

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS
IN SURE START LOCAL PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

Sure Start, the national initiative created in 1998 and implemented through local programmes, sought to improve the life chances of children living in areas of deprivation. Children's services were to be 'joined up' to deliver new and different ways of working. The inclusion of teachers was integral to some programmes, although little research was available to document this. This study sets out to examine how teachers responded to the challenge of promoting babies', toddlers' and young children's learning within a multi-agency and community context. It investigates how teachers' roles were constructed; the nature of their everyday activities, how they responded to multi-agency work; how innovative work arose and what triggered change.

Qualitative and ethnographic in nature, the study incorporates empirical evidence from six Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs). Research methods were designed to access teachers' thinking within a situated perspective. In addition to work shadowing and scrutiny of documents, data was gathered from 25 semi-structured interviews with team members, managers and teachers.

Three complementary theories of social learning; Activity Theory, Communities of Practice and Professional Craft Knowledge, were brought together to interpret findings. Teachers demonstrated varying levels of participation within SSLPs. Those moving towards full participation had undergone identity transformation, and contributed to the construction of a new practitioner: The Sure Start Teacher. Through engagement in front-line joint work with practitioners from other agencies, expansive learning has occurred and this in turn has stimulated innovative practice. The role of teachers in SSLPs can be described as: exchanging knowledge and skills within a multi-agency team; facilitating intergenerational learning in the locality and providing a pedagogic lead within a framework of joint work with members of the Sure Start community.

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Abbreviations

DES:	Department for Education and Science
DfEE:	Department for Education and Employment
DfES:	Department for Education and Skills
EEC:	Early Excellence Centre
EPPE:	Effective Provision of Pre-school Education
EY:	Early Years
EYDCP:	Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
LEA:	Local Education Authority
NESS:	National Evaluation of Sure Start
NNEB:	Nursery Nurse Examining Board
NQT:	Newly Qualified Teacher
NVQ:	National Vocational Qualification
OT:	Occupational Therapist
OFSTED:	Office for Standards in Education
PCK:	Professional Craft Knowledge
PEEP:	Peers Early Educational Partnership
PSA:	Public Service Agreement
QTS:	Qualified Teacher Status
REPEY:	Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years
SALT:	Speech and Language Therapist
SEN:	Special Educational Needs
SENCO:	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SLA:	Service Level Agreement
SSLPs:	Sure Start Local Programmes

Chapter 1 Introduction

In the past, teachers of young children taught in schools. Their qualifications reflected training directed at children of Foundation Stage age (3 to 5 years) and above. Nowhere in mainstream teaching is education concerned with children under three. This study aims to look in some depth at how teachers have responded to the challenge of promoting the learning of babies, toddlers and young children within a multi-agency, community context. Employing teachers in Sure Start Local Programmes presented an exciting opportunity to create new and different roles. This study set out to explore the roles some teachers constructed through participation in Sure Start programmes and to place the findings within a theoretical framework in an attempt to further the understanding of the emergence of a new practitioner: The Sure Start Teacher.

Sure Start, a national initiative, introduced by the Labour Government in 1998, was designed to provide integrated services for children under four years old in areas of deprivation across the country. It was promoted as an innovative and radical strategy central to the Governments drive to reduce child poverty and social exclusion. The desire to tackle social injustice is captured within the aim of Sure Start, it is:

To work with parents-to-be, parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children-particularly those who are disadvantaged-so that they can flourish at home and when they get to school, and thereby break the cycle of disadvantage for the current generation of young children.

(Sure Start Unit 2002a: 4)

Targeting communities most in need, Sure Start set out to be a different kind of service. One that brought together services for young children: statutory services, voluntary and community organisations as well as parents. It was to be a service responding to the needs of the local community, managed by representatives from professional agencies, local community groups and parents and guided by national principles and targets. Early education, childcare, health and family support have been brought together in a single Sure Start unit with its own dedicated Minister. At the heart of Sure Start thinking is the concept that practitioners from a range of backgrounds can provide a better service when they work together, share ideas, practices and environments, than when working separately. This, coupled with the belief that early intervention and

support can make a significant difference to children's lives, was the essence of the Sure Start initiative.

Over the last 8 years, Sure Start has expanded. With over 520 local programmes in operation, its profile has been raised and its budget increased. Recognition of the importance of education, and skilled educators in young children's lives, has shaped and guided national policy since its inception. Free early years education has become available for all 3 and 4 year olds together with more and better child care places, marking the transition from what was at the outset a targeted service, to a universal one. Ambitious plans are now in place to establish Children's Centres, the natural successor to Sure Start Local Programmes, in every local community.

1.1 Setting the scene

When the Labour Party gained power in 1997, between one quarter and one third of children in Britain were living in households in relative poverty. Relative poverty as a statistical indicator defined as 'households with an income level below 60% of the median income level in that year' (DWP 2002). This represented a three-fold leap from previous levels in 1979 (Sutherland et al. 2003). Evidence of links between deprivation and low educational attainment of children was available (Feinstein 1988) that suggested differences between children living in conditions of social disadvantage and those not, resulted in differences in social and cognitive development that could be identified before a child was 2 years old.

Prior to 1997 the educational landscape for pre-school children was one of inequality, with little central government involvement in childcare. Pugh (1988) noted in a report commissioned by the National Children's Bureau, that national commitment to developing and resourcing pre-school services was low and services suffered from the lack of a consistent national policy. Services for young children were largely compartmentalised with very little liaison or co-ordination between agencies, this was especially true of health and education. Families sought health advice through primary health care channels. Health visitors assessed children's general development and signposted to other services if concerns arose. Young children's care was the responsibility of social service departments, while education departments managed their education. This separation of interwoven aspects of young children's experiences was criticised by many academics (Anning 1999 and Pugh 2001) Childcare was

understood to mean services that were provided for children from birth to compulsory school age and included day nurseries, childminders and nannies, and offered full time care. Preschool education, on the other hand, referred to education services and included nursery classes, nursery schools and playgroups, usually offering part time places to children of three and over.

In 1990 the Rumbold Report triggered discussion on the quality of education for 3 and 4 year olds. Findings reinforced messages already voiced by professionals concerning parity of provision:

Access to services is still largely determined by where a child lives, when his or her birthday is, whether parents have access to information about services, and whether they can afford fees where there is no public provision.

(DES 1990: 27-28)

Four years later, the Start Right Report (Ball 1994) extended the debate by presenting a case for Governments to invest in good quality nursery education. Alongside this national call, research was being reported from the US, which was to further the case and add urgency for a review of young children's services in Britain.

During this same period, comparative studies of European models of early educational provision (David 1993) revealed wide variations between countries in terms of its availability, structure, staffing and governance. Findings from these studies were becoming available for consultation by policy makers in the UK.

