approach includes a non-directive model in which the practitioner encourages children to have free choice in their learning. Opportunities are provided for children to define their own problems, while the practitioner clarifies and models ways in which problems might be solved. In both direct and non-direct models, the practitioner offers a supportive role that may encourage the child to discuss the processes of problem solving. Listening to children discussing their own understanding and hypothesizing and valuing children's theories, gives practitioners insight into children's thought processes. These insights are then used to inform future teaching. In her report, McGuinness (1999:1) concludes that thinking skills must be made explicit, informed by a 'metacognitive perspective; creating dispositions and habits of good thinking'.

Starting with the child, building on their own theories, ensuring the more recent understandings of brain development and the ways in which children's development and interest relates to their motivation, ensure that children's interests are sustained through the curriculum (Kotulak, 1996). One such event occurred in the SPEEL research during Layer 1 visits – a child was attempting to explain how conkers came to be on chestnut trees:

> *During a walk around the school grounds the practitioner encouraged the children to observe the autumnal scene. The practitioner has generated a culture of curiosity in her setting. Children were familiar with asking questions of each other and were willing to hypothesise when faced with unfamiliar situations. While they were walking around one of the chestnut trees many children began to collect the conkers. The practitioner asked them 'Where do you think the conkers came from?' After some thought, one child explained that a stairway came out of the ground so that the conkers could all march up and find their place on the branches of the tree. The child was not ridiculed not corrected. Her hypothesis was accepted and used as a starting point for further investigation with additional questions from the other children and the supportive adult. Together they explored other areas in the school grounds, following up their findings with a visit to the class and local libraries.*

In valuing children's theories' practitioners enable children to develop a positive sense of themselves. Bowman *et al.* (2001) propose that effectively encouraging children's natural propensity to experiment and invent is likely to result in children who are eager to learn. They conclude that when children's learning is sensitively modelled and scaffolded they are likely to engage in complex thinking and problem solving.

In addition to practitioners' relationships and interactions is their practical knowledge of the classroom, its broader context and the ways in which the environment impacts on learning. This knowledge of the learning context is discussed in the following section.

PRACTICE – The Learning and Teaching Context
Within the SPEEL Framework, the learning and teaching context is constructed through:

- Creating a supportive, enquiring and respectful ethos within the setting;
- Making provision for learning, including playful learning;
- Maintaining relationships.

It is considered that the learning environment within settings influences the quality of children's learning (Day 1999). However, Muijs and Reynolds (2001) found that many practitioners are more concerned with children's emotional and social needs than their cognitive development. Fisher (1997) considered that decisions made by teachers regarding curriculum issues also include consideration of their confidences and affective and social needs. It has been established that ensuring that children's learning is promoted within a context of care and security is more challenging and highly complex.

In his research, Woodhead (1998) questions indicators of quality that inevitably contribute to children's development and care suggesting that quality judgments are related to cultural goals and expectations. Many of these cultural goals are represented in the nature and use of buildings, materials and staffing, as well as the day-to-day processes such as children's experiences, and varied approaches to teaching, learning, control and discipline. Turner-Bissett (2001) acknowledges that the cultural context is reflected in the primary classroom including many of the tensions and contradictions about teaching and learning, curriculum and play and the needs of the individual, a group or society.

In total, these contribute to a setting's ethos. Ethos, however, is also argued to be a fashionable but an unsubstantiated concept (Donnelly 2000). Donnelly suggests it is used to describe the distinctive range of values and beliefs which contribute to philosophy or atmosphere – the materials, resources and routines which construct the learner's patterns of behaviours and thinking. Ethos is too important to ignore yet difficult to define (*ibid.* 2000). Donnelly suggests there are three levels of considerations involved in creating a setting's ethos. First is a superficial level, which is apparent, for example, in documentation from settings. Although referred to as superficial, it is also considered to be 'aspirational' in its content. Second is conceived of as an outward, tangible attachment, visible in organisational structures that may be informed by policies. The final level is deeper, leading to inward attachment with genuine priorities and vision.

Within the context of the SPEEL project, the outward and visible structures, such as displays or documentation, have been identified and provide evidence of the ways in which effective pedagogues make provision for supportive, enquiring and respectful ethos within their settings. The deeper, inward attachments were often revealed during the reflective dialogues.

Ethos is sometimes characterised by beliefs about the role of the child, within pedagogy. There are frequent references, in the Framework and in literature, to the desirability of a child-centred approach to learning that contributes to a playful ethos within a setting (Bredekamp and Copple 1997).

The concept of 'child-centredness' is subject to much debate (Chung 2000). A child-centred ideology suggests that in play, children reveal their needs and interests on which curriculum may then be based. Malaguzzi (1996) declares that:

> There is an inner force that pushes children on, but this force is greatly multiplied when they are convinced that facts and ideas are resources, just as their friends and the adults in their lives are precious resources. It is especially at this point that children expect…the help and thoughtfulness of grownups. These are the important offerings of children. Their own timing and rhythms demand enormous respect. Children need the support of adults (p.30).

Only recently has a coherent framework been developed to support practitioners' ideological basis of learning through play (Moyles *et al*. 2001). Through studying the framework it is possible to understand how practitioners' underlying values and beliefs regarding the place of play in children's learning determine the way in which the learning environment is organised, planned, resourced, maintained and accessed. Wood and Attfield (1996:153) also found that:

> Play acts as an integrating mechanism that enables children to draw on experiences, represent them in different ways, make connections, explore possibilities, and create sense and meaning. It integrates cognitive processes and skills that assist in learning. Some of these develop spontaneously, others have to be learnt consciously in order to make learning more efficient.

Providing a playful ethos within the setting demands understanding of how children learn. The adult must take the responsibility for providing an environment that will promote children's active construction of concept development and new understandings (Bowman *et al*. 2001). The environment will reflect children's interests, past experiences, prior learning and current cognitive development; it will also have provision for developing children's construction of ideas and ways of thinking and learning. The quality of the 'integrating mechanisms' and the ways in which children are able to 'make connections' will be influenced by the context in which their play occurs – hence the importance and significance, to their learning and development, of the learning environment.

Research has shown that young children learn best when they are actively interacting with others and the environment (David *et al*. 1993). Providing materials and opportunities for experiences must be accompanied by appropriate intervention from informed and supportive adults (Moyles and Adams 2001). Provision alone, 'providing opportunities' does not automatically promote learning or development.

The ethos is affected by the resources that are made available for children (Beardsley and Harnett 1998). For example, the accessibility of materials and the ways in which they are organised and presented to children will determine the extent to which children's autonomy, independence and initiative are promoted and effective learning established (Wood and Bennett 1999).

The importance of the environment is emphasised by Siraj-Blatchford (1999), for instance, the ways in which practitioners can honour children's cultural experiences and the ways in which anti-racist materials contribute sensitively to the curriculum (Siraj-Blatchford 1992). Embedding a multicultural approach also ensures that children learn about and celebrate cultural differences.

The ways in which adults interact with young children can ensure an anti-racist approach is promoted (Siraj-Blatchford 1992:108-109). The writer explains that young white children might have no choice but to construct negative views about black people if they are not provided with positive role models. She recounts an incident in which a four-year-old was struggling to eat a school dinner with a knife and fork. At home, meals were eaten by hand – as is the normal practice in many Pakistani homes – so this was the first opportunity for the child to learn that there were alternative ways of eating food. Having struggled to balance a few baked beans on a fork he turned to using his hands – for him, a more efficient and familiar way of eating. A passing adult shouted at him, across a crowded room that this was no way to eat food. Adding insult to injury the adult commented that 'only animals eat with their hands'. In an instant, the child was bewildered and embarrassed, his home, family, community and cultural heritage also implicated in the statement. It is significant that although this was published in 1992, it still remains relevant and challenging to practice ten years on.

In promoting a multi-cultural, anti-racist approach, effective practitioners must also ensure that all adults working with young children are familiar with and have understanding of the related

issues. Valuing effective team working involves ensuring significant other adults in the setting are familiar with these and other underpinning principles.

Practitioners incorporate play activities in their planning and often use them as a basis for furthering children's understandings of different aspects of curriculum. However, promoting learning through play in reception class has been found to be problematic (Beardsley and Harnett 1998). Sestini (1987) suggests that few play activities have criteria for cognitive challenge. (The complexity of play is expanded in the section on Principles.)

The ethos within the learning environment is socially constructed. McLaughlin (1993) emphasizes the social aspect of settings:

> The school workplace is a physical setting, a formal organisation, an employer. It is also a social and psychological setting in which teachers construct a sense of practice, of professional efficacy, and of professional community. This aspect of the workplace – the nature of the professional community that exists there – appears more critical than any other factor to the character of teaching and learning for teachers and the students.

Above all, the most important aspect is the nature and quality of the dynamic relationships between teacher and learner. At a pragmatic level, this will involve ensuring seating is appropriate to support the development of relationships, that clear rules are established, guidelines, whole school behaviour policies are developed by all staff and implemented with enthusiasm (Muijs and Reynolds 2001; Brophy 1981). Informed by knowledge of children, the practitioners will ensure the environment supports further learning and promotes 'comfortable collaboration' (Day 1999).

Evans *et al*. (1994) discuss ways in which collaboration may lead to positive effects within and between schools and pupils. They argue that generating a collaborative ethos supports practitioners and promotes a more inclusive approach to individual needs of children. Some concern has been noted that although promoting collaborative work amongst children has many advantages, it might encourage dependency on others in peer groups and does not necessarily also foster independence (MEP 2001). Generating and sustaining an appropriate ethos is highly complex and demands on-going reflection, evaluation and assessment of children's progress through development and learning, as reflected in the SPEEL framework. The following section examines this aspect of pedagogy.

PRACTICE – Planning, Evaluation and Assessment

Exploring assessment involves examining pedagogical goals, values, expectations and outcomes (Bowman *et al*. 2001). From a practitioner perspective, Beardsley and Harnett (1998) suggest it is also important to acknowledge the social and political contexts that shape the experiences of children and their teachers. This will provide the basis for additional knowledge gained through working with and observing children. Practitioners frequently incorporate play activities in their planning and use the information to further children's understandings of different aspects of curriculum. Observations are used to inform and evaluate children's learning, possibly, but not always with the added benefit of evidence of the process. Many strategies are used to capture the processes of learning. Beardsley and Harnett (1998) suggest that practitioners use:

- Dramatic representations;
- Recall or review of pedagogical episodes;
- Photographs which are later discussed by the children;
- Video and audio of children engaged in play;
- Children's written or verbal accounts or drawings of play;
- Mapping pattern and sequence of play; or

- Diaries of ways in which play was developed.

Planning is an area which is noted by writers as being problematic and/or challenging for practitioners (Fisher 1996). In their research, Moyles and Suschitzky (1997a) noted that practitioners other than teachers are rarely involved in all aspects of the full process of planning. They offer the following diagram in explanation of the complexity of the processes and suggest that, whereas many practitioners intervene in and direct children's experiences, and some are also involved in assessment of the quality of those experiences and perhaps in recording, few practitioners see the whole picture as vital in their work.

Figure 20: Moyles' and Suschitzky's Planning, Evaluation and Assessment model
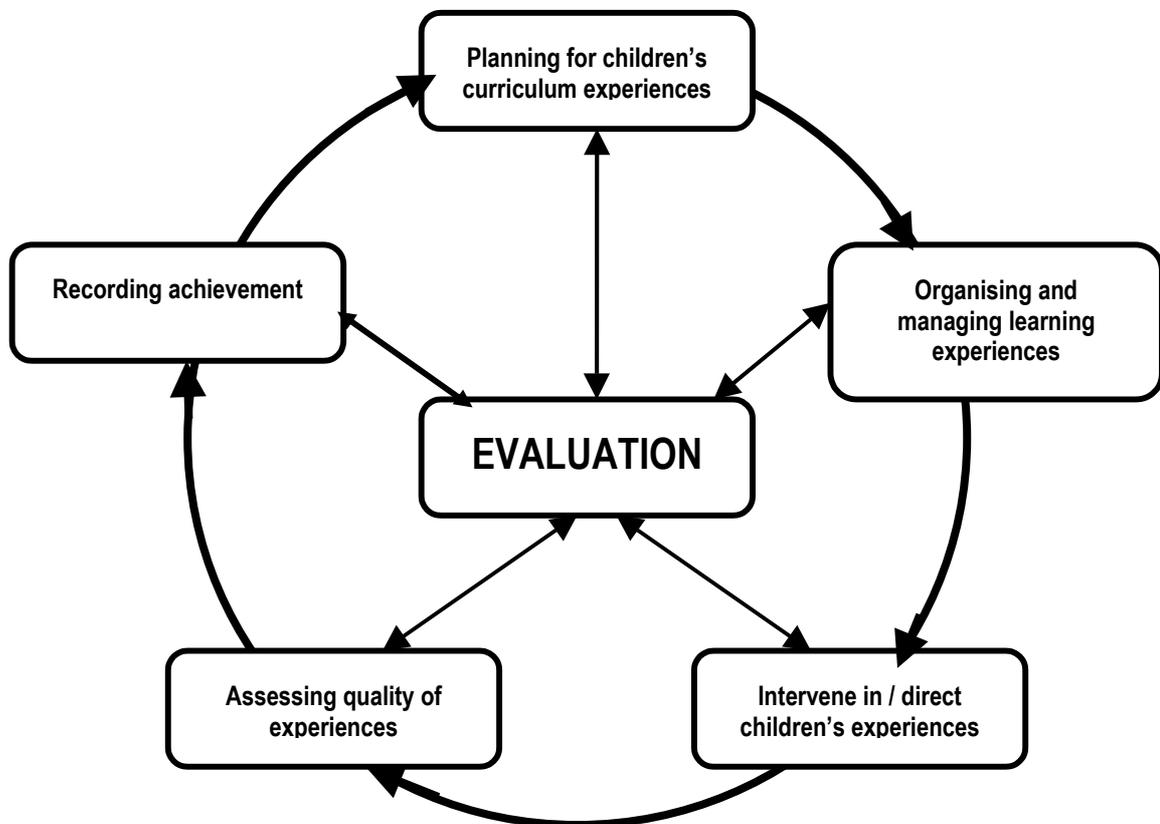
6.42   As a result of their research, MacBeath and Mortimore (2001) suggests that assessment is linked to appropriate, high expectations of pupils, monitoring of pupils' work and providing feedback on pupil learning. They also argue that the need to extend the curriculum to challenge the more able as well as support the learning of less able children.