In the US, programmes designed to counteract inequality in young children's experiences, were beginning to demonstrate the positive effects of early educational intervention. The High Scope Perry Preschool Project had arisen following alarm at the persistent failure of students living in impoverished neighbourhoods around Michigan. The intervention involved giving 3 and 4 year old children part-time early education, linked to childcare, for up to two years, together with weekly home visits from a teacher who worked in partnership with parents/carers. By the time students were 19, the impact of preschool education on their lives was proving to be significant through the following indicators:

In improving scholastic placement and achievement during the school years; in decreasing delinquency and crime, the use of welfare assistance, and the incidence of teenage pregnancy; and in increasing high school graduation rates and the frequency of enrolment in postsecondary programs and employment.

(Berrueta-Clement et al. 1984:1)

The final phase of the longitudinal study, when participants were aged 27, found educational performance, as measured by numbers graduating from high school, was significantly higher for those who had received the High Scope Preschool Programme than for the control group. Measurements of social responsibility, earnings and economic status and commitment to marriage were also higher for the young people who had experienced the Preschool Programme (Schweinhart et al.1993). Benefits were not only confined to local communities, economic implications were also favourable. It was reported that for every \$1 invested in the Perry Preschool Programme, there had been a cost gain in reduced crime, lower demand for special education, welfare and other public services, of over \$7 in real terms to the taxpaying public (Barnett 1994). The High Scope Preschool approach is based on the principle of active learning, where young children are encouraged to make their own choices about the play activities they want to be involved with and then reflect on what they have done, thereby engaging in a plan-do-review model. The programme was pioneered with children from poor socio-economic groups but later extended to universal settings, including Head Start programmes, childcare centres, home based programmes and programmes for children with special needs (Hohmann and Weikart 1995).

In the 1960s, in tandem with the Perry Pre school project, Head Start programmes originally designed as summer schemes but quickly becoming all the year round provision, were being introduced to groups of 3 – 5 year olds from families on low income who were considered ‘at risk’. Over forty years ago the aspirations of the Head Start programme was to encourage children’s intellectual, social and emotional development, in the hope of improving their educational performance in the elementary schools (Blackstone 1973). All these were elements later to be echoed by Sure Start in Britain. Alongside education, health, nutrition, and social work, employment opportunities and community and parental participation were all included in the Head Start programme delivery plan. At the time of its implementation the multiplicity of goals was regarded as exceptionally ambitious and viewed with some scepticism. Concern was also voiced that hostility and jealousy from those people only marginally better off and not receiving Head Start services might surface.

Studies evaluating the long-term benefits of Head Start have varied. A 17 year follow up study (Oden et al. 2002) found that school success was higher only amongst women, but a much lower crime rate was found for both men and women The study

also looked at the effects of a Head Start programme using the High Scope curriculum model. It compared a group who had received the standard Head Start curriculum to those who had received the more intensive High Scope approach. The study revealed that incorporating an active learning approach resulted in participants achieving greater school success and having a significantly lower crime rate at the age of 22 (Oden et al. 2002). Integrated services alone appeared to have less impact than programmes with an integrated educational approach:

This study strengthens the evidence that early childhood programs need a high quality, educational approach to have positive effects on children's lives.

(Weikart 2002:1)

Whilst evidence supporting educational intervention of children aged 3-5 was growing, less research was available focussing on even younger children. Nevertheless, in the mid nineties the US began to roll out an Early Head Start initiative, targeting pregnant women, babies and toddlers.

In the nineties projects began to emerge in the UK which piloted integrated approaches to children's services. Evidence from these experimental programmes together with evidence from programmes in the United States, triggered the Labour Party to include a commitment to establishing centres based on integrated services in their general election manifesto (Glass 1999). The concept of community based centres where services for families with young children would be together on the same site, sparking new ways of working, was already part of Labour Party thinking prior to their election victory. In 1997 when Labour came to power with a pledge to invest in 'Education, Education, Education', the political climate was set for change.

1.2 How Sure Start came into being

The comprehensive spending review in 1998 (H.M. Treasury) marked the real beginning of Sure Start. A cross-cutting review was set up to review provision for young children with representatives from eleven different government departments (Glass 1999). The challenge of bringing together so many perspectives was managed by an independent minister (from neither health nor education) who chaired the steering group. The brief was to examine the situation for children aged seven and under and consider whether social exclusion affecting young children could be tackled at the family and community level using a more integrated approach, bearing in mind

evidence from initiatives already being implemented. Research evidence suggesting intervention in the earliest years was the most effective, shifted the focus of the group to children aged nought to three, including the pre-natal period (Glass 1999). Open consultations were held with campaigning groups, academics, and representatives of innovative programmes throughout the country, whilst at the same time a review was commissioned to research policy on community involvement. As a consequence of the latter, evidence was gathered that reported interventions with high levels of community involvement were able to draw upon and stimulate the common concern local people had for each other and their environment (Glass 1999).

Frequently regarded as engineering the Sure Start programme, Norman Glass, formerly a representative from HM Treasury summarised the main findings from the review:

1. The earliest years in life were the most important for child development, and that very early development was much more vulnerable to environmental influences than had previously been realised.
2. Multiple disadvantage for young children was a severe and growing problem, with such disadvantage greatly enhancing the chances of social exclusion later in life.
3. The quality of service provision for young children and their families varied enormously across localities and districts, with uncoordinated and patchy services being the norm in many areas. Services were particularly dislocated for the under fours – an age group who tended to get missed out from other government programmes.
4. The provision of a comprehensive community based programme of early intervention and family support which would build on existing services could have positive and persistent effects, not only on child and family development but also help break the cycle of social exclusion and lead to significant long term gain for the exchequer.

(Glass 1999: 261)

And so it was, with reference to the above findings that the first principles for the then embryonic Sure Start arose. It was recommended that programmes should be:

- Two generational: involving parents as well as children
- Non-stigmatising: thereby avoiding labelling ‘problem families’
- Multifaceted: targeting a number of factors, not just education or health or parenting.
- Persistent: to last long enough to make a real difference.
- Locally driven: based on consultation and involvement of parents and local communities.

- Culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of children and parents.

(Glass 1999: 262)

So, the programme that was approved stemming from the 1998 Comprehensive spending review marked the birth of Sure Start and the cross departmental unit, Sure Start, was established. The Government pledged £452 million to establish 250 local programmes staggered over a period of 3 years (Sure Start 1999b). Naomi Eisenstadt was appointed head of the Sure Start unit (Sure Start 1998) and a national evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) was commissioned, to provide a strong research and evaluative component supporting continuous improvement within Sure Start programmes (Sure Start Unit 2000).

At the same time that Sure Start was launched, a national childcare strategy was put into place. One of the requirements of the strategy was for every local authority to set up an Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership (EYDCP). The rationales for this was the need to co-ordinate and bring cohesion to, existing services for young children in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. Although this move was welcomed, services were still not considered ‘joined-up’ and there were continuing cries for an integrated national policy (Pugh 2001).

In January 1999 the first sixty areas in the country, identified by the Sure Start unit, were invited to submit their proposals to set up Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs), (Sure Start 1999a). Guidance was already available on the principles within which local programmes were expected to work (see above), including being able to:

- Co-ordinate, streamline and add value to existing services in the Sure Start area, including signposting to existing services
- Ensure lasting support by linking effectively with services for older children
- Achieve specific objectives, which relate to Sure Start’s overall objectives
- Promote accessibility for all local families

(Ball 2002: 12)

The core services that SSLPs were expected to provide included outreach and home visiting, support for families and parents, access to good quality play, learning and childcare experiences for children, primary and community health care and advice about child health and development and family health, as well as support for people with special needs, including giving help to access specialised services.

Programme areas were prioritised by the Sure Start unit, using the index of local deprivation plus two more child focussed indicators; levels of teenage pregnancy and low birth weight babies. The exact locality for each programme area was left for authorities to decide although the Sure Start unit was keen for catchment areas to incorporate local geography and not include arbitrary community divisions. Initially the size of the programme area was to be one with between 400 and 1000 children under four living in that area. Later, geographically small programmes, to target pockets of deprivation and rural areas, were introduced. The first programmes were especially important for the future of Sure Start as they were to provide evidence based guidance and advice to subsequent programmes on how Sure Start principles could be built into the programmes and how services could be developed. These first programmes were referred to as the 'trailblazers'. Round Two programmes were announced in November 1999 and Wave Three in July 2000. Whilst education was expected to be an integral part of service delivery, early Sure Start programmes were focussed very much on the bonds between children and their parents, so that health and social care emerged as the dominant culture (Benjamin 2003).

Following the spending review of July 2000, the Treasury announced a major expansion of Sure Start. The White Paper (H.M Treasury 2000) declared a doubling of its funding so that by 2004, SSLPs would reach one third of poor children under four. The number of programmes was expected to exceed 500 by 2004, aided by the roll out of another 3 waves of programme implementation. The cross departmental group providing evidence for the spending review, found that effective joint working between agencies was beginning to take root and cultural changes in interactions with parents were noticeable. However, an unmet demand for childcare in disadvantaged areas was flagged up as an issue of concern (H.M Treasury 2000).

In the UK nearly half of children living with lone-parents also live in poverty (OCED 2001). By contrast, Sweden, which has the highest levels of lone-parents in Europe, has only 7% of children of lone parents living in poverty (OCED 2001). One of the main factors contributing to this difference is the lower rate of unemployment amongst Swedish lone-parents. When Sure Start first began, early intervention programmes were regarded by many politicians as compensatory. The Government hoped that by putting in quality services and working alongside parents in deprived areas, young children's language and cognitive skills could be raised to put them on a

par with their peers when they entered school. The question that was asked was, would this strategy in itself be enough to tackle child poverty. What emerged was the view that the system of workless families supported by social expenditure needed to be changed and the route out of poverty was for lone parents in particular to enter the workforce. This meant looking at the provision of accessible and affordable childcare. Some academics, impressed by the Sweden system of integrated education and childcare and low levels of child poverty, increasingly urged UK policy makers to turn their attention to social democratic models rather than targeted intervention to prevent the continuance of cycles of deprivation (Moss 2004).

At the end of the last century there existed a divide between childcare and education, with a split between the elite of teachers in schools and poorly trained childcare workers in the community. Workforce reform was seen as crucial in raising the quality of early years provision. In recognition of the range of entry and departure points practitioners might require, a ‘climbing frame’ model to facilitate training and qualifications for early years practitioners, was put forward (Abbott et al 1998). Subsequently the foundation degree was introduced, a qualification tailored around working practitioners and viewed as a positive step towards early years workers accessing further training opportunities.

The year 2000 Spending Review also triggered the creation of Sure Start Plus, a programme to reduce the risk of long-term social exclusion and poverty, in teenage mothers. At this time Sure Start was gaining momentum, extending its reach and remit and moving forward in a determined drive to improve the quality and quantity of early childhood education and care. Plans to mainstream the Sure Start approach began to take foot and the roll out to wider areas of the population began in a handful of selected areas around the country. Although it was recommended that Sure Start should continue to focus on children up to the age of 4, the Public Service Agreement (PSA) for mainstreaming included all services for the under 5s, arguably a much more suitable age with statutory schooling beginning at 5.

The next significant change for Sure Start stemmed from the findings of the inter- departmental childcare review report (HMSO 2002). This review advocated a move towards a coherent national policy by linking early education, childcare and Sure Start. A new single, inter-departmental unit was announced and launched, together with changed logo and publicity, to cement this new identity. This unit formalised the

joining up of existing services and merged relevant departments within central government. It was anticipated the new unit would simplify funding arrangements, streamline targets and strengthen local authorities' roles in supporting delivery. The guiding principles for Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs) were summarised as:

1. Working with parents and children
2. Services for everyone
3. Flexible at point of delivery
4. Starting very early
5. Respectful and transparent
6. Community driven and professionally coordinated
7. Outcome driven

(Sure Start Unit 2002b: 3)

These were included in a booklet aimed at parents and professionals and distributed nationally to accompany the launch of this new updated Sure Start (Sure Start Unit 2002b).

Ambitious targets to increase the number of lone parents in employment (70% by 2010) promoted pledges for additional funding to pay for high quality childcare places (Cabinet Office 2002). Plans were also released to guarantee all 3 year olds a free nursery education place; more neighbourhood nurseries linked to Sure Start programmes; new Children's Centres in disadvantaged areas and provide support for other childcare places including out of school childcare, funding for childminders, and support for children with special educational needs (Sure Start Unit 2002c). Investment in services for young children and their families was considerable. So by 2003, the direction of Sure Start had moved from being a targeted service to a universal one.

The death of Victoria Climbié and the subsequent publication of the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2003) strengthened the case for professionals to work together in multi-disciplinary teams. The Children's Act (DfES 2004) that followed provided the legal framework to implement recommended changes including early intervention to safe guard children through, amongst other measures, sharing information between agencies.

Joining up early education and childcare was formally established at policy level for the under threes under the new Sure Start unit. Guidance materials on good practice, *'Birth to Three Matters: A framework to support children in their earliest*

years,' was published to help practitioners in their work with babies and toddlers (DfES 2002a). The role of teachers within integrated education and care provision began to be openly discussed. The phrase *teaching and learning* started to be used in the context of not only 3 and 4 year olds, but also babies and toddlers.

The announcement in 2003 of the establishment of Children's Centres and their inclusion in the 10-year childcare strategy (HM Treasury 2004) marked the mainstreaming of Sure Start. SSLPs, Neighbourhood Nurseries and Centres of Excellence are all planned to become Children's Centres. These centres will act as service hubs within the community for parents and providers of childcare services for children of all ages. They are different from SSLPs in that local authority, rather than voluntary organisations control them. Catchment areas for Children's Centres are planned to be flexible, allowing children to attend from outside the locality to encourage social mixing. They represent the next phase of the government's strategy to deliver better outcomes for children and families. The Centres will, as with SSLPs, provide holistic support for children's development, support families with young children and facilitate the return to work for those parents who are currently unemployed. The government has set a target of 2,500 Children's Centres by 2008 and 3,500 by 2010 (HM Treasury 2004).