6.43   Assessment leads to teachers developing cognitive knowledge of learners, although Turner-Bissett (2001) advises that practitioners view children through their own set of values and beliefs and are bound up within the relationship between practitioners and child. Practitioners will be skilled at administering and scoring tests, interpreting the results, often gained through observation and questioning of children. However, Turner Bissett (2001: 84) also suggests that it is

important during the assessment process that practitioners have a 'self-awareness' of their role. She argues that whilst none of these tasks is inherently difficult, speed and spontaneity of responses is indicative of the expert practitioner. An ability to be self-aware demands a surfaced and conscious familiarity with underpinning principles. These are discussed in the following section.

6.3   PRINCIPLES

This section presents a brief overview of some key theories of children's learning and development and is followed by a discussion of some influences on practitioners' principles. Surfacing these principles has been an exacting process, for research suggests that few opportunities are encouraged for deeper discussions about effective pedagogy (Simon 1999). Practitioners are not always able to identify and articulate effective and successful aspects of their work (Turner-Bissett 1999). In order to support the location of their voices (Jensen *et al*. 1997) practitioners need opportunities and time to recount the anecdotes and stories of the daily activities in which they are engaged.

In spite of this challenge, it emerged from the analysis of the interviews in the SPEEL research that practitioners hold passionate convictions about their practice and the role of play in promoting learning and development (Moyles 2001). However, Woodhead (1996: 88) suggests that cherished beliefs about what is best for children are culturally constructed and that achieving quality is a progressive process, not a final outcome.

Practitioners spoke in the SPEEL research with passion and commitment about their work with young children. As they talked about practice, especially within Reflective Dialogues, they began to delve deeper into previously implicitly and intuitively held knowledge (Turner-Bissett 1999). It was found that practitioners held certain, often deeply seated convictions about their practice and, in particular, in relation to the role of play in promoting learning and development. One practitioner described how during a visit to Reggio Emilia, she was moved to tears at the effectiveness of the curriculum and the ways in which children's learning and development is valued:

> *I sat in a room and cried. I did, because it was everything I've ever believed in and the, the standards of the children, their, their intensity, the standards of their work, and their collaboration together, the way that they were talking together, the buildings. They would just not put their children in a hut at the end of a playground. Their children are their future, they give their children the best.*

Through a process of withdrawing from and returning to practice, with the aid of the video, it was found that practitioners were able to identify the effective and successful aspects of their work. As the Reflective Dialogue deepened their thinking they began to consider adaptation and change to their principles and practice.

It was found that three categories of principles emerged, relating to:
- Children's entitlements;
- The context for teaching and learning; and
- Practitioner roles.

PRINCIPLES – Children's Entitlements

Many theorists have informed our understanding of children's development (for example Dewey, Froëbel, Isaacs, The Macmillans, Montessori, Steiner, Piaget and Vygotsky). More recently our understanding of how children learn has challenged former beliefs (Moss and Pence 1994; Laevers 1999; Sylva *et al*. 1999; Dahlberg *et al*. 1999).

These theorists were rarely mentioned by name by practitioners in the SPEEL research, although two approaches were frequently proclaimed by practitioners to underpin their approach to effective practice: High/Scope, with its clearly identifiable structure, emphasizing a process of 'Plan → Do → Review', and the creative influences of Reggio Emilia. High/Scope, which developed from the Head Start project, is a structured approach based in children being active learners; through a process of Plan → Do → Review, children are encouraged to assume responsibility for their own learning (Hohmann and Weikart, 1995). The role of the adult and working with parents contributes to this approach that, essentially, gives children significant levels of choice in their activities. Autonomy is also a related issue in the Reggio Emilia settings of Northern Italy. Several practitioners had visited or read about Reggio Emilia and were enthused and inspired by the ways in which children are encouraged to direct and inform the emergent curriculum and the levels of responsibility and trust afforded to young children.

Our earlier practitioner continued:

> *That was the other thing really from Reggio, that we have always put the emphasis on the process [of learning]. We knew that, but we didn't know how to show that to other people, to explain that to parents, to students, staff, the whole process of learning. So that was the other way that I think Reggio has influenced us, that we have looked at, them [asking] how we can document the learning process and then use that to inform our planning?*

In response to being asked by the interviewer 'So what do you see as the kind of principles behind Reggio Emilia?' another practitioner commented:

> *I just think it lets children make their own choice and do what they want to do, instead of us saying you have to paint this and then cut it and then do this, they can just do whatever they want and it holds their concentration longer when they have got freedom of choice as it were.*

Different theorists hold different views of learning and development. These have different implications for practice and consequently contribute to practitioners' underpinning pedagogical principles in differing ways. Those that are relevant to the SPEEL project are mentioned here although it is not the intention, at this stage, to undertake a critique or to study them in depth, partly because this has been explored in other studies and time, at this stage, does not permit a more lengthy review. However, it is possible to identify some links with early theorists and principles that appear to underpin the practice of the SPEEL practitioners.

Freidrich Froëbel (1782-1852) encouraged an informal yet structured approach to learning. He believed that self-directed activities were linked with intrinsic motivation. The value of free-play, meaningful experiences with real materials was emphasized – with almost a mystical belief in its processes. Parents were valued as the child's first educators. Providing authentic, meaningful experiences was stated by many practitioners, leading to the first statement claiming that young children must experience high quality education and care through a meaningful curriculum within a stimulating learning environment planned to maximize learning and development for each child.

Susan Isaacs (1885-1948) was herself influenced by Froëbel. She proposed that the significance of play lies in its imaginative meaning and cognitive value. Through play, the child discovers and begins to understand the world. The role of the educator is somewhat passive, providing an appropriate environment, with little adult intervention, but concentrating on training the child in acceptable behaviour and social relationships. Isaacs had essentially a behaviourist approach to learning with a romantic, child-centred ideology. Play continues to be valued as a valuable process in children's learning (DES 1990).

Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952) advocated a greater degree of structure and formality. The child-sized environment was not designed to stimulate fantasy nor imaginative play but to promote a personal voyage of discovery in which children might gain understanding of the world around them. One influential aspect of her work was the value she placed on observing children's play and her conviction that in the development stages of children played a key role in learning. SPEEL practitioners frequently mentioned the commitment to valuing and understanding children's development and its impact on children's learning although not necessarily in the context of Montessori-based settings.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) promoted the concept of phases within childhood ranging from 0-7 years, followed by 7-14 and 14 years onwards. He suggested that children benefit from a carefully planned learning environment in which the community and relationships play a key role in promoting children's development – their 'imagination, resourcefulness, inventiveness and adaptability which each child brings to bear upon the experiences he or she encounters' (Jenkinson 1998:17).

Jean Piaget's (1896-1980) theories have had a dominant influence on classroom practice, in determining that play can facilitate learning by encouraging children to assimilate new material into existing cognitive structures. His theory suggested that children's development is sequential, that they are active learners who benefit from first hand experiences. His work appeared to place more emphasis on children's cognitive development than their social and emotional development.

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1935) acknowledged the importance of more knowledgeable others who support children's learning. His social constructivist theories were based on supporting the learner within their zone of proximal development. Jerome Bruner (1915-) also emphasised that children learn through being actively engaged with the scaffolded support of more knowledgeable others.

The role of the adult is critical in ensuring effective pedagogy upholds the value of early childhood as a significant, specific and valid stage of a child's life. The effective early years pedagogue has a responsibility to enhance children's natural learning and development (Bredekamp and Copple 1997).

Other former pioneers have contributed to our understanding and valuing early years, including the MacMillans, Dewey and de Lissa. More recently, others have argued for effective provision for young children, in particular that each child should be respected and valued regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, special educational needs, gender or ability (RSA 'Start Right' Report 1994; Moss and Pence 1994; Laevers 1999; Sylva *et al*. 1999). Curriculum documents from other countries also contribute to contemporary understanding of how children learn (e.g. Royal Ministry of Educational Research and Church Affairs 1997, SPAEM 1999).

Finally, and more recently, research into children's development has reported that neurological pathways continue to benefit from the stimulation of playful learning experiences (POST, 2000). This recent understanding informs new constructs of excellence within pedagogy. In its summary of submissions (2000) on the appropriate content of early years education, the POST document states:

The latest neuro-scientific research on the dense neural-pathways formation in the early years, and other research findings on the rate of physical maturation in the early years, is also quoted in support of later school entry. In practical terms, early entry to school may effectively deny four-year-olds their entitlement to early education. The establishment of a distinct period of education before the start of more formal schooling, according to Early Education, could ensure that all children receive the support that they need, as a right.

Within all the recent work is a common commitment to playful pedagogy. Historically, play has been promoted as central to learning and development by theorists although the relationship of play to pedagogy is not straightforward and makes different demands on the supporting adults (Bennett *et al*. 1997). Promoting learning through play has been found to be problematic, as indicated earlier. Sestini (1987) found that few play activities had the criteria for cognitive challenge. Sylva *et al*. (1980) found that adult interactions were more managerial and consisted of domestic related activities. Meadows and Cashdan (1988) were critical of the scarcity and poor quality of adult-child interactions.

The Principles framework in SPEEL represents an amalgam of many of these theories, adopted and adapted in the light of experiences, knowledge, skills and understanding. In addition to a sound theoretical base, Griffiths and Davies (1995) advocate that early years principles should be based on a commitment to fairness, involving:

- care and respect;
- entitlement to a curriculum (academic and social);
- obtaining and applying knowledge of children's backgrounds (whilst challenging stereotypical assumptions).

For example, in Layer 2, all the practitioners, except one, talked about the importance of having respect for children:

> *Respecting [children's] contributions no matter how small or how bizarre they may seem at the time. Because if you don't, then you know, I don't think the children will.... they'll stop participating I think, if it's not valued. If we don't listen to them, they'll just go off and do their own thing and you know, maybe lose that interaction.*

> *Yeah, so I feel that [practitioners] ought to enter into a relationship, or want to enter into a relationship with children where there is a certain amount of equality with regard to respect, with a regard to learning from each other as well.*

> *But they [effective practitioners] are people who have particular types of relationships with children. Where they value what children are saying, they're encouraging them to express their ideas, and they're encouraging children to listen to each other and speak to others, and they respect what children have to say and their sort of viewpoint.*

And finally, during a Reflective Dialogue:

Researcher: *So, of all the things that we've talked about, what would you value most? What's at the heart of the practice?*

Practitioner: *The children, relationships with children, respect.*

Researcher: *How do you show respect?*

Practitioner: *I show respect in that [video] clip by, by not dragging David off to the Maths area to make sure he knew rectangles (laughing). But by noting that he didn't really get it then, and knowing that I will return to it.*

Even though recent policies and initiatives also promote a child-centred ideology (QCA 2000), there is a need for practitioners to justify play, its inclusion in the curriculum and its role in assessment (Anning 1991; Bruce 1991; Bruner *et al*. 1997; DES, 1990; Moyles 1989; Wood and Attfield 1996). Research suggests that reception teachers plan to be involved in more directed activities while children are engaged in unsupported play (Stevenson 1987; also Bennett and Kell 1989, Cleave and Brown 1991; OfSTED 1991). Even where play is considered effective in supporting learning (Moyles 1989), its relationship to pedagogy is problematic and lacks clarity (Bennett *et al*. 1997). Bennett and his colleagues argued, for example, that intervention should be skill-oriented not curriculum-focused, and that adult intervention should take account of child's level of play, ensuring it is congruent with children's development and the content of the curriculum. Kliebard (1995) also suggests that effective learning occurs when the curriculum is in harmony with the child's real interests, needs and learning patterns.

Throughout the SPEEL research it was evident that practitioners are deeply committed to young children's needs, interests and learning and that they have children firmly at the centre of their work (Dadds 1999). Chung and Walsh (2000: 229) argue that the term 'child-centred' has 'masked complex and contradictory underlying assumptions about children and their learning and development that need to be brought to the fore if the education of young children is to be adequately addressed'.

It must be noted here that Woodhead (1987) argues that the concept of 'need' is culturally constructed and, as such, should be approached with critical enquiry. Practitioners' interpretation and response to children's learning and developmental needs is realised in the ways in which they plan for teaching and learning. This is explored in the following section.