Initially deemed too expensive, the employment of teachers is now a requirement within the core offer for Children's Centres (Sure Start Unit 2003a). Publication of the Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years Study (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002) in tandem with the personal commitment of the Minister for Children strengthened the case for inclusion of qualified teachers. It was officially acknowledged that teachers have a valuable role to play in supporting young children's learning and their requirement to be part of Children's Centre provision is contained within Children's Centre practice guidance:

Should be secured through either the employment of qualified teachers or significant input from teachers in an advisory role. In the latter case, plans should be put in place through leadership of the centre and staff development to further strengthen the teaching and learning available.

(Sure Start Unit 2003a: 10)

The statutory inclusion of teachers marks a significant shift in government thinking. Whilst the government calls for evidence-based practice to guide practitioner direction, no research is yet available on the role of teachers working in multi-agency

communities, and particularly working with children under the age of 3 and their parents.

1.3 Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs)

Based in the 20% most disadvantaged areas in the country, SSLPs were designed to be locally driven through consultation with parents and community groups. Programmes are managed through partnerships with parents, community organisations, voluntary groups and statutory agencies. In the early days these partnerships ranged in size from just under 20 to over 90 (Ball 2002). Government funding meant a typical Sure Start programme received on average £2.3m over its first 3 years, including £0.8m for capital expenditure. Lead and accountable bodies, which may represent the same or different organisations, contribute to the governance of SSLPs. The lead partners in the first two rounds of SSLPs included community and voluntary organisations, education authority and early years units, health trusts, social services and local authorities. About a fifth of round one and two programmes had an education lead partner (Ball 2002).

In the first four rounds of programmes a relatively small proportion of SSLPs employed teachers. Whilst teachers throughout England were appointed to programmes, a greater number were employed in the south rather than the north of the country. A noticeably higher number of programmes managed by community/voluntary organisations employed teachers, so it is interesting that education led programmes did not have higher levels of teachers on their programmes (Hastings 2004). At the time of the fieldwork no centrally held information was available on the number of teachers in Sure Start programmes (personal communication Allnock 2002).

Sure Start objectives governing local programmes were grouped within four areas; improving social and emotional development; improving health; improving children's ability to learn and strengthening families and communities. Several targets related to each objective, all of which were expected to be achieved within a three year period. The objectives and targets together formed a Public Service Agreement (PSA). The objective improving children's ability to learn is most directly related to early education, focussing on achieving good quality environments to promote early learning, through providing enjoyable and stimulating play. Developing young children's language skills and identifying children with special needs were included in the objective. The Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for this objective was as follows:

- To achieve by 2004 for children aged 0-3 in the 500 Sure Start areas, a reduction of five percentage points in the number of children with speech and language problems requiring specialist intervention by the age of 4.

And the Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) targets:

- All children in Sure Start areas to have access to good quality play and learning opportunities, helping progress towards early learning goals when they get to school.
- Increased use of libraries by parents with young children in Sure Start areas.

(Sure Start Unit 2002d: 20)

So, the situation at the time of fieldwork, found teachers in SSLPs who were aware of, and responding to, the above targets. The PSA target for the subsequent period (2003-04 to 2005-06) continued to focus on promoting language skills in young children and linked targets to Foundation Stage Profile results (Sure Start Unit 2003b).

1.4 Rationale and motivation for the study

In the past, education for the under threes has been erratic, with no specific requirement for trained teachers to play a role. There are, in any case, limited opportunities for teachers to train to be competent with children under school age. Where training for teachers does exist, it expects them to operate in a situation with other teachers and usually in places like nurseries or schools; institutionalised single agency provision. In such contexts, teachers are able to use and develop further, for example, theories about: how children learn, managing behaviour, diagnosing readiness for learning and assessing progress. Being surrounded by and working closely with the same profession helps. Other teachers may have different ideas, so one's own views may become modified or changed through joint work and discourse within a community of educators. As teachers become more experienced they develop craft knowledge and become able to find more techniques and develop more skills that work for them. People are all different so what works for one does not necessarily work for all.

For teachers in Sure Start programmes, things are different. They are part of a group of professionals from various backgrounds, each bringing their own professional knowledge from different bases. Although each professional will want the same outcome, namely a better experience for the child, they may well have different ideas on how to achieve it. This can lead to compromise or to conflict and confrontation. In this new context, teachers have no supportive community of peers; the social situation

is different. Teachers may be working with families or in the community in other ways. Team working will cause teachers and other members to re-examine their professional knowledge and to consider the role they can best play in a multi-agency delivery of services to young children and their families.

In each SSLP there is a group of people, who share the common concern to develop a multi- agency way of working in order to provide improved, joined up services. By regular ongoing interactive meetings, where the accepted practice of single agency delivery of services is questioned, the group deepens its knowledge and expertise in the area of multi-agency delivery and so extends and expands its professional knowledge and the role that each can play. Any such group engaged in a joint learning enterprise, using the professional knowledge that each practitioner member brings and which focuses on the development of a shared practice, is known as a Community of Practice. It is the teacher, the social worker, the health visitor, the speech and language therapist themselves who are generating the know-how. It is not handed down from on high. Each is adding to their professional role, their knowledge and actions, enabling more efficient delivery via a multi-agency approach to children's services.

Some, but not all SSLPs, include qualified teachers, there is no statutory requirement for teacher inclusion; each programme is responsive to the needs of its own community. In 2003 only 12% of SSLPs employed teachers (Hastings 2004). The reasons expressed by programme managers were that they were unsure what teachers roles' would be, that they were expensive to employ and they felt they didn't have the right skills (Hastings 2004). The whole question of the role of teachers in early years multi-agency teams is then of huge interest and debate within forums of practitioners, managers and strategic planners at higher levels.

Whilst research evidence supports the case for qualified teachers to work with 3-5 year olds in a variety of settings, no evidence is yet available regarding teachers working with the 0-3 year group. In order to build on good practice and respond to lessons learned from the early SSLPs, research needs to be undertaken. Employing teachers on SSLPs represents new challenges not only for teachers, but also other team members and teachers' managers. This research was begun at a time of change. Scant research is available on questions surrounding the role of teachers in SSLPs. It is hoped that findings from this research will provide insight and understanding into the role of

teachers in SSLPs, which will be valuable for teachers, managers and strategic planners within Children's Centres.

The study is reported in a conventional sequence. Structured around six chapters, the introduction (Chapter 1) is followed by a literature review (Chapter 2) which establishes and places the study in the context of current research. The theoretical framework for the study (Chapter 3) informs the subsequent part, research methodology (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 is dedicated to research findings and discussion and constitutes the major section of the thesis, which is then brought to a conclusion in the sixth and final chapter. It is hoped this pattern of reporting will provide clarity and cohesion for the reader.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

To date, scant research has been published focussing on the role of teachers within Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs). Although the first round of local programmes were introduced over eight years ago, research findings through the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS), have not yet addressed the question of teachers and the work they do. While national evaluation themes have reported on, for example, the quality of play and learning experiences (Anning et al. 2005) they have not studied the role that teachers play. Local evaluations of SSLPs, commissioned by individual programmes and aimed at contributing to the cycle of reviewing and refining practice, have been variable in their approaches to evaluating teacher roles.

Within the broader context of early years education, there seem to be significant research gaps. One of the conclusions from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) early years special interest group review, noted a ‘paucity of evidence about the relation between adult training, professionalism and children’s learning’ (BERA 2003: 41), and a literature review compiled to support the Birth to Three Matters framework called for ‘the development of practitioner research networks to promote discussion and reflection on research allied to practitioners’ own observations’ (David et al. 2003: 143). The above review stressed both the lack of research on the processes and practices of early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children from birth to three as well as the impact of practitioner training on children’s and parents’ experiences of ECEC. Hannon (1999) noted the meagre availability of evidence –based practice for educationalists within Sure Start. He urged policy makers to develop qualitative evaluations, for example, profiles of communities, descriptions of services, and the views of staff and community participants, before trying to measure outcomes for children and parents.

The employment of teachers within Sure Start teams marks a challenging move towards new and different ways of working. Research into teachers’ experiences of working within the 0-3 age group, what they actually do, and how this links with roles and responsibilities, are largely non-existent.

2.1 The case for promoting learning from birth

Today, it is widely accepted that babies are active and competent learners from birth; learning to communicate and starting to form ideas and theories about how things work (Bruce 2001; Lindon 2000; Edwards 2002; Bowman et al. 2001).

Recent research into how a baby's brain is constructed has challenged previous thinking about how babies learn and sparked greater urgency towards examining and reforming the physical and emotional environment that parents and carers provide for very young children. Huttenlocher (1995) studied patterns of synaptogenesis within the brain. He found that the number of synapses in the visual cortex dramatically increased at about 2 months of age and was its greatest number at around 8 months of age followed by almost a halving of synapses until the age of 7 years. Thereafter the number of synapses remained at a fairly constant level throughout adulthood. After 8 months of age, it is suggested that those synapses that are not stimulated may be shed. From this type of research the 'windows of opportunity' theory has arisen (Mandernach 1995). Limited studies from work with both cats and children with brain lesions have supported the suggestion that there is a period of maximum receptivity for sensory development and language acquisition. Using evidence from diseased brains and animal studies have however, been criticised by leading researchers in the field (Blakemore 2002; Bruer 1999), arguing that these situations are not directly comparable with normally developing brains.

The suggestion that very young children living in stressful environments make abnormal synaptic connections in their brains because of high levels of cortisol and adrenaline and that this 'wiring' may lead to inappropriate behaviour, possibly violence (Collins and Depue 1992; Essex 2002; De Bellis 2002), has been challenged by the work of Gunnar (1996). She found that a caring parent or involved adult could override the effects of stress, strengthening the case for developing resiliency through the quality of the relationships that the child experiences.

Members of BERA (2003) have voiced a more cautious approach of linking cognitive neuroscience to education. They warn of the dangers of interpreting findings from neurophysiology in over simplistic ways. The group recommend turning towards behavioural science to inform us about teaching, learning and cognitive development rather than, at this moment, developing brain based educational research policy and practice.

There is disagreement over the extent to which early childhood experiences influence or may determine later life. The polarisation of this debate is summarised by the views put forward by Guldberg (2004) and Gerhardt (2004). Guldberg examines the determinist myth she feels is gaining wide acceptance and remains largely unchallenged, namely, that the first three years of life affect the development of capabilities that will 'shape the entire rest of their lives'. She challenges evidence presented from neuroscience, citing rapid increases and decrease in cell synapses as determining the shape of the brain in later life. She notes that changes in the pattern of synaptic connections occur naturally and stresses that there is no firm evidence to link them to babies' experiences. So Guldberg argues against the infant determinism position whilst acknowledging that early childhood experiences certainly influence social and emotional development. She regards the determinist view as negative and points to evidence that show children to be psychologically resilient. An opposing view is held by Gerhardt who puts forward the view that the emotional development of adults is linked to the quality of their parenting. She backs up her case with research evidence suggesting the development of the orbitofrontal cortex is experience dependant and takes place largely in the first 18 months of life. She takes a pro-active stance on parent support programmes.

Bornstein (1999) points to the complex nature of factors influencing child development and supports the view that whilst the infant years are hugely important, they do not determine future adult development. Work by Rutter (1998) with Romanian children also supports this view. His study demonstrated that children were not irreversibly damaged by early deprivation and were indeed able to 'catch up' on their physical and emotional losses. Bruer (1999) too, opposes the exclusivity of the first three years in a 'windows of opportunity' model of brain development and argues that the brain's plasticity allows learning to continue throughout life.

Whilst the debate on the extent and permanence of influences in the first years on brain development continues, no one disputes the huge impact that relationships and environments do have on young children's learning. The nurturing of young children is fundamental to their learning and those children that grow up in households where the effects of poverty restrict or limit the development of normal social and emotional development will be disadvantaged from the start. Teachers' involvement in Sure Start

intervention programmes to promote positive relationships between parents/carers and their young children has yet to be evaluated.

Over the last ten years, a plethora of research evidence has been published (Gopnik et al. 1999; Murray and Andrews 2000; Bowman et al. 2001) causing educationalists to re-question their views on the capacity of babies to learn and opening wide the debate on qualities conducive to promoting healthy bodies and minds. In the US, education from birth is widely accepted. In the authoritative account of pre-school learning, *Eager to Learn*, Bowman and colleagues (2001) place the education of children under 3 years high on the agenda. They argue that:

Educators have an opportunity and an obligation to facilitate this propensity to learn and to develop receptivity to learning that will prepare children for active engagement in the learning enterprise throughout their lives.

(Bowman et al. 2001: 2)

Trevarthen (1995), Lindon, (2001) Bruce (2001) and Selleck (2001) all stress the need for babies to experience secure relationships with primary care givers. Work by Bowlby (1953) on attachment theory influenced policy makers and parents in child rearing practices in the fifties and sixties. The notion of mothers being the sole providers of babies emotional security however, led to the emergence of the concept 'maternal deprivation'. Using this term today is criticised for the guilt it places on a huge swathe of working mothers, striving to contribute to their household economy. Indeed Penn (1999) argues that it was attachment theory that led to the widely held view that home was the best environment for young children.