Closely linked to children's entitlement to learn are the principles that inform and underpin the broader context for teaching and learning. These are presented in the following section.

PRINCIPLES – Context For Teaching And Learning

There is an assumption that when children make their own choices learning becomes much more powerful but in reality this is dependent on the range and quality of choices available and the degrees of support available (Shefatya 1990). The way in which resources are planned, organised and made accessible will determine the choices children have and the ways in which potential choices are exercised.

Practitioners are only able to provide active, hands-on, multi-sensory and meaningful activities if the context has been designed to support learning in this way. Coherent, yet flexible planning is required if children's conceptual development is to be promoted through the learning environment (Hargreaves 1999).

A belief that young children's learning dispositions develop through play will inform the ways in which play is planned and supported. If play is to provide cognitive challenge, for example, then learning opportunities must take into account children's interests and prior learning. During their research, Moyles and Adams (2001) visited a number of settings with participating practitioners who were exploring ways of supporting children's learning through play. It was found that making provision for differentiated play experiences was challenging and highly complex. For example, in one visit to a Reception class, a group of children were playing in an area that had been set-up to represent a jungle. Flowing fabrics, suspended from the ceiling were used to create the canopied effect of large draping foliage. Additional resources consisted of ducks, rabbits and crocodiles.

During subsequent discussions with the practitioners the ways in which the learning context contributes to children's conceptual development and their disposition to learn, was challenged. Questions were asked about the relevance of jungles to young children living in the Midlands, in the UK. Additional ways of promoting children's learning through the environment were suggested (Moyles and Adams 2001). Leat and Nichols (1999) suggest that children must be presented with opportunities for concrete exploration before they are able to explore theoretical concepts. They also suggest that children might be encouraged to explore and analyse objects and ideas before appreciating links with drawings and models.

There is increased understanding and emphasis on the need to promote positive dispositions for learning (see Katz 1995; Carr 1995). The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (1998) emphasize that effective practitioners possess a complex blend of skills, abilities and dispositions suggesting that practitioners also develop a disposition to learn.

Whilst many practitioners uphold the importance of children making choices, there is an assumption that when children make their own choices learning becomes much more powerful. In reality, this is dependent on the range and quality of choices available and the degrees of support available (Shefatya 1990). Ensuring that play does enrich learning demands the support of highly skilled adults whose practice is clearly underpinned by sound principles of learning. Wood and Attfield (1996) argue that if pedagogues are to realise their claims that play supports learning, they must define and articulate the ways in which this might be achieved.

Many practitioners placed an emphasis on ensuring effective teaching and learning takes place, within a context of care. More emphasis has been placed on care by the childminder and in day nurseries, where practitioners are working with very young children. For example, the childminder considered her role involved placing an emphasis on care, before education:

> *I think to, well obviously to give them the appropriate care, but then also to provide an activity, a much loved activity that they'll feel comfortable and make them, just potter along with something that they're happy with and don't have to worry about too much.*

Whilst working with children, practitioners face many pedagogical dilemmas, even though as Griffiths and Davies (1995: 6) suggest, 'the very normality of it disguises the many decisions' that are made. Although the emphasis within school settings might be on learning, one headteacher stated that practitioners *'would still be involved in the care side of things'*. In encouraging children to make their own choice and do what they want to do, one practitioner was aware of the particular balance of principles embedded in:

> *… responding to children as individuals with differing learning potential and styles .. experiences and interests … the need to build upon, encourage and extend learning;*

> *… independence, perseverance and concentration are promoted when children make choices, talk and think for themselves;*

> *… young children must experience high quality education … through a meaningful curriculum …*

Both fieldwork and the literature review confirm that effective pedagogy is based on informed knowledge and theories of early childhood development, education and care, including management and organisational factors. For example, children do not always provide evidence of their existing knowledge or 'knowing they do not know'. Donaldson (1978) suggests that on occasions children will respond to a situation with apparent fluency and confidence, which belies

their actual understanding so it demands an informed practitioner to know how and when to observe and interpret children's actions.

The key to effective pedagogy is the way in which principles are established and the way in which understanding of children's learning and developmental theories is applied to practice, informed by practitioners' values, beliefs and understandings. Moss and Pence (1994) confirm that definitions of quality are inevitably value-based. Practitioners' commitment, passions and beliefs have been evident in the ways in which principles inform their practice and the ways in which they are able to justify how children learn more effectively.

Effective pedagogy involves the interaction with the learning context with adults promoting collaborative activities for children. Through guiding and promoting collaborative activities, practitioners are able to scaffold children's development (Wood and Wood 1996). The practitioner might select areas within children's prior learning experiences, establishing and encouraging their interest through careful introduction to the activity; highlighting certain aspects of the activity which might not have been noticed; modelling ways of achieving goals; identifying other children engaged in similar activity; helping children to solve problems; providing differentiated support to all children and demonstrating ways of controlling frustration. At later stages in the activity, the practitioner can encourage other children to share their experience, so helping children internalise the experience before considering how to build on this knowledge on future occasions.

PRINCIPLES – Practitioner Roles

Throughout the SPEEL project, emphasis has been placed on the importance of establishing positive and caring relationships with children. Certain personal qualities are identified as being key to effective practice as they determine the nature of the relationship and interactions developed between children and learner. Borich (1996) suggests that interactions are considered the key to effective teaching for they provide opportunities in which informed practitioners can be responsive and flexible to children's learning and behaviour.

Increasingly, practitioners are encouraged to develop relationships with the child, in order to promote learning (Fisher 1998). Webster-Stratton (1999) describes many strategies for promoting open, caring and informed relationships with children. For example, suggestions are made to help practitioners work with children in resolving behaviour management issues, working closely with families and carers provides a way of sharing information, valuing and responding to the child and community (Lindon and Lindon 1994). Working in teams is encouraged to develop a sense of collegiality. Anning and Edwards (1999) state that it is easier for practitioners to review and reflect upon practice with the sympathetic and informed support of colleagues.

The key to effective pedagogy is linked to the ways in which principles are established and relevant understanding of children's learning and developmental theories are applied to practice. Perceptual awareness and informed, knowledgeable reflection is thought to be central to determining appropriate contexts for these processes. The ways in which practitioners process these concepts and understandings are explored in the following section.

6.4   PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS

Effective pedagogy involved informed thinking and the ability to critically question, deconstruct and reason (Dahlberg *et al*. 1999). Professional thinking is considered to be the conscious processes of interpretation and reflection and their application to practice (see Descriptors in Section 1). It is dependent on practitioners acquiring, using and applying pedagogical knowledge. The purpose of the SPEEL research was to define pedagogical knowledge that would inform practitioners of ways in which young children's learning can be promoted (Foster 1999: 383).

The ability to be critical and to examine children's learning is dependent on practitioners being sufficiently informed so that they can be discerning. For example, within the SPEEL project, many practitioners talked about their role as scaffolders. But Tanner and Jones (1999: 4) suggest that the term scaffolding is 'an ill-defined construct in the literature with one person's scaffolding being another's Socratic questioning, leading to limited procedural knowledge'. They believe (*ibid*.) that even using the term 'scaffolding' can be unhelpful partly because the scaffolding metaphor of the building site does not resemble the dynamic interactions of the setting. The metaphor is visually appealing yet does not adequately inform the thinking, professional practitioner how to consider the impact on children's learning. Practitioners engage in deeper thinking as they examine, question and evaluate the impact of their role as 'scaffolders' (Simmons *et al*. 1989).

The development of pedagogical reasoning is a complex process rooted in reflective practice and requires conceptual change. Shulman (1999: 71) presents a model of pedagogical reasoning and action in which a cyclical process of six stages leads to new understandings based in empirical work with other novice and experienced practitioners. He begins with existing comprehensions, of the purposes and content within the teaching learning setting. At this stage, the role of the practitioner involves critical preparation of materials and clarification of learning intentions; this also involves preparing a range of strategies, examples, which will enable the learner to access and relate to the intention in ways that are meaningful and relevant. Additional characteristics are considered taking into account the individual needs and cultural contexts of the learners.

PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS – Pedagogical Knowledge

Effective pedagogy is dependent on practitioners acquiring, using and applying their professional knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge and the ability to use and apply that knowledge, to reflect, to reason, think about, learn, consider change and develop a professional awareness of pedagogical issues are key features of the Framework.

Effectiveness is determined by skills and knowledge, and Shulman (1999) suggests that knowledge is comprised of many different elements. The most significant element is considered to be 'pedagogical content knowledge'. This represents a combination of levels of knowledge acquired through experience and reflection, in addition to the knowledge and understanding acquired through initial and on-going training. Turner-Bissett (2001: 125) suggests that this knowledge 'contributes towards the richest form of pedagogical content knowledge, which underpins teaching' and is enriched by theoretical knowledge, an understanding of how children learn, familiarity with and confidence within the curriculum and ongoing, reflected-upon knowledge.

Shulman (1999) argues that in reducing teaching to a set of skills we risk trivialising teaching, ignoring its complexities and diminishing its many demands on practitioners. He believes that effectiveness is determined by skills and knowledge, suggesting that knowledge is comprised of many elements listed below:

- Content knowledge which includes the knowledge, skills, understanding and dispositions that children will learn;

- Pedagogical knowledge includes classroom management and classroom organisation, i.e. the ways in which practitioners organise their settings and make provision, through routines, for children and adults;

- Pedagogical curriculum knowledge includes the use and management of appropriate resources, which may be selected in order to promote specific learning or conceptual development; this also includes the management of classroom assistants, often in minute detail, demanding fluent, on-the-spot decisions (Turner-Bissett 2001);

- Pedagogical content knowledge transcends subject knowledge and embraces the pedagogical processes that enable children to access the learning. It is practitioners' own knowledge and understanding, suggested by Turner-Bissett that this 'contributes towards the richest form of pedagogical content knowledge, which underpins teaching' (Turner-Bissett 2001:125)

- Specific detailed knowledge, i.e. intimate knowledge which practitioners gain about learners, their characteristics, preferences, interests and prior learning;

- Knowledge of educational contexts. This occurs at many levels from knowledge of the ways in which a small group of children may respond to understanding the social implications of learning in larger groups. It also includes knowledge and understanding of senior management and governors' expectations, LEA policies, community and cultural expectations and obligations;

- Knowledge of the aims and purposes of education, its values and philosophies.

Through the Reflective Dialogue interviews, the SPEEL researchers have been able to capture this 'richest form of knowledge'. As explained in Section 2, the practitioners selected one pedagogical episode that was viewed by them. This video provided the focus for a reflective discussion between research-partners. Through the course of the interview, layers of pedagogical knowledge were explored and 'rich pedagogical knowledge' revealed as practitioners considered issues ranging from the pragmatic to ethical and political issues. This range and level of knowledge, identified by Shulman (1999), is illustrated in the following account and extract from one of the interview transcripts.

One practitioner chose to have a lunch time session video-taped. An initial viewing of the video shows her sitting around a table managing, listening to and talking with a group of children while they are eating. Initially, the practitioner talked about wanting the children to eat their lunch with their knives and forks. Through scaffolded support from her research-partner, the practitioner began to consider deeper pedagogical issues. The dynamic nature of pedagogical knowledge and its impact on thinking is illustrated in the following cameo as her knowledge is used to promote deeper reflective thinking:

- *I am trying to encourage the children to make choices.*

She states the learning intention and is drawing on her knowledge of children's experiences, their stage of development and learning needs.

- *Well, we have chopsticks in the role-play area, but probably not at the dinner table. Mmm, it's interesting.*

She shows a consideration of the ways in which the resources for role-play reflect children's culture. The practitioner is actively seeking understanding about each child's background, considering the ways in which the learning experiences are congruent with children's development and respectful of their culture, family and community background.

- *I've been trying to think in my mind as well how I could give out food to the children, without me initiating "what do you want?" I mean, how do I get the children to say what they want to eat without me constantly saying "do you want a bit of this, do you want a little bit of this?". Because in my mind, as well, I think it's about blackmail. But you don't get people in a hotel situation saying that to you. They say "do you want" and you might say "I only want a little bit". How do you do that (for children)?*

Deeper ethical issues are related to the ways in which children are provided with authentic choices. She is applying her pedagogical knowledge, critically examining her role and challenging and reflecting upon her impact on their development. In her desire to present authentic choices to children she refers to the existing practice, where little choice is actually presented, as 'blackmail'. This practitioner is now very conscious of the professional and moral obligations she holds.

- *Talk with the staff .. you know, sound out ideas, no matter how crazy. It's a very good team for doing that, … Also, I could try asking the children, we do ask the children, like what they want outside. Why not? At the dinner table, what would you like me to do? How do you want me to ask you what you want?*

She concludes the Reflective Dialogue with a consideration of the ways in which reflective practice might be developed – through involving the staff and children themselves.