In the US, Belsky (1986; 1988) continued the debate on attachment theory arguing that studies showed non-parental care for children under 12 months olds for more than 20 hours a week were more at risk of developing insecure relationships and displaying non-compliant and aggressive behaviour at a later age. This conclusion has been contested by academics arguing measures for assessing secure attachments are unreliable and lack cultural considerations (McGurk et al. 1993). However the controversy continues. Whilst accepting the benefits of high-quality childcare, Belsky (2002; 2004) reasserts his belief that quantity of childcare can affect children's social and emotional development. He calls for considerable expansion of maternal/paternal leave and tax policies to enable more parents to choose part-time employment whilst their children are young.

The final report from the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (Sylva et al. 2004) study, published findings showing children at the end of Key Stage One schooling that attended day care settings at very young ages (under two years old), have a slightly higher incidence of aggressive behaviour. The EPPE study also provides evidence to refute the notion that home is the most favourable setting for young children's learning and social and emotional development (see later in this chapter for a review of EPPE findings). In her study of the care needs of young children, Penn (1999), argues that the preoccupation with relationships between babies and adults, has led to the exclusion of consideration of relationships babies have with other children, in particular their peer group within group settings.

The concept of companionable learning developed by Rosie Roberts (2003), recognises the value of significant people (which may for example, extend to grandparents, key workers in childcare settings or siblings) in the emotional development of babies. She states:

Babies need something unique that takes place between two individuals, where one person takes a companionable interest in the mental life of another.

(Roberts 2003)

This definition offers an alternative way of thinking about the emotional needs of a baby. The approach sits comfortably with the principles stated in Birth to Three Matters and the concept of emotionally available adults (DfES 2002a). It is an approach that acknowledges and builds on the premise that babies are active and capable learners and that the pace of learning will be influenced by their emotional environment.

Drawing on research evidence, the publication of Birth to Three Matters in 2002 (DfESa) introduced cohesive guidance for practitioners working with babies, toddlers and very young children. It demonstrates the commitment that the Government places on raising the profile of a child's first three years and sends a powerful message about the importance of the earliest years and of the holistic approach to child development and learning. The portfolio of materials that was produced for practitioners arose following the Government green paper 'Schools building on success' (DfEE 2001). Birth to Three Matters identifies qualities of warmth, being positive, responsive and consistent as essential for the key person role. It reinforces the five principles within Every Child Matters (DfES 2003) namely; being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and not being economically disadvantaged.

The Birth to Three matters materials are designed to focus on processes rather than outcomes. This represents a significant departure from the Foundation Stage Curriculum which is divided into six subject areas and includes statements of attainment that are graded through stepping stones to reach early learning goals. Indeed Abbott is critical of the compartmentalisation of children's learning that exists within mainstream education:

The national curriculum has been instrumental in encouraging practitioners to view children's learning under subject headings and to deny the interrelatedness of both learning and development.

(1997: 162)

She also put forward a strong case for dismissing the current age boundary within the Foundation Stage and urged a change of thinking and redefinition so that the true foundation for learning is viewed not as starting from age 3, but right from birth (2004). This change is now reflected in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to be introduced in September 2008 (DfES 2007).

So there is a growing body of research evidence supporting the value of positive learning experiences right from birth and this in turn argues for involvement of those who understand how to provide these experiences and how young children learn.

2.2 Educating children under 4 years – Are trained teachers necessary?

There is then, abundant evidence that learning is rapid and significant in the earliest stages of life with education playing a vital role (Gopnik et al. 1999; Murray and Andrews 2000). Sure Start holds the view that parents are children's first and foremost educators, the question is; 'Who are the people best placed to educate young children when parents are at work and how can parents themselves be supported in providing environments that promote learning?'

One of the Sure Start principles is early intervention at a young age. In the subsequent sections the following questions will be discussed; what evidence is there to support early intervention in young children's learning? Do teachers have a role to play, and if so, what is that role? Firstly though, it is necessary to examine what is understood by the term 'teaching'. The definition the Government gives for children of

3 to 5 years old contained within the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage is given below:

Teaching means systematically helping children to learn so that they are helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward, as well as helped to reflect on what they have already learnt

(QCA/DfEE 2000: 22)

Whilst it is implicit that children learn through social construction of knowledge, some educationalists develop this further. Dahlberg (2001) places the child within a larger learning community viewing the teacher as co-constructor of both knowledge and culture, so that in her view, the role of a teacher must be:

Partly about going into a dialogue and communicative action with the child, the group of children and colleagues, (and) partly about a reflecting and researching attitude in which the starting point is the work and learning process of both the children and teacher... The work of the teacher is mainly to be able to listen, see and let oneself be inspired by and learn from what the children say and do.

(Dahlberg as quoted in Pugh 2001: 35-36)

Such a definition provides an alternative way of thinking about teaching, one that fits with the notion of teachers being facilitators of learning.

2.2.1 Early Educational Intervention in the UK

Research evidence suggests early intervention is more successful than later interventions in combating disadvantage and social exclusion (Papps and Dyson 2004). The rationale of establishing targeted early intervention programmes is to diminish the adverse effects of poverty and the lack of stimulation that often accompanies it in the pre-school years, thereby giving children a fairer chance to succeed when they start school.

Interventions designed to support children living in areas with risk of low educational attainment, fall into two categories. The first is the family learning agenda, based on the principle that a quality home environment is paramount to children's success and the best way to improve quality is to increase parents own learning. The second is to direct interventions at raising the quality of pre-school settings, which for children of working mothers may form a large part of their waking day.

2.2.1.1 Family Learning initiatives

Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP)

One of the earliest early intervention programmes in the UK was The Peers Early Education Partnership Programme (PEEP), which began in 1995 as an intervention to help improve educational outcomes for young children living in low socio-economic areas. When the first round of Sure Start local programmes was announced, two PEEP areas were included. PEEP programmes are categorised according to the age of the child and involve parents and children in structured activities. PEEP uses a curriculum model based on the principles of Opportunity, Recognition, Interaction and Modelling (Hannon 1995). The curriculum focuses on seven areas of development: self esteem, disposition, listening, talking, reading, writing and numeracy. All these are elements of the National Foundation Stage Curriculum, although no links are made explicit (it is an additional rather than an alternative curriculum). Views of PEEP practitioners have not yet been researched. Essential to PEEP programmes is the formation of partnerships with parents. The value of such a partnership is summarised below:

Foundation PEEP in the settings represents for parents/carers a bridge into their relationship with their child's teachers in the future. PEEP believes that it supports parents who are used to talking to 'professionals' about their child's learning.

(Evangelou and Sylva 2003: 20)

When PEEP was run in school nursery classes, it was recognised that parents were not engaging with the school staff during the sessions. To help overcome this, nursery teachers from the school took over the role of PEEP leaders. The role of a qualified teacher known as the 'PEEP nursery support teacher' is then, to create opportunities for supporting parents to support their children's learning and to bridge the home/school divides. Two practitioners run each PEEP group, one to lead on the programme to parents, and the other termed 'assistant' primarily to support the children's play. Sessions with a planned division between parent focussed time and shared time with the children is common to both initiatives. Although PEEP was not initially planned to include teachers, programmes do involve them, including SSLPs running PEEP groups.

Evaluation findings have been reported using a quasi-experimental design. A group of 70 children who participated in a PEEP programme when aged three and four, were found to have higher scores for language, literacy, numeracy and self-esteem, when compared to a group that did not join PEEP (Evangelou and Sylva 2003).

A longitudinal study, Birth to School (Evangelou 2005), reported findings concurring with the view that good quality parenting skills precede child outcomes. This is consistent with Sure Start national evaluations (NESS 2004a). Parents who participated in the PEEP programme were found to display much warmer interactions with their young children and children were found to experience cognitive gains in literacy skills and higher scores for self-esteem. Interestingly, the study also found a positive 'community' effect, so those families that did not attend the PEEP sessions, but nevertheless lived in the area, demonstrated, albeit to a lesser degree, the same effects as described above. The study conclusion supported the efficacy of early interventions with strong parental involvement.

Early Start

Early Start programmes fall into the family learning agenda and have strong parallels with PEEP. Developed by the Basic Skills Agency in 2001, Early Start programmes are designed for children 0-3 and their parents. Each course lasts for 30 – 40 hours, usually over a 12-week period. Evaluated by a team from the University of Sheffield, the first findings of the initiative were reported in 2004. Based on fieldwork at 16 Early Start programmes, one of the conclusions reached was:

Activity-based sessions with good modelling by early years staff and adult tutors working together are possibly the most powerful means available for conveying strong messages about pedagogy and cognitive and linguistic content.

(Brooks et al. 2004: 15)

The delivery of the Early Start programmes is then, based on both an adult tutor to lead sessions with adults, whilst child led activities fall to early years workers, including teachers, within a framework of collaborative joint working. It was reported that the calibre and experience of staff was one of a number of reasons for the success of Early Start programmes. The use and value of modelling as a strategy for effective adult learning, both for parents and practitioners, echoes the findings from the EPPE study (Sylva et al. 2004) and is reported later in this review.

Bookstart

Bookstart is a national programme designed to promote early literacy skills by giving free packs of books to parents of 9-month-old babies, toddlers and 3 year olds (Booktrust 2004). The Bookstart scheme represents a partnership between librarians and health visitors, and latterly pre-school practitioners, making SSLPs ideal bases for the distribution of books and involvement in the scheme (Sure Start Unit 2004). Early evaluations of the project in Birmingham (Wade and Moore 1993) noted a positive response to children's use and access of books. Baseline assessment scores for children at the end of their Foundation Stage suggested the project had influenced literacy attainments. In terms of family learning, it increased the enthusiasm that parents had for books and their inclination to use books with their children. A later study by the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (Booktrust 2001) reported findings indicating positive outcomes including increased library membership for babies, increased confidence of adults to read to babies and increased awareness amongst parents of the importance of reading to support speech and language development. In 2005, a further study at Roehampton (Collins et al.) contradicted earlier research by finding there was little significant difference in Foundation stage profile results for those children that had participated in the Bookstart programme and those that had not. The underlying factor affecting literacy scores was found to be adults reading to children regularly and consistently from an early age. The research did point up the need for health visitors to be trained in what to say to parents about sharing books with children. It was proposed librarians could attend postnatal groups to model reading aloud to babies. No mention was made of teachers input into the Bookstart initiative in this study.

2.2.1.2 Pre-school Education

In an attempt to collect data from a traditionally under researched area, so that reliable evidence could be called upon to contribute to the debate on the impact of pre-school education on young children, the Effective Provision for Pre-school Education study (EPPE) was commissioned by the Government in 1996. This was a high profile research programme, under the leadership of key educationalists in the field including Kathy Sylva, Iram Siraj-Blatchford, Edward Melhuish and Pam Sammons. Heralded as the first major longitudinal study to examine the relationship between pre-school settings and child outcomes in this country, the Sure Start Unit eagerly awaited and

then cascaded messages that emerged from the EPPE study through both national conferences and the Sure Start magazine (Sure Start Unit 2003c; Partners 2003; UpStart 2003).

The design of the EPPE programme was originally based on tracking a cohort of 3000 children over a five year period from the age they started at a pre-school setting at three years, through to the end of their Key Stage One schooling. Children from 141 centres in 6 local authorities participated in the study. Later, a cohort of 200 children with no pre-school experience was added to the project. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected to describe children's attainment and social and emotional development. Based on the concept of 'value added', the technique of multilevel modelling was employed, not only to determine the effects of different centres but also to identify the effects of individual and family characteristics on children's later progress. The areas identified by the team for investigation were:

- The effects on children of different types of pre-school provision,
- The structural (e.g. adult/child ratios) and process characteristics (e.g. interaction styles) of more effective pre-school centres, and
- The interaction between child and family characteristics and the kind of pre-school provision a child experiences.

(Sylva et al. 1999: 5)

Using early childhood rating scales to measure the quality of the pre-school environment, findings from the EPPE study show that integrated centres offering combined education and childcare and nursery schools and classes are the best settings for cognitive and communicative scores (Sylva et al. 2004). In terms of contact with parents, LEA settings, as opposed to private and voluntary settings, reported more meetings for parents as well as sharing of assessment information and helping parents in their role as the child's first educator.

EPPE research highlighted the influence that a home learning environment can have on social behavioural outcomes. Activities such as parents reading to their child, teaching songs and nursery rhymes, visiting the library, playing with letters and numbers all contribute to differences in social behaviour and indeed cognitive and language outcomes on entry to school. It was found that the effects of a rich home learning environment can outweigh the effects of other factors such as the mother's qualification level. The EPPE findings postulate that settings, which organise joint

parent/child activities, are more favourable to better social behaviour and cognitive gains for young children.

In the extension of the EPPE study into primary education, Sammons et al. (2007) found that the quality of the home learning environment was still a strong predictor of attainment in reading and mathematics (slightly less) at the age of 10. In fact it was the combination of a rich home learning environment together with a good quality and effective pre-school experience that led to the greatest gains in cognitive outcomes for children nearing the end of their primary schooling.

2.2.1.3 Early intervention for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Studies from both the US, and the UK, (Love et al. 2002; Sammons et al. 2002a) indicate that early identification and intervention with children at a young age with special educational needs, can lead to a reduction in the numbers of such children requiring specialist support and teaching when they enter school.

The Early Years Transition and Special Educational Needs (EYTSSEN), (Sammons et al. 2002a) project found that children identified as ‘at risk’ of showing SEN at a later age, scored more highly on cognitive measures if they started at pre-school at the age of three, than those starting at a later date. It also showed that the number of children identified as ‘at risk’ at three, was reduced if children attended a pre-school setting. In 2002 (DfES b) training for practitioners to work with young children with special educational needs was initiated by the Government, in conjunction with Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, by creating teams of area based Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, to work across the diverse spectrum of preschool settings.