Overall, pedagogical content knowledge is considered greater than subject knowledge, and embraces the deeper pedagogical processes within learning. Pedagogical content knowledge is based on an ability to conceptualise issues and linked to open-minded attitudes. Brownlee *et al*. (2000) suggests there are three domains to pedagogical knowledge. These statements are illustrated, in italics, from extracts from the interview transcripts:

1. Declarative knowledge, for example, knowing that a child needs security
   - *Children need to feel secure, comfortable, confident and happy if they are to learn.*

2. Procedural knowledge – strategies employed to interact, with sensitivity, in order to promote feelings of security in a child familiar with it.
   - *And then I want them to feel, to settle, to become comfortable, so they might want to sit in the corner of the room for a short while. And just look around and see what's going on before they feel confident enough to, to explore the toys, or, or come and see what the other children are doing. And I think that's all very important to help a child settle, and I think it's important to be positive, lots of nice eye contact, positive praise.*

3. Conditional knowledge - justifying intentions and subsequent interactions.
   - *If you're setting a good example for them in, you know, how to express yourself, and hopefully in how confident you come over doing that, and they can feel confident in their play, in their role, in their feelings, and come to terms with the way that they feel and express themselves more, that's very important.*

There is increasing interest in the ways in which practitioners update their pedagogical knowledge and the ways in which newly acquired knowledge is influenced by practitioners' 'personal constructs' (Banks *et al*. 1999:95). These constructs may be the result of past experiences (including gender, race, culture), prior knowledge and understanding and/or values and beliefs in what constitute excellence.

The relationships between pedagogical knowledge and the ways in which practice is informed continues to be subjected to critical debate although Simon suggests (1999) that the term 'pedagogy' continues to be ridiculed and resisted within UK (Moyles and Adams 2001). Bruner (1999) suggests that contemporary pedagogical understanding promotes metacognition with practitioners being responsible for teaching learners to be aware of the processes of thinking. This will influence and inform the ways in which practitioners interact with learners and will also inform current constructs of excellence.

Teachers in particular are trained and encouraged to reflect on pedagogical knowledge. They are expected to reflect on children's learning, to revise and plan for future learning accordingly, in order to ensure that learning experiences for children are positive, effective and result in confident learners. For other practitioners, it is not possible to assume that this has been part of their training. Yet there is ample evidence that the processes of engaging in reflective thinking (e.g. Day 1999; Ghaye and Ghaye 1998) are vital to developing effective practice. These processes of reflective thinking are now considered.

PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS – Thinking

In their research, Frede *et al*.(1993) identify a relationship between supported, reflective practice and effective teaching, and additional factors are suggested (curriculum content, learning processes, teacher-child ratios and relationships with parents). Practitioners' training and knowledge has also been found to be a key factor in determining effective pedagogy, language and interactions between children and adults. Bowman *et al*. (2001: 150) state that 'teachers with bachelor's (or higher) degrees in early childhood development appear to be most effective' (see also Howes 1997).

The SPEEL framework identifies 129 Key Statements for professional thinking which relate to the ways in which practitioners process professional knowledge. Reflecting on practice enables practitioners to discover, rediscover or understand the complex range of knowledge, skills and understanding they have and to develop and use the intellectual and emotional power within themselves to try and improve their situation (Ghaye and Ghaye 1998). These writers also suggest, from their research and conceptualisation of the issues, that reflection has the potential to empower practitioners because the process enables them to become more effective.

One SPEEL practitioner describes trying to manage the *'layers and layers of thinking'* that occur as each pedagogical dilemma is resolved. The effective practitioner is reflective and questioning. S/he is also analytical and initiates constructive critical engagement with peers and others. Self-knowledge develops through experience and by reflection at various levels, from technical to practical and critical (McIntyre 1992).

Shulman (1999) suggests that reflection occurs when practitioners look back, as with the filmed episodes within SPEEL, and considers what has occurred, reconstructing and recapturing the event. In recalling the cognitive, i.e. what might have been learned, and the affective, i.e. what the child may have felt, the practitioner recaptures the events, the emotions, and the achievements. Through this process the professional learns from experience. Unfolding each pedagogical decision enables practitioners to subject their own practice to scrutiny. Within Reflective Dialogues, the research-partner provides supported challenge and time to confront aspects of practice and its effect on children's learning. This process of reflection may then lead to changes and increased effectiveness of pedagogy.

Tschannen-Moran *et al*. (1998) consider the complexities of the professional and personal self. They contend that practitioners' beliefs are constructed from personal experiences of teaching, their expectation or ideas about teaching, their inner state, their knowledge of subject matter, and the reinforcement they receive for the behaviour of others. Teachers' belief about their efficacy influences other behaviours, such as willingness to work and openness to new ideas.

The SPEEL practitioners identified many pedagogical qualities which indicate a willingness to explore new ideas – being visionary, innovative and applying flair and creativity to the role. In making the implicit explicit they have contributed to their own professional development and re-awakened their own pedagogical consciousness.

PROFESSIONAL DIMENSIONS – Qualities

During Layer 1 the managers/headteachers were asked to define effective pedagogy. Their first response was to draw on the personal qualities of the practitioners they had known and with whom they worked. Some of these qualities were expressed as:

> *Someone who likes children, loves children, cares about the child; has a willingness to learn; is open and approachable; is bubbly and has a sense of humour; is flexible and approachable; is organised; is confident and positive about what can be achieved with children.*

These early statements formed the basis for examining the Professional Qualities of the effective pedagogue. Cartwright (1999) supports this view of the pedagogue, stating that a love for children, respect for and trust in each child is a fundamental attribute of the effective practitioner. She adds that a sense of humour and integrity are additional qualities that may typify excellence. It appeared that, within the SPEEL project a distinction was being made between professional qualities which can be learned or are the result of training and knowledge gained through experience, and personal qualities which appear to determine the kind of practitioner who is highly valued by managers/headteachers.

Many of the qualities are linked to the ways in which children's learning is motivated and sustained. Katz (1995) argues that merely valuing affective, personal qualities '*she's good with children*' risks denying the intellectual, and rigorous elements of effective pedagogy. She insists (*ibid.*) that practitioners must be authentic, honest and respectful as relationships are developed. Liking children must be accompanied by informed understanding of how children develop and learn.

This and other literature confirms that effective practitioners are dedicated to ensuring knowledge and the curriculum is accessible to all learners (NBPTS 1998). Practitioners deployed their ability to relate to children, ensuring that children are comfortable, confident and valued, and generated an ethos within the setting that promoted effective learning.

In her research, McGuinness (1999) found that raising standards was related not only to what children learn, but also to the way in which practitioners related and interacted with children. Acting as role models for children was partly informed by practitioners' own understanding of using metacognitive skills. But practitioners' behaviours were determined also by their personal qualities – the ways in which they moved around the settings, interacting with children, making fluent (intuitive) decisions and judgments and the ways in which they, as practitioners, developed their own metacognitive skills.

Part of the complexity of teaching is related to the cultural and personal values which are deeply embedded within pedagogy. Teaching involves the self, within interactions, relationships and in the process of professional development. It is cognitive and affective, involving feelings of euphoria, excitement but also sadness or guilt (Turner-Bissett, 2001:109).

Reproduced in full, Bennett *et al.'s* (1997: 124) account of teachers' responses clearly illustrates the ways in which practitioners' conscious reflection impacts the quality of teaching:

> It was clear from the teachers' accounts that they did not see a clear role for themselves in children's play. On the one hand, they held strong beliefs about the privacy of play and the child's right to ownership. On the other hand, they lacked both the confidence and the practical strategies for meaningful participation. It is significant that in all the cases where the teachers change their theories or their practice, or both, the role of the teacher and other adults in the classroom are a central feature in this process. . . This challenging their assumptions about play

also made them challenge their practice, and one of the key areas for change was liberating more time for interactions. This involved a re-ordering of priorities . . . Significantly for the teachers, they also needed to let go of the guilt they expressed if they were not engaged in more formal activities.

They also add (*ibid.*1997: 120):

Genuine change for these teachers came about through reflecting on their action via the stimulated recall of videotaped episodes of play, which raised their theories and practice to a conscious level of awareness. For most of the teachers this was the first opportunity they had had of observing in a detached manner the extent to which their intentions were achieved in practice. They came to recognise the congruence, and discontinuities between intentions and outcomes that led them to problematise or think differently about, their practice.

The dilemma for practitioners is to know how to intervene and what strategies to use in order to move beyond benign questioning or brief interjections in order to check behaviours Bennett *et al*. (1997). Although the practitioners wanted to be more involved in play, this was difficult without rethinking their role. Whitty and Willmott (1991) suggest these 'personal judgments' are likely to promote criticism of practice in which its effectiveness and appropriateness is examined.

A key aspect of effective pedagogy is the way in which the practitioners are able to transform their own knowledge into forms that are accessible to the 'minds and motivations' (Shulman 1999:72) of individual learners. The ongoing process of pedagogical reasoning enables the practitioners to remain responsive and sensitive to the diverse and ever-changing needs of the learners. A third aspect of pedagogical reasoning involves instruction – the layers of dilemmas that inform the interactions, questioning, the humour and the nature of exchanges within the pedagogical episodes; through evaluation, the practitioners examine learners' comprehensions and the effectiveness of the teaching. This process can also lead to professional development of practitioners as they observe learning processes more critically and more regularly (Pascal and Bertram 1997). Through reflection, the practitioner reviews, confronts, reconstructs and critically scrutinizes the learners' responses. Finally, new comprehensions are reconstructed leading to further transformations – and so the recycling continues. Shulman (1999) defines reflection as 'this what a teacher does when he or she looks back at the teaching and learning that has occurred, and reconstructs, re-enacts, and / or recaptures the events, the emotions, and the accomplishments. It is that set of processes through which a professional learns from experience – for conceptual change provides the key to change in behaviour and attitude (Hatano 1995).

Mailhos (1999) asserts that teachers need to be 'autonomous and responsible professionals capable of making the right decisions at the right moments, in order to facilitate their pupils' learning. This is what we call the teachers' professional competence. Professional competence is a process not a state, generated by pedagogical reasoning.

Practitioners develop reflective capacities that are complex and enriched by perception and cognition which lead to decision-making during three stages:

1. Before an episode – out of the presence of the child, based on learning objectives, learning context and child knowledge, which is hypothetico-deductive;

2. During an episode – using all information available: an on the spot, inductive process, continually reconstructed;

3. After an episode, as a result of reflection.

He also argued that decision making involves:

- Identifying appropriate substantive knowledge;
- Identifying and selecting appropriate materials;
- Identifying and designing and implement learning situations;
- Accessing and evaluating learning episodes;

which leads to:
- Conceptualisation of the teaching episode and rationalisation of pedagogical actions, resulting in transfer to new teaching situations (Mailhos 1999).

6.5   Management and leadership in settings

Two perspectives of one final quality of effective pedagogy have been presented in the SPEEL project which have also been explored in the literature. Practitioners have praised the support and enthusiasm of their head-teacher or manager. Head-teachers and managers have elaborated on the various aspects of their role in supporting and celebrating the achievements of their early years staff. The literature confirms that one key aspect of effective pedagogy is the role of the head-teacher, senior management team and the implementation of development planning. The qualities of effective management within educational contexts are discussed in this final section of this review.

Effective pedagogy is socially constructed, in particular through the supportive role of the headteacher and management within the setting. School improvement is a dynamic action-orientated process that is likely to involve organisational change and challenge the existing school culture (McMahon 2001).

One headteacher, in MacBeath *et al.'s* (2001) research, confirms that 'I think developmental planning is at the core of what we do' (2001:112) which continues this theme and suggests that high profile development planning by headteachers is useful for monitoring and sustaining school quality with its emphasis on 'perceived clarity of school aims and goals and the pursuit of improvement'. Robertson and Toal (2001) also suggest that development planning will maximise the academic attainment potential of all young people within their schools and supporting personal development, self-confidence and self-esteem. Reeves *et al.* (2001) propose that leadership needs to take a whole school approach to initiatives in order to ease the challenges of sustaining resources, understanding amongst colleagues and predicting or allowing for the complexity and challenges of the processes of change.

Jirasinghe and Lyons (1996) identify key characteristics of effective leaders in educational settings suggesting that they:

- Are committed to the particular setting;
- Feel ownership of its progress so they are more likely to have energy and persistence;
- Display enthusiasm and expertise in their role;
- Display confidence and conviction;
- Engender feelings of security amongst staff, for example one headteacher, in the SPEEL project, commented she wanted her staff to feel *'safe enough to take risks with their ideas'.*

MacBeath (1998) suggests that effective leadership includes self-awareness, social sensitivity, emotional security, perspicacity and imagination. This view is shared by the TTA (1996: 9), which comments:

We also know that effective teaching must be supported by high quality management and leadership at middle and senior levels in the profession. The subject co-ordinator, the head of department the headteacher and senior management team - - who need to offer leadership, set the tone, ethos, direction and purpose within a setting, translate that purpose into plans, implement those plans, check through monitoring and evaluation that progress is taking place. Finally, they suggest that managers and leaders also need to be accountable for that progress, at whatever level they manage.

A further list is presented by Harris (1999:23) who suggests that teaching and learning in the effective school is promoted by:

- Strong, purposeful leadership
- Involvement of deputy headteacher
- Involvement of teachers
- Consistency amongst teachers
- Structured sessions
- Intellectually challenging
- Work-centred environment
- Limited focus in sessions
- Maximum communications
- Record keeping
- Parental involvement
- Positive climate
- Involvement of pupils
- Collaborative learning groups in which pupils review
- Meaningful formative and motivational assessment.

A final point

In 'Eager to Learn' (2001:183) Bowman *et al*. suggest that this 'intellectual framing of the idea of pedagogy supposes a coherence and deliberateness that is often absent in practice'. There is a danger that in simplifying the complexity of pedagogy, the expertise of practitioners is minimised. The broader context must be acknowledged, for even expert pedagogues must work in a context of informed support, 'helpful structures, with an appropriate curriculum (*ibid.* 2001: 319). Bowman *et al*. conclude 'If there is a single critical component to quality, it rests in the relationship between the child and the teacher/caregiver, and in the ability of the adult to be responsive to the child'.

SECTION 7

Findings, Discussion and Recommendations

SECTION SEVEN
Findings, Discussion and Recommendations

Additional to the Framework, analysis of the observations, interviews, reflective dialogues and documentation indicate a number of key issues, which warrant consideration during identification, and evaluation of effective early years pedagogy.

Issues surrounding effective pedagogy and the Framework

7.1   Early years pedagogy is an extremely complex phenomenon comprising a wide variety of practices underpinned by principles acquired through training and as a result of professional experiences and personal understanding. Because of its complexity, 'effectiveness' has to be viewed as a whole rather than particular aspects taken in isolation from each other.

7.2   This vastness and complexity of what constitutes effective pedagogy has been something of a surprise to many practitioners. Seeing 'effective early years pedagogy' laid out clearly in the Framework has raised their perception of the status of their role for many practitioners.

7.3   Local Authority and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) personnel were able readily to identify settings where they perceived 'effective pedagogy' to be in evidence. The list of criteria for selection, collated from their responses, includes quality of teaching and learning, good OfSTED inspection reports, strong leadership, quality staff, reflective practice, good atmosphere, good outdoor facilities, child-initiated activities, good relationships between staff and high levels of involvement of parents.

7.4   Such criteria, however, depend on the use of shared language across the sector which, at the moment, is not the case. Words such as 'pedagogy' and 'teach' produce various responses in practitioners (e.g. embarrassment, humour, fear, discomfort, misunderstanding). The language of 'teaching' engenders concern in early years practitioners who feel that they support children's development within an enabling, facilitating and observing role rather than directly as 'teachers'.

7.5   Effective pedagogical practices are dependent upon headteachers/managers developing a strong overall management and organisation ethos in which practitioners feel they are important, valued and have status.

7.6   Practice varies significantly amongst practitioners identified overall as effective. This suggests that there is a continuum of effectiveness ranging from 'good' to 'excellent' and the majority of practitioners (certainly within this research) will need to work towards achieving excellence. The Framework is aspirational in that it seeks to identify the highest level of effectiveness.

7.7   Articulation of and reflection about practice appear to be important to practitioners in considering necessary changes to practice and improvement in pedagogical skills.

7.8   The ability of practitioners to articulate and reflect upon practice appears to be related to their level of training and to an ethos within settings which positively promotes self-evaluation and reflection and adopts strategies for developing these.

7.9   Practitioners talked of 'interactions' with children (using a variety of terms dependent upon the type of setting and their role). For example, practitioners spoke often of 'supporting children's learning'. Few practitioners used the word 'teaching' which appears to have potentially negative

connotations, related to 'doing things **to** children' for which they are not developmentally ready and interfering in their 'natural' process of learning.

7.10   Conversely, where teaching was being undertaken, this was observed not always to be matched to children's needs and interests, or recognised as such by practitioners.

7.11   The most effective practitioners are very conscious of their impact on children's learning. However, observation within the research has shown that sometimes practitioners can be oblivious to their own impact, for example, the cause of inappropriate behaviour is often attributed to the child rather than to anything within the setting or the responses of the practitioners.

Practitioners' knowledge and understanding

7.12   Overwhelmingly, early years managers/headteachers and practitioners see child development knowledge as fundamental to effective teaching and learning. Headteachers and managers in particular commented upon the fact that nursery nurse training gave those practitioners greater knowledge of developmental issues which was valued and valuable.

7.13   Play could be said to be at the root of practitioners' thinking and principles but it appeared that adult involvement and engagement in children's play is not well understood or utilised as a vehicle for learning. Few practitioners were able to provide a theoretical basis and play was not readily in evidence in the observational aspect of the research.

7.14   Whilst principles (beliefs and values) underpinning practice were evident in settings' documentation and prominent in headteachers'/managers' interviews, they appear to be the least well-developed area of practitioners' knowledge and understanding. Provision of materials tends to dominate activities.

7.15   Although knowledge of when and how to intervene in children's learning came across strongly from all those involved in the research, at the point of analysing the videos of practice, it became clear that practitioners found this aspect challenging. The concept of 'scaffolding', whilst used by some practitioners, is difficult for many to put into practice because conceptually it is not well understood.

7.16   Practitioners spoke with great conviction about all aspects of children's entitlements to learning and developmental experiences matched to their needs. This also appears in settings' documentation. These sentiments were not necessarily evident in practice.

7.17   Practitioners invest much time and energy in developing relationships with individual children and perceive this as related directly to the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Such practice is more difficult for practitioners who operate in lower adult/child ratios (e.g. in reception classes).

7.18   Early years practitioners appear to bring certain personal qualities and attitudes to the role which are valued by parents and headteachers/managers alike, for example 'patience', 'tolerance', 'good humour'. Other skills, such as 'setting clear parameters' for children's learning, need to be acquired through training.

7.19   It is possible to surface practitioners' knowledge and understanding of their own practices and encourage them to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses through the process we have called 'video-stimulated reflective dialogues'. This is a new methodology, which treats the practitioner as a research-partner in identifying effective pedagogy, and puts the onus of identifying professional development needs on the practitioner rather than on the researcher. It appeared that,

in general, qualified teachers were able to reflect more deeply on their practice and to criticise it than other practitioners.

7.20   Overwhelmingly, responses from managers/headteachers, practitioners and parents indicated that practitioners' own subject curriculum knowledge was felt to be secondary to knowledge and understanding of children. This contradicts some of the literature and other research evidence which suggests that subject knowledge is important to effective teaching.

Use of records and planning to meet individual and special needs

7.21   Early identification of SEN is a feature of effective practice. However, this was rarely seen within the research.

7.22   In all settings, the individuality of each child was seen as fundamental. However, the concept that *'All children are special and individual'* often overrides special educational needs (SEN) as a specific issue. Differentiation tends to be achieved through the tasks and activities themselves rather than from planning to differentiate a child's experiences.

7.23   Planning to meet the individual needs of a child with SEN appears mainly to be subsumed within overall planning of activities for all children. Differentiation in general tends to occur at the point of contact with children rather than at the planning stage.

7.24   Developmental records are more common than formative or diagnostic records and these show minimal links to planning for individual children. The links between planning>assessment>recording and the cyclical process of using records to inform planning and assessment of progression, appear not to be well understood or well used in many settings.

7.25   Where children attend various settings in a single week, continuity and progression is not well supported, because in each setting the child receives experiences pertinent to that setting but not related to the child's weekly experiences as a whole.

Parental partnerships

7.26   Practitioners appear to understand and value parents' roles and contributions to their children's learning and development and this is reciprocated. Especially in Layer 1, we were overwhelmed by the number of items it was possible to extrapolate regarding parental partnerships and relationships from the statements made by practitioners and headteachers/managers.

7.27   A questionnaire distributed to parents (Layer 2 settings) revealed that they express clear views on effective pedagogy. When asked what 'special qualities' they wanted to see in an effective practitioner, parents generated 248 statements with an additional 244 included from other open questions relating to 'teaching' characteristics.

The representation within practice of the 'DfES five areas'

7.28   The 'DfES 5 areas' outlined in the original specification – Information Communications Technology, differing needs (gender, SEN, equal opportunities), care, thinking skills and outdoor activities – are not, on the whole, well represented in practice or in practitioners' thinking about practice.

7.29   Provision for ICT varies considerably. We observed and were told of occasional instances of very wide ranging, effective practices where children were encouraged to use the programmable equipment such as washing machines, digital and still cameras and tape and video recorders for relevant and meaningful purposes. In some settings it was difficult to make ICT provision due to the particular physical circumstances, e.g. a village hall playgroup with multiple use arrangements where storage and security are significant issues. But lack of provision also related in many instances to a) practitioners' own insecurity with ICT and computer use in general; b) the value (or lack of value) they or parents associate with its use with young children; and c) a lack of suitable hardware and (in some cases) software.

7.30   Behavioural issues were often paralleled with considerations of gender (i.e. boys generally behave more antisocially than girls). The most effective practitioners addressed behaviour problems by helping children to develop strategies for identification and resolution of conflict. Other, less effective, practitioners were placatory about such conflicts and avoided addressing the issues beyond diverting the child's attention.

7.31   Care is very embedded in practices especially in day care settings and is associated with keeping children 'safe' and 'healthy'. Practitioners were not able to separate out education and care links and expressed strong beliefs that education and care were inseparable in the early years. This inability to treat either as discrete may also be associated with the problem of early years practitioners identifying with a teacher role (see 7.4 and 7.9).

7.32   The value of the outdoor teaching and learning context has recently been raised in practitioners' consciousness, often as a result of OfSTED inspections. Training has also been given in some areas through the EYDCP. Integrating indoor and outdoor teaching and learning experiences is less well developed. Outdoor experiences are somewhat problematic for some settings which have only very restricted – or no – outdoor facilities. The most effective practitioners are able to develop creative ways of ensuring field trips to local parks and playgrounds or to places of local interest such as farms and shops. Some settings provide gross physical skill activities within the building, perhaps on certain days of the week.

7.33   'Thinking skills' are perceived by practitioners as activities involving children in problem-solving and questioning. Open-ended, challenging questioning is a feature of effective pedagogy. Whilst many practitioners think they are doing this, there is some evidence that more needs to be done to offer a balance between open-ended questions – those which challenge children's thinking and scaffold learning – and closed questions which check on children's understanding of, for example, vocabulary use. We found that thinking simply in terms of open- or closed-questioning is not sufficient in terms of effective pedagogy. It is vital that practitioners consider metacognition, that is, children's understanding of their own learning and learning style.

7.34   Gender and equal opportunities issues create dilemmas for many practitioners because they are currently still concerned with treating all children and families 'the same'. There appears to be confusion and concern amongst practitioners that treating children and families differently somehow acts against equal opportunities legislation.

7.35   While practitioners are aware of the issues surrounding boys' underachievement, they are concerned about offering different experiences to boys and girls out of similar concerns for 'equality'.

RECOMMENDATIONS for Dissemination, Training and Policy
The Framework

7.36   As it stands, the Framework provides a rounded set of core competences identifying the effective practitioner/pedagogue role and its many components. We recommend that it be used to support the work of:

- Practitioners, e.g. as a clear summary of competence and performance in effective pedagogical practices. Practitioners can use the Framework as a basis for identifying and improving practice, giving the Framework a real strength as the basis for professional development and improvement of pedagogy;

- EYDCPs, e.g. as the basis for identifying local and regional training needs;

- Educators and trainers, e.g. information and checklists for content and assessment, items can be unpicked so as to encourage discussion about the complexity and extent of effective pedagogy;

- Advisers and inspectors, e.g. as criteria available for use in evaluating the effectiveness of practitioners and pedagogy within settings;

- OfSTED/TTA, e.g. used as the basis for assessment and evaluation of practitioner competences at pre-service and continuing professional development level, including those who may become Senior Practitioners;

- Managers/headteachers who are enthusiastic about the Framework's potential as a vehicle for staff appraisal and as an audit of training needs;

- A wide variety of Early Years teams in settings, e.g to help them articulate clearly what they do effectively and offer evidence of effective practices;

- Multi-professional/cross-agency initiatives, e.g. the Key Statements could be used as a focus for discussion about role characteristics, competences and standards of performance;

- Parents and future parents, e.g. the information included within the Key Statements could influence positively their expectations of settings and practitioners;

- Policy makers, e.g. employers and LEA personnel may use the Framework as an evaluative tool or the outcomes from evaluation to inform training needs;

- Researchers, e.g. as the basis for further research into effective pedagogy.

7.37   It is recommended that the Framework needs to be incorporated in – or at least to be used alongside – the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage in training. Practitioners are gradually gaining familiarity with the Guidance document and they are increasingly likely to appreciate its contribution to practice. We feel that it is important to retain the stability generated by the CGFS and help practitioners make close links between this and the new Framework.

7.38   Whilst evidence by way of short case studies and cameos has been included in the Framework for practitioners (see Appendix), without training in its use, practitioners' interpretation of the Framework may vary from setting to setting. As the Framework represents the most effective practice, practitioners need to understand that, in several instances, they will be in a 'working towards' situation rather than expected to be capable of achieving depth in each Key

Statement. This is acceptable given that each Key Statement has a number of features embedded within it which can – and should – be unpacked by users. Training in how to do this is vital.

7.39   Similarly, identification of strengths and weaknesses through dialogues with others (preferably more expert) about video of practice or of actual practice will require training for the beneficial effects to be felt.

Identifying effective pedagogy within the Framework

7.40   As effective pedagogy is so complex, we recommend that practitioners are encouraged to view the Framework initially in its entirety. Giving evidence of effectiveness in only one Area of Focus is inadequate in describing overall standards of performance. Offering evidence of effectiveness in some Key Statements across all Areas of Focus will allow core competences to be determined. Some training in how to make links across the three main Areas of Focus will be needed. This applies especially to surfacing and examining the Principles which underpin different practices.

7.41   We recommend a series of national/regional dissemination conferences at which the Framework can be shared with practitioners and their views gathered on i) ways in which they think they might use the Framework and ii) what else would support their use of the Framework in the ways identified.

7.42   The language of effective pedagogy requires practitioners to be familiar with the accurate and relevant use of words like 'pedagogy' and 'assessment'. Practitioners should be trained to define and describe such words for themselves as well as using descriptors such as those provided within this research.

7.43   Practitioners need training in understanding effective pedagogy as a whole setting issue. It became clear during the research that effective management and team-work are crucial to individual practitioners being able to fulfil their roles effectively.

7.44   Training in human and resource management and in the effective organisation of an early years setting is necessary for many headteachers/managers in order that staff feel valued and the status and importance of early years work is heightened.

Practitioners' knowledge and understanding

7.45   Child development knowledge should be included in all training both initial and in-service. Single day courses are insufficient to give practitioners the depth of knowledge which all involved in early years acknowledge is vital to effective pedagogy. The potential of early childhood studies degrees and the new Foundation degrees for Senior Practitioners is significant in developing practitioners who understand and apply their knowledge to ensuring children's achievement and progress.

7.46   Alongside this, further training is needed in linking child development knowledge to the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and the Early Learning Goals and at matching differentiated teaching and learning at the interface between the two. Raising awareness is not the same as developing reflective, thoughtful and effective pedagogues.

7.47   Balancing the practitioner's teaching role with the child's own initiated activities requires sensitivity and training. As a matter of urgency, practitioners need to be taught how to interact with children at the level of teaching whilst not undermining children's confidence in their own

skills and abilities. It is imperative that promotion of 'teaching' does not occur at the expense of young children's learning.

Parental partnerships

7.48   Sustaining an emphasis in training and policy on the development of parental and community partnerships will be of benefit to all practitioners who seek to be effective. Current achievements in this area need to be sustained and extended for the benefit of children, practitioners and parents.

Use of records and planning to meet individual and special needs

7.49   All but the most effective settings and practitioners show weakness in keeping diagnostic and formative style records. Significant training is needed for all practitioners in how to link planning with the development of different types of recording.

7.50   Similarly, most early years practitioners find it difficult to plan to meet the needs of individual (especially SEN) children whilst also dealing with the group of children as a whole. Training in the planning>assessment>recording>planning cycle is crucial to improving individual children's progress within the Early Learning Goals.

The representation within practice of the 'DfES 5 areas'

7.51   Significant ICT training at a personal level is needed for many early years practitioners. Until they are skilled themselves in the use of e.g. computers and cameras, it is unlikely they will use ICT to good effect with children. Laptop computers which can be taken home by practitioners from settings where storage is insecure are also recommended.

7.52   Gender and equal opportunities issues require significant training particularly in relation to EO legislation and its applications in the early years. Practitioners need to understand and know how to provide differentiated practices that ensure each child is treated equally but differently, in order to match the teaching to the child and the curriculum.

RECOMMENDATIONS for Further Research

7.53   Evaluation-based research which monitors the Framework in use and practitioners' responses to it, e.g. by a large-scale questionnaire survey, is vital to ensuring that practitioners are able to use the Framework to improve their own practice.

7.54   It would also be helpful to identify different levels of effective practice within the Framework and monitor these against children's progress within assessments. This way, effective pedagogy as defined by the Framework would be related both to practitioner performance and child outcome measures. Such research would also offer a further measure of the Framework's reliability.

7.55   The research has produced a rich dataset which, in itself, has the potential for significant further analysis and interpretation beyond the original scope of SPEEL. For example: further analysis of video data to refine the Framework and offer good practice guidance and/or exploring

practitioners' thinking further through narrative analysis of transcripts of interviews and reflective dialogues.

7.56   Effective pedagogues believe in the value of play, yet have difficulty in either defining what they mean or in teaching through play. Research which identifies, through practitioners, what is play in the context of early education and care, and how children's natural propensity to play can be developed by practitioners, is clearly vital.

7.57   Research into effective pedagogy specifically in relation to those areas it has been difficult to investigate in depth during this research, e.g. special education needs, gender issues/equal opportunities issues, outdoor learning, ICT. What, for example, underpins effectiveness in implementing outdoor activities across the FS? How do the most effective practitioners develop and use the resources available and overcome building challenges? The production of good practice guidance would be available from research of this kind.

7.58   Clearly young children need care as well as education but is there a balance to be struck? Is care dominating in some settings at the expense of education? These questions raised in the SPEEL research would benefit by further exploration.

7.59   We have recommended the use of portable ICT equipment and training in its use. However, there is a deeper issue related to ICT which required research, namely, the effects of e.g. computers upon young children's learning. It is assumed to be a 'good' thing that children learn to use computers, cameras, and other technology in the early years. However, this is by no means universally accepted. Research which seeks to identify the pros and cons of technological learning in the early years should be funded.

7.60   Thinking skills has been well researched by Carol McGuinness and colleagues (1999) (for the DfES) but at the level of secondary education pupils. It is already known that young children can think beyond the extent of their ability to articulate that thinking but is there a particular kind of effective pedagogy which supports children's development of thinking and metacognition? Research into this area with young children (3 to 8 year olds) is vital to develop both understanding and application in early years practices.

7.61   Video-stimulated Reflective Dialogue is undoubtedly a powerful tool for encouraging practitioners to dig deeper into their own understandings about teaching and learning. It offers a unique opportunity to reflect directly on practice and to consider the reasons (principles) behind practitioners' action and reactions. Actively engaging as a 'research-partner' with a 'knowledgeable other' is known to enable practitioners to extend their own understanding of pedagogy (Moyles *et al* 2002). From SPEEL there is no direct evidence that this has longer term implications for practice, although practitioners perceive this as likely. Research is needed to extend this technique and evaluate its impact on subsequent, longer-term changes to practice which increase its effectiveness.

7.62   More research is recommended which seeks to identify practitioners' personal qualities – e.g. attitude scaling of different practitioners, perhaps using those already part of the SPEEL project, to establish the effects of different levels of training on effectiveness as indicated in the Framework.

7.63   How much subject knowledge should be held or acquired by early years practitioners needs further investigation. This relates also to the level of training required to produce competent and effective early years practitioners given the extent of this multi-professional workforce and indications in this and other research that qualified teachers generally are able to offer a critique of their practice more fully and achieve higher standards of performance and outcomes.

SECTION 8

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SECTION EIGHT
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[1] See Section 6 for an explanation of letters in brackets after references.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES
Managers/Head-teachers and
Practitioners (Layer 1)

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

SPEEL PROJECT – Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Head-teachers/Managers/Teachers/Practitioners

MATERIALS:
- Interview Schedules (with spares),
- tape recorder (plus spare) with new batteries,
- spare set of batteries,
- labelled tape for each interview,
- spare tape,
- copies of Research Summary,
- pens (different colours) and pencils,
- clip-board with pad for notes,
- Context Diagram/basic info
- Practitioner Biographies (3 per setting)

SET-UP

n.b.   *Find a suitable location where you won't constantly be interrupted! Check tape-recorder at start for most appropriate location (e.g. don't have near a noisy radiator, on the window-sill where there will be traffic noise to pick-up, near the outdoor play area, by an open window, etc.)*

1. Thank for being part of the project. Appreciate time taken from 'normal' work to be involved and say how valuable the person's contribution will be to our overall understanding. Emphasise also that this is the first stage in the research and that we are genuinely seeking to understand practitioners' views and understandings.

2. Explain the general outline of what we are trying to do within the Project – can give Summary Sheet to read later. Emphasise that we are looking at pedagogy in relation to the new Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and interested to find out what meaning 'pedagogy' has for practitioners/settings as well as what pedagogy looks (and feels) like in practice.

3. Seek permission to tape-record interview, emphasizing that this is only for our purposes within the research (so we don't miss anything important) and that everything gathered for the research is totally confidential. Only anonymous codes will be used even in feedback to DfEE.[1] The tape recording allows us to confirm some of the finer points when we are analysing the interview. All information given contributes to our overall knowledge of pedagogy, and guidance will ultimately be provided by the DfEE/QCA as a result of the project.

4. Explain that the interview will take about 40 minutes (Practitioners), 30 minutes (Head-teacher/manager). Check whether there are likely to be any limitations on this time, e.g. childcare needs, etc. Offer to answer any questions the practitioner has about the research at the end of the interview.

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[1] At the time of conducting the research the DfES was still the DfEE (Department for Education and Employment.)

5. Ask practitioner to give you the information needed to complete the biography. Again, emphasise that this is anonymous and needed only so that we have basic statistical information about our respondents/interviewees.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Q1.   What is your understanding of the word 'pedagogy'?
- Teaching?
- Children?
- Curriculum

Q2.   What are the characteristics of a good pedagogue/ teacher?
- Teaching skills/qualities?
- Knowledge of children?
- Relationships with parents?
- Understanding of children's development?
- Observational/interpretation/analysis skills?

Q3.   How are you currently using the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage to inform your teaching/pedagogy?
- For planning?
- For differentiating between age-groups?
- For reporting to parents?
- Child development knowledge?

Q4.   What use do you make of play as a process in teaching and learning?
- Playful teaching? Role of adults?
- Balance between adult/child initiated activities?
- Incorporated from Guidance?
- Child development links?
- Observation?

Q5.   CGFS emphasises the need for balance between education and care – how do you try to achieve this in your interactions with children?
- Links with parents/community?
- Individual children's needs?
- Specific family needs/problems?
- Links with child development?

Q.6   CGFS indicates the need for indoor/outdoor facilities and experiences to be carefully considered. How do you deal with this aspect in your pedagogy?
- Areas of learning?
- Resourcing?
- Role of adults?

Q7.   The DfEE has put significant emphasis upon children's use of 'thinking' skills. What do
        you understand by this term? Do you/how do you incorporate it into your pedagogical
        practices?
- Incorporated into documentation?
- Planning for use in practice?
- Language/communication?
- Problem-solving?
- Children's understanding of their own learning?
- Independence/autonomy

Q.8   How many children do you have within your setting who are deemed to have 'individual'
        or specialised (SEN) needs? In your teaching/planning, how do you handle such
        differences?
- Inclusion/integration?
- Equal opportunities?
- Gender issues – particularly boys' underachievement?

Q.9   What use(s) do you make of ICT in supporting your teaching role?
- Uses with children?
- Uses for planning/documentation/recording?
- Internet uses, e.g. e-mail systems

Q10   Are there any other comments you wish to make about pedagogy/CGFS /the research?

At the end of the interview ….

1. Thank (profusely) for taking part, emphasising once again the value of speaking with practitioners.

2. Ask, if necessary, whether you can follow up - via post or telephone - any points which might usefully
    be pursued. Acquire contact information if relevant.

APPENDIX B(i) and B(ii)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES
Head-teachers/Managers (Layer 2)
Head-teachers/Managers (Layer 3)

SPEEL PROJECT – Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE LAYER TWO

Head-teachers/Managers

INTRODUCE SELF AND PURPOSE OF PROJECT

1. Thank for being part of the project. Appreciate time taken from usual work to be involved and say how valuable the person's contribution will be to our overall understanding. Emphasise also that the research is still relatively new and that we are genuinely seeking to value managers/Head-teachers' views and understandings.

2. Explain the general outline of what we are trying to do within the Project –Summary Sheet already sent. Emphasise that we are looking at <u>pedagogy</u> in relation to the new Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance and interested to find out what meaning 'pedagogy' has for practitioners/settings as well as what pedagogy looks (and feels) like in practice.

3. Seek permission to tape-record interview, emphasizing that this is only for our purposes within the research (so we don't miss anything important) and that everything gathered for the research is totally confidential. Only anonymous codes will be used even in feedback to DfEE. The tape recording allows us to confirm some of the finer points when we are analysing the interview data. All information given contributes to our overall knowledge of pedagogy, and guidance will ultimately be provided by the DfEE/QCA as a result of the project.

4. Explain that the interview will take about 30 minutes. Check whether there are likely to be any limitations on this time, e.g. staff/childcare needs, etc. Offer to answer any questions the practitioner has about the research <u>at the end of the interview</u>.

5. Ask practitioner to give the information needed to complete the biography and <u>the settings information</u>. Again, emphasise that this is anonymous and needed only so that we have basic statistical information as the basis for our project.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Q1. <u>What teaching qualities/characteristics/attributes do you look for in practitioners/staff?</u>

Q2. <u>How do you identify these qualities/characteristics/attributes when you see them?</u>

Q3. <u>How do you assess effective pedagogy/teaching in members of your staff?</u>

In what ways do you think effectiveness in teaching is determined by the Area of Learning being covered?

Q5. In what ways do you agree/disagree with the following statements about effective pedagogy?

(*Text in italic* are statements from Layer 1 practitioners; non-italic text are some ideas to draw out discussion.)

Construction of the learning environment:

> *"Children need to feel secure, comfortable, confident and happy if they are to learn. The right kinds of attitudes (motivation, interest, excitement, concentration) to learning can be encouraged through open-ended activities."*

- How important is children's sense of security etc. to their learning? Are there any other pre-requisites to learning?
- In what ways can children be helped to feel secure, comfortable, confident, happy etc.?
- How important to effective pedagogy is it to encourage positive attitudes to learning?
- How or in what ways are positive attitudes to learning encouraged and planned for?

Collaboration:

> *"Knowing, understanding and appreciating children's families and their lives and relating that to the teaching is important - it also builds parents' confidence, helps when uncomfortable issues are discussed and children see staff are interested in their families."*

- How much difference does an appreciation of families' lives make to effective pedagogy?
- What sort of knowledge is valuable e.g. families' values?
- How or in what ways does the effective pedagogue relate knowledge and understanding to teaching?

Teaching:

> *"Talking with children – so that children can be in partial control of their own learning – it's about not just giving them the answers, it's about giving them little bits of information, posing them questions, getting them to think it through."*

- How far is teaching children through supporting their learning (scaffolding) important to effective pedagogy?
- Can further examples be given of practitioners teaching through scaffolding?
- How or in what ways is this type of teaching planned for?
- In what other ways can practitioners teach children?

Assessment:

> Planning opportunities to assess…
> **children's learning**
> *whether children can apply learning or knowledge*
> *quality of play*
> *progression*
> *strengths*
> *weaknesses*
> *difficulties*
> *concerns*
> *well-being*
> *development*
> *needs*
> *values*
> *interests.*

- Are all of these important to assess and why?
- In what ways can they be assessed?
- How or in what ways are assessment opportunities planned for?

Evaluation:

> *"Constantly striving to improve - be reflective about one's own practice and on children's learning, plan after reflection and make observations on decisions in planning."*

- How far is being reflective or reflective practice important to effective pedagogy?
- How or in what way is provision evaluated/reflected and acted upon?
- How or in what ways are practitioners reflective about their own practice?

SPEEL PROJECT – Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE LAYER THREE
Head-teachers/Managers

INTRODUCE SELF AND PURPOSE OF PROJECT

1. Thank for being part of the project. Appreciate time taken from usual work to be involved and say how valuable the person's contribution will be to our overall understanding. Emphasise also that the research is still relative new and that we are genuinely seeking to value managers/Head-teachers' views and understandings.

2. Explain the general outline of what we are trying to do within the Project –Summary Sheet already sent. Emphasise that we are looking at <u>pedagogy</u> in relation to the new Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance and interested to find out what meaning 'pedagogy' has for practitioners/settings as well as what pedagogy looks (and feels) like in practice.

3. Seek permission to tape-record interview, emphasizing that this is only for our purposes within the research (so we don't miss anything important) and that everything gathered for the research is totally confidential. Only anonymous codes will be used even in feedback to DfEE. The tape recording allows us to confirm some of the finer points when we are analysing the interview data. All information given contributes to our overall knowledge of pedagogy, and guidance will ultimately be provided by the DfEE/QCA as a result of the project.

4. Explain that the interview will take about 30 minutes. Check whether there are likely to be any limitations on this time, e.g. staff/childcare needs, etc. Offer to answer any questions the practitioner has about the research <u>at the end of the interview</u>.

5. Ask practitioner to give the information needed to complete the biography and <u>the settings information</u>. Again, emphasise that this is anonymous and needed only so that we have basic statistical information as the basis for our project.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Q1.   <u>What teaching qualities/characteristics/attributes do you look for in practitioners/staff?</u>

Q2.   <u>How do you identify these qualities/characteristics/attributes when you see them?</u>

Q3.　　In what ways do you think effectiveness in teaching is determined by the Area of Learning being covered?

- Language/literacy/communication
- Maths/numeracy
- Personal/social/emotional
- Creative
- Physical
- Knowledge & understanding of the World

Q4.　　The DfEE has asked specifically that we look at effective pedagogy in relation to ICT, Individual/Special Needs, Outdoor Learning, Balancing Care & Education and Thinking Skills. In your opinion, what is effective pedagogy in these particular areas? Would you place more emphasis on one area rather than another?

Settings were then asked a selection of the following questions according to earlier responses:

Q5.　　In what ways do you agree/disagree with the following statements about principles of effective pedagogy?

(Statements in *italic* are quotes from practitioners)

- Seeks to build a trusting and mutually exchanging relationship with each child
"I think it is about valuing each child as an individual. We don't say, right, you come in, first day, we are in a nursery now, we are all going to do this. I think it's about valuing each child, the skills, the knowledge, the understanding that they bring when they start."

- Provides opportunities for the different ways children learn
"An 'average child' would develop, but in real life, you've just got to look at each individual child and they'll excel in one thing, and you know, what may be good [in one child] may not be so good in another. So it's about tuning into their interests and what they're capable of doing."

- Values and makes full use of play as a process in teaching and learning
"It's about building up the learning through lots of structured play and first hand experience and actually embedding all of that in."

- Has knowledge and understanding of child development
"Knowledge about children and about how children learn and develop underpins all of our practice here and it's the starting point for action."

- Seeks to provide a caring, safe and stimulating environment through which children can learn

"I think it's important to provide a real context which has a pace and which is exciting and stimulating. It's important to provide opportunities for children to explore, and equip them with the tools to do so."

- Constantly evaluates practice

"We've got teachers here who are constantly thinking and we have quite a lot of dialogue going on. I've not got people who are resistant to change at all."

APPENDIX C

REFLECTIVE DIALOGUES

C(i)   Concept Paper
C(ii) Introduction to
       Researchers
C(iii) RD Process
       Information to
       Researchers

The Reflective Dialogue Method
© Prof. Janet Moyles and Dr. A.S. Fred Paterson
June, 2001

Introduction

Facilitating meaningful and lasting teacher development is highly problematic. Research by Joyce (1991), which suggests that up to 20 repetitions are required before new skills become embedded in practice, highlights the limitations of standard INSET formats. Reflective dialogue is a process which can help sustain the focus and motivation required to persevere with particular innovations or developments in practice over a period of time.

Recent research with primary teachers[2] and early years practitioners[3] has indicated that Reflective Dialogue is both a useful professional development strategy and has potential as a research tool for drawing out from practitioners their knowledge and informed perceptions of their daily practices and stimulating cognitive and metacognitive processes. The outcome is a tool for professional development which is the basis for evidence-informed and reflective practices. A key element of the process is that the practitioner controls both where attention is focused and the direction and pace of enquiry. It seems likely that the method can be adapted for a range of professional contexts.

This paper sets out briefly what reflective dialogue is and ways in which it has currently been used.

What is 'reflective dialogue'?

'Reflective Dialogue' is essentially a two-way discussion between research partners – as we have used it, between a teacher and a research-partner – intended to uncover significant thinking about day-to-day practice through the process of scaffolded discussion about images of that practice. In RDs, the two research partners draw on each other to extend and develop their pooled thinking about practice using a shared source of information – a video. The dialogue then focuses on thinking about aspects of that practice by the practitioner scaffolded and supported by the research partner. Using a series of questions/headings drawn from literature on reflective practice (Appendix 1), the role of the research-partner is to probe the responses of the practitioner to a self-selected question, and to draw attention to further questions or themes that might be applicable. Prior to the Reflective Dialogue itself occurring, the practitioner and research partner will have considered the theoretical basis for the framework of questions and the questions that make up the framework – see A1 and A2 below.

The RD can serve all or some of the following purposes:
- *To surface practitioners personal knowledge and professional theories;*
- *To highlight the assumptions practitioners make in their thinking about teaching;*
- *To help practitioners critique their own thinking and practice;*
- *To provide a model of reflective practice and to encourage practitioners to think reflectively;*
- *To develop practitioners' awareness of their learners and of themselves as practitioners;*

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[2] Study of Primary Interactive Teaching (SPRINT – ESRC funded R000238200) is the research project which developed the Reflective Dialogue method with primary teachers.

[3] Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning (SPEEL – DfES funded project) followed on from SPRINT and used RDs with multi-professional practitioners.

- *To support developments in practice*;
- *To provide practitioners with meta-cognitive opportunities.*

What is the Process of Reflective Dialogue?
1. Prior to involvement in the research partnership, the practitioner is given a brief written explanation of the method.
2. The practitioner identifies about twenty minutes of practice exemplifying the particular aspect under consideration; for example, their use of interactive teaching strategies in the Literacy Hour as in the SPRINT Project or a particular effective teaching episode as in the SPEEL Project.
3. The research-partner takes video footage of this activity and the tape is handed to the practitioner.
4. S/he then identifies (over the next day or two) a number of key points or interesting passages from the footage taken.
5. At a mutually convenient time, the practitioner and the research partner then view the video together. The practitioner stops the tape at points of interest and, from the Framework of reflective questions, selects a question with which to examine the action. If in the early stages, the practitioner finds difficulty in selecting an appropriate stimuli, the research partner models the question and response process.
6. If the RD process is going to continue over a few weeks, it is helpful for the research partners to set a few action points, that is, ideas on potential changes or adaptations to practice intended to bring about improvement. These, in themselves, can then form the basis of the following RDs.

Once the practitioner becomes familiar with the process she/he can readily become a supporter for other colleagues, and hence, the process can be cascaded efficiently through an entire institution[4].

What responses do practitioners give to the RD method?
SPRINT PRIMARY TEACHERS: Fifteen teachers were engaged in three reflective dialogue episodes over three terms. These teachers linked a number of professional developments to the use of video and reflective dialogues.
- developments in their thinking and reflection about interactive teaching;
- enhancement of teacher self-awareness;
- enhancement of awareness of classroom practice;
- greater awareness of the dynamics of classroom interactions;
- greater awareness of learners.

Although some discomfort, anxiety and difficulty with the process were initially reported by some of the teachers, ALL those involved considered it worthwhile and informative. Teachers valued the opportunity for reflection and many felt that the combination of video and structured professional dialogue with a research partner is used profitably as a professional development tool.

SPRINT TUTOR RESEARCH PARTNERS: Eight higher education tutors from 4 different institutions constituted the research partners and all reported their growing allegiance to the RD process. Shedding their 'normal' role of raising open-ended questions (usually to ITT students) was difficult but not impossible and all agreed that the teachers had a greater autonomy over the process of reflection which encouraged metacognition. In the opinion of HE research partners, the RDs resulted in shared rich data which constituted a 'comfortable' challenge for both partners and also increased the learning of both.

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[4] It is intended to use RDs in this way with a number of schools during the academic year 2001-2002.

The questioning framework as outlined above was found by tutors, on the whole, to be too detailed and the least experience tutors found that the questions tended to divert their attention from the actual dialogue with the teacher partner. The questions were simplified for the SPEEL project – see following.

SPEEL EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS
Thirty-five early years practitioners in 18 settings were engaged in one reflective dialogue as part of an observation and data gathering activity lasting over two days. The video was filmed on the first day and the RD occurred on the second day. The single RD has been slightly less satisfactory than in the SPRINT project where experiences over time allowed the teachers to build on their earlier reflective practice and extend their thinking further. Practitioners have reported similar concerns over being video taped but all reported their own learning from the process and how much they have valued being encouraged in this way to think about their practice. Research partners (the Director and two researchers on the SPEEL project) have reported deepening understanding of effective practice from the RD process. SPEEL RESEARCH-PARTNERS were drawn from a team of 3 doing fieldwork on the project.

What is the theoretical background to the Reflective Dialogue method?
The RD method draws upon various established methodological arenas; in particular action research, stimulated recall, cognitive interviewing, reflective and evidence-informed practice.

The Reflective Dialogue method builds upon a growing body of educational literature focusing on the use and efficacy of the combination of video evidence and professional dialogue as research methods (see A2 Bibliography). The Reflective Dialogue questions are specifically based on the conceptual framework of reflective thinking developed by Hatton and Smith (1995: rooted in the work of Habermas 1974).

The aims of action research as advocated by the likes of Stenhouse and Carr and Kemmis are threefold; the improvement of practice; greater understanding of practice by practitioners; and improvements in the situation in which practice occurs. Reflective Dialogues are aligned with action research in all these aims, and in the ethical position that it is the practitioners who should guide this process.

The method has similarities with processes followed in Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR, Kagan 1979) used for training mental health professionals. In IPR an 'inquirer' guides professionals or students via a given set of prompts as they review video or audio recorded sessions with clients or colleagues. Various research studies have reported the benefits of IPR. Reflective Dialogue is, however, different to IPR in one crucial detail – it is the practitioner who controls the focus and pace of the prompts.

A1

FULL Framework of Questions
(has subsequently been revised to reduce number of questions)

Intentions/Purposes	**Technical Reflection**
• What were your intentions/aims/purposes in using this strategy? • How far were you successful in this? • How did you come to this view? • What did you expect the students' response to be? • How/why was it different? • What does this tell you? • On what basis were your purposes formed? • Did the context (school policy/time of year etc) influence your purposes?	• What were you doing/aiming for here? • How did you decide what outcomes were appropriate? • Why did you choose this strategy/subject matter? • What evidence/information did you base this choice on? • Can you break down what you were doing into different aspects/elements? • What's significant about the different elements? • How might different/individual children perceive/respond differently to the strategy/activities? • How did your prior experience of the class influence your actions/thinking? • How might your actions be improved? • What kind of learning was promoted? How do you know that?
Self Awareness	**Perceptual awareness**
• What were you thinking in this moment? • What were you feeling in this moment? • What are the roots of this feeling? • What do you learn from viewing your self?	• What were you aware of in the classroom at this moment? • Where was your attention focussed? • What do you notice now that you weren't aware of during the session? • What alternative foci might there be?
Dialogic Reflection	**Critical Reflection**
• What assumptions are you making about teaching and learning? • What are these assumptions based on? Personal experience; teacher training; other professionals; school/professional culture; research evidence? • What alternative actions/solutions/views might be appropriate? • How might you decide which is appropriate to your situation? • What source of new/alternative knowledge/ information might be useful? • What values are represented in the teaching? • What other values might be applicable to the teaching? • What does 'being professional' mean to you?	• What ethical/moral choices have been made here? • What alternative moral/ethical positions are there? • What wider historical, socio-political, cultural forces/constraints apply here - inter-personal; classroom; school? • How are students affected by your actions beyond the classroom/in subtle ways? • What covert messages might be conveyed? • Does the practice offer equality of opportunity? Is it just? Judged by what criteria?

A2: *Theoretical Basis for Framework and Bibliography*

Intentions and purposes The object being to explore your intentions and goals in order to review what they are based on. What are your criteria for effectiveness? It is important to recognise that change is a personal process influenced by your previous experience, current school and classroom.	***Technical reflection*** Technical reflection involves identifying the educational basis for intentions and providing reasons for action. It aims to assess the effectiveness of practice used to attain defined educational goals.
Self awareness The object is to bring your attention to yourself in the moment of teaching. What do you sense about yourself – physical feelings, emotions, thinking, and attitudes 'in action'.	***Perceptual awareness*** The object being to help you focus on *perceptions,* not your thinking. Where is the focus of your attention? What is noticed from the video that was 'un-noticed' in action? What additional foci might be developed 'live'?
Dialogic reflection Educational ends and means are viewed in terms of the value commitments underlying them. The aim here is to explain and clarify the assumptions and predispositions underlying teachers' practice. Practical reflection seeks out alternative assumptions, claims, perspectives, and solutions and weighs competing practices.	***Critical reflection*** Both the ends and the means of teaching, and its context are seen as value governed selections from a range of possibilities. Critical reflection aims to question and critique the goals and practices of the profession; to raise awareness of the impact of un-surfaced professional aims and ideology; and take account of social, cultural and political forces in teachers' practice. Based on the desired and potential outcomes for students and other stakeholders, critical reflection questions the ethical and moral justification for educational ends and means.

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C(ii)

THIS IS THE SPEEL PROJECT TEAM

SIAN ADAMS

ALISON MUSGROVE

JANET MOYLES

Dear Practitioner,

We are very much looking forward to seeing you as part of our project.   …………… will shortly be coming to video your practice and to talk with you about what you and the children doing. You can choose:

- any of the six areas of learning from the Foundation Stage;
- 20 minutes of your most effective practice;
- AND you can keep the video if you wish.

We will ask you to take the video home and view it yourself before sharing two or three short clips that you feel show aspects of your most effective teaching. (A quiet room in which we can do this on the second visit would be very much appreciated.)

Please remember that we're not OfSTED! We are not looking to make judgements on your practice but to talk with you about what you see as effective in your everyday teaching. Also, we are not comparing settings: rather we are trying to get an in-depth view of what is 'effective pedagogy' in your opinion – what does it look and feel like? We will not be using your names or your videos for any other purpose but to talk with you about the practice. We will ask your permission to tape-record the reflective discussion, as this will contribute to the development of the final framework of effective pedagogy.

We are doing our research in many different Foundation Stage settings – playgroups, nurseries, schools, daycare centres, and so on. These settings (including yours!) have all been identified as having particularly effective practices in teaching and learning. We're really pleased to be working with you.

From: The SPEEL team

May, 2001.

C(iii)

APU

SPEEL PROJECT – Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning

REFLECTIVE DIALOGUES

What are the purposes of reflective dialogues?

- We value very much what you do as practitioners. We want you to feel like co-researchers with us. We want to challenge you and ourselves to understand more.
- Explore with you – with benefits for us and for you – what makes effectiveness from your perspective/point of view.
- Interesting to look at how YOU make meaning from what you do and how you feel about your own practice.
- In the first round last term, we realised that practitioners had excellent **implicit** knowledge of what they do. Now we want to try to make that **explicit** through looking at your video with you and by you talking with us.
- So I'll be challenging you with questions like: How do you know that? How do you make these decisions? And what else …?
- You will have control over your own video – it's up to you to select the clips you want to share with us for us to talk about.

PRACTICE
What was your role here?
What made this effective?

THINKING AROUND YOUR PRINCIPLES
How did you make the decision to act in this way?
What were you thinking about at the time?
Now, on reflection, what are your thoughts about its effectiveness?

PRINCIPLES
What do you see as the principles underlying this kind of effective practice?
What kind of things do you most value as effective in this practice?

PHILOSOPHIES/BACKGROUND
What is at the 'heart' of what you did here and the approach you took?

ADDITIONAL LAYER 3

From what you see on the video, what might be an effective way of incorporating
ICT, Thinking Skills, Individual/Special Needs/Gender, Outdoor Learning and Education/Care?
(Specific areas that the DfEE have asked us to look at.)

APPENDIX D

EARLY ANALYSIS

PRACTICE level detailed statements from the early draft Framework

TEACHING

i. Teaching skills and knowledge directly

a) Informing
b) Describing
c) Explaining
d) Instructing
e) Demonstrating techniques and procedures
f) Leading through focused activity
g) Gaining and holding children's attention
h) Drawing and re-directing children's attention

ii. Teaching through modelling behaviour

a) Modelling language and communication skills
b) Modelling play behaviour
c) Modelling thinking skills
d) Modelling positive attitudes
e) Modelling collaborative working
f) Modelling expected personal behaviour

iii. Teaching through interacting with children

a) Using enthusiastic, vibrant, lively and positive approaches
b) Playing alongside and working in with children
c) Gaining and holding children's attention
d) Participating with children
e) Sharing learning with children
f) Sharing experiences with children

iv. Teaching through scaffolding

a) Working in with, guiding and supporting children through activities using small steps
b) Moving and extending children to next stage
c) Listening to and talking with children
d) Valuing what children say, even if inaccurate and responding using appropriate language
e) Directing children's attention
f) Helping children to make connections
g) Encouraging and supporting children to pose questions
h) Encouraging and supporting children to investigate
i) Encouraging and supporting children to think through and solve problems
j) Encouraging and supporting children to predict
k) Encouraging children to help each other in their thinking
l) Encouraging children to listen to other people and value what they say
m) Encouraging and supporting children to talk about what they have done
n) Drawing on children's experiences

v. Teaching through communicating

a) Encouraging and supporting children to talk through what they are doing
b) Encouraging and supporting children to give personal recollections
c) Encouraging and supporting children to converse
d) Encouraging and supporting children to think out loud
e) Modelling language through thinking out loud
f) Modelling negotiation skills
g) Modelling non-verbal communication skills
h) Listening to children
i) Encouraging children to listen to other people and value what they say
j) Planning to use specific language
k) Gearing language to children's level of understanding
l) Using language accurately

vi.   ***Teaching through giving children feedback***
a)   Talking with children about what they have been doing
b)   Encouraging and supporting children to think and talk about what they have done
c)   Reminding children of their successes
d)   Praising achievement descriptively
e)   Looking for opportunities to praise children
vii.   ***Teaching through questioning***
a)   Using an appropriate amount and intensity of questioning
b)   Posing challenging questions
c)   Posing open-ended questions
d)   Encouraging and supporting children to pose questions
e)   Answering children's questions
viii.   ***Teaching through intervening***
a)   Knowing when and when not to intervene
b)   Stepping in to pose a question
c)   Stepping in to explain, show or tell a child something
d)   Stepping in to add, remove or change a component of an activity
ix.   ***Teaching through responding to children***
a)   Following children's initiative and direction
b)   Adapting to children's interest, mood and learning style
c)   Drawing on children's experiences
d)   Linking with what children do away from the setting
e)   Helping children to make connections
f)   Valuing and using children's theories
g)   Recognising and acknowledging the decisions children make
h)   Allowing children the time they need for an activity
x.   ***Motivating children and fostering their interests***
a)   Drawing children into an activity and engaging and maintaining their interest
b)   Directing children's attention
c)   Encouraging children to initiate their own activity
d)   Encouraging and supporting special interests
xi.   ***Encouraging children's enquiry***
a)   Encouraging and supporting children to investigate
b)   Encouraging and supporting children to work things out
c)   Encouraging and supporting children to pose questions
xii.   ***Encouraging children to think about their learning***
a)   Making learning intentions explicit
b)   Encouraging and supporting children to think and talk about what they would like to do and learn
c)   Encouraging and supporting children to think and talk about what they have done and learnt
d)   Encouraging and supporting children to be reflective

EVALUATION

Evaluating the quality of provision
a)   Planning opportunities to evaluate policy documents
b)   Planning opportunities to evaluate resources
c)   Eliciting feedback from children
d)   Eliciting feedback from parents
i.   ***Evaluating the provision of learning opportunities***
a) Planning opportunities to evaluate planning documents
b) Planning opportunities to evaluate activities
c) Sharing assessment information between team
ii.   ***Evaluating organisation and management***
a) Planning opportunities to evaluate organisation of children and team
iii.   ***Evaluating quality of teaching***
a) Planning opportunities to observe and discuss each others' teaching

iv. Developing reflective/reflexive practice   a) Planning opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation
v. Developing practice   a) Identifying training needs   b) Visiting other settings   c) Sharing ideas   d) Keeping up to date with new developments

Areas of Focus: ***i, ii, iii   etc. in bold italic text***

Features of Practice: a), b), c) etc. in plain, regular text

APPENDIX E

Parent Questionnaire
Layer 2

SPEEL PROJECT – Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning

QUESTIONNAIRE TO PARENTS/CARERS

March, 2001

Dear Parents/Carers,

As part of its strategy to enhance and extend the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the early years Foundation Stage (3-5 year olds), the Department for Education and Employment has commissioned a team of researchers here at Anglia Polytechnic University to undertake a study to gain various people's views. We are working with a wide range of people who teach young children and also visiting a number of settings including that which your child attends.

We would be extremely grateful if you would spend a very few minutes completing the form on the reverse of this letter and returning it as indicated. It is really important that we gain **your** opinions. You may also want to talk with your child. Responses will enable us to ensure that your views are taken into account when decisions are made as to the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage.

For most of the questions you need only **circle or tick** the number which is most in accordance with your views, that is: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = don't know/not sure, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree. The word 'teacher' is used throughout to denote all those who work to support your child's learning and development.

The form is completely **anonymous**: there is no need to put your name or that of your child When it is completed, please return it in the attached (sealable) envelope to your child's teacher. It will then be handed to one of the researchers during our visit on ……………. (insert date).

If you have any queries or would like to clarify anything about the questionnaire, please feel free to contact one of us on 01245 493131 Extension:3502.

With good wishes and thanks for your time and help,

Professor Janet Moyles: Project Director
Dr. Sian Adams and Alison Musgrove: Researcher(s)
Anglia Polytechnic University,
School of Education,
Bishop Hall Lane,
Chelmsford,
CM1 1SQ.

Please turn over the page …….

THE QUESTIONS:

(please circle: **5** = strongly agree, **4** = agree, **3** = don't know/not sure, **2** = disagree, **1** = strongly disagree)

	Strongly agree	agree	Don't know/not sure	disagree	Strongly disagree
1. A good early years teacher seeks my help in understanding the needs and interests of my child.	5	4	3	2	1
2. A good early years teacher understands a lot about children's general growth and development.	5	4	3	2	1
3. It is important that the teacher tells me if my child is having problems of any kind.	5	4	3	2	1
4. It is important to me to be able to talk with the manager/head if I have concerns about teaching and learning.	5	4	3	2	1
5. It is important to me to be able to talk with the teacher at least once a week about how my child is getting on.	5	4	3	2	1
6. It is important to me that the teacher listens to <u>my</u> views about my child.	5	4	3	2	1
7. It is important to me that I receive brochures and other printed information about the range of learning activities provided for my child.	5	4	3	2	1
8. It is important to me that I receive printed information telling me about the early years setting and the people who work there.	5	4	3	2	1
9. It is important that I know about how my child's progress is monitored and assessed.	5	4	3	2	1
10. It is important that I know what kinds of activities my child does when they are in the setting.	5	4	3	2	1
11. It is important to me that I understand why my child is involved in play activities in the Foundation Stage.	5	4	3	2	1
12. It is important that I know when my child has done something really good.	5	4	3	2	1
13. It is important that I know about the new Foundation Stage Curriculum so that I can help my child's learning.	5	4	3	2	1
14. It is important that I support my child's learning through providing activities at home.	5	4	3	2	1
15. It is important that I give the early years teacher as much information as possible about my child's family background and circumstances.	5	4	3	2	1
16. It is important to me that the teacher treats my child differently according to her/his individual needs.	5	4	3	2	1
17. It is important to me that my child is able to work and play outdoors as part of learning activities provided by the setting.	5	4	3	2	1
18. It is important that my child should be encouraged to be as independent as possible in his/her learning	5	4	3	2	1

Please also write just a few words on how you feel about the following:

19. What special qualities do you like your child's early years teachers to have?

20. What makes early years provision 'special' as far as you and your child are concerned?

21. What are the **three** most important things you look for in pre-school/early years education and care?

22. Are you ……?　female　　male　　*(please tick)*

23. Are you ……　married　　living with a partner　　single　　*(please tick)*

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. You have been most helpful. Please return it in the envelope provided (sealed) to the setting your child attends.