The early identification of children with SEN was studied as part of the EPPE study (Sammons 2002a). Generally accepted as being cost effective and paramount to the progress children make (Owen and Smith 2000), strategies to detect early learning difficulties were searched for within the 141 preschool centres in the research sample. 100% of managers in LEA run nursery schools and classes had qualified teacher status, and all reported systems in place for the early identification of children with SEN. This was in contrast to the voluntary sector playgroups and private day care nurseries, where only 82% and 77% respectively, of centre managers reported having such strategies in place (Sammons 2002a). This would suggest qualified teachers are more likely to

implement systems to identify children ‘at risk’ of special needs so that early intervention can be put in place.

Papps and Dyson (2004), exploring the viability of conducting a cost – benefit analysis on earlier identification and effective intervention with children ‘at risk’ of low educational attainment in the UK, concluded insufficient information was available from longitudinal studies and recommended commissioning a scoping study.

2.2.2 Early Intervention in the US

From the United States, evidence is available from programmes in deprived areas using either an ‘educational’ (child based), or a ‘family model’ (parent based). Seitz (1990) compares ‘educational’ and ‘family model’ programmes using children’s cognitive and behavioural measures and concludes that programmes supporting the family model are effective in raising child outcomes. As already reported, the family model underpins the Early Start programmes developed by the Basic Skills Agency in the UK as well as PEEP and Bookstart. SSLPs employ both models, dependant on the employment status of the parents.

Johnson et al. (1996) studied an intensive parenting education and family support programme with parents of children from birth to two years. The study involved 486 mothers with the aim of helping them to become effective teachers and role models for their own children. It was found that the mothers in the intervention programme provided an effective context that supported children’s learning. In contrast to these findings, a larger study involving 4410 families over a five year period in the US, evaluating a Comprehensive Child Development Program, found no significant effects.

In the US, Early Head Start (EHS) programmes are beginning to report research findings (Love et al. 2002). Early Head Start evolved from its sister organisation, Head Start in 1995, as a two-generation programme targeting families with pregnant women and children in the 0 to 3-age range in low-income communities. Staff development and linking into community partnerships were both given high priority. Close parallels can be drawn between the design components of the evaluation study of Early Head Start and the National Evaluation of Sure Start (see later). Seventeen programmes working with just over 3000 families from urban and rural settings throughout the country were selected as the research sample for the EHS impact study.

EHS research was carried out at the start of programme implementation, only two years after funding was released and one year after the programmes were up and running. The study followed children from enrolment to the age of three. Multiple methods were used for measuring child outcomes. These included child assessments and observations, videotaped parent/child interactions, ratings of child behaviour by parents and parents self reports of their own attitudes, and behaviours. Programmes were categorised according to whether home or centre based support was offered, or a combination of both. At the start of the research project the programmes were evenly spread between the three approaches but within a few months, changes in programme direction started, causing a reduction in the number of programmes using the centre only approach.

Children that attended EHS programmes when assessed at the age of three were found to have slightly higher cognitive development scores, higher receptive language skills, and favourable impacts in areas of social-emotional development when compared to a control group without programme intervention, although still scoring below national norms for the first two indicators. Parents were found to be more emotionally supportive, more likely to read to their children, and less likely to use negative parenting behaviours than the control group. Family income did not increase significantly during the research period. Mothers were found to be less likely to have further children during the first two years of enrolment with EHS than the control group and fathers improved interactions with their children.

The greatest impact on children and parents was found in those programmes that offered a combined home and centre approach. Although no firm conclusions can be drawn, the research team suggest the mixed centre approach may be yielding better outcomes due to its flexibility and the longer length of time families kept their involvement with the programme. The research team found centre based programmes focussed more on improving parenting and family support work whilst home only programmes concentrated on improving the intensity of service delivery and improving children's cognitive development. African American families that enrolled in the programme during pregnancy and those families with only moderately high demographic risk factors had the best outcomes.

A positive relationship was established between children's outcomes and parenting skills. Teenage parents and parents at risk of depression were identified as

subgroups that particularly benefited from EHS. Specific areas highlighted for future focus included: car safety issues and parents suffering from mental illness. Transition plans were used to facilitate the transfer of children from EHS to Head Start (3-5 year olds). Roughly a quarter of the children who attended EHS programs had disabilities or delays in development.

Early Head Start programmes have to meet the requirements of the Head Start programme performance standards. Teachers in centres provide early education for infants and toddlers. Additionally, this education includes case management, a family development service to parents and other family members of the children in the group and one parent training session are held monthly. All teachers are expected to hold a child development associate credential, an equivalent or a higher degree or be working towards a child development associate. Each teacher is responsible for four families. No specific curriculum has to be followed. On entering the programme the child's development is assessed and an individual child activity plan is drawn up. However within the 17 EHS programmes using the home and mixed centre approaches evaluated in the impact study, teacher involvement was varied and for those that did employ teachers, their role was very diverse. This is similar to Sure Start local programmes. It is interesting to note EHS teachers have only recently achieved pay compatibility with Head Start teachers. And there is some doubt about teachers in the US being comparable with those in the UK.

2.3 Adult roles within settings - Do qualifications make a difference?

Many studies (Sylva et al. 1980 and 2004; Meadows and Cashdan 1988; Bowman et al. 2001; Moyles 2002), point to the vital role that adults have in children's learning. Many SSLPs include full day-care facilities. All include spaces where parents and children can come together and have partnership arrangements with local playgroups, crèches and nurseries. Commenting on the adult role within an early years setting, Rodger and Barnes stress, 'understanding the subtleties of that role takes experience and objectivity.' (1997: 157)

The EPPE study (Sammons et al. 2002b) reports on findings gathered from centre manager interviews exploring the qualifications of staff at six different settings (playgroups, nursery classes, nursery schools, combined centres, local authority day-care centres, and private day nurseries). A strong correlation was found between the

qualifications (care or education) of a centre manager and the quality of provision in the settings. Centre managers with higher-level qualifications, PGCE or a teaching qualification had higher scores for caregiver interactions categorised as ‘positive relationships’ and lower for interactions described as ‘detachment’ and ‘permissiveness’. Teachers in this study, were found to encourage children to engage in activities, especially mathematics and language, with high cognitive challenge, and ‘sustained shared thinking’. Teachers were found to be effective in using a range of teaching strategies including demonstration, explanation, questioning and modelling. The practice of adults modelling positive attitudes, behaviours and use of language was identified in the study as being particularly important when working with pre-school children (Sylva 2004).

EPPE findings studying the characteristics of the workforce in pre-school settings show that the average age of managers sampled was 44 years and of the staff that worked directly with the children ten years younger. Looking at the age profile of managers and staff together, this research found that in nursery classes and nursery schools more staff were in the 41 –50 age group, whilst in playgroups more staff were in the 31 –40 age band, whereas in the private day nurseries and LEA centres more staff fall in the 21-30 age band. The ratio of men to women was found to be 1 man to every 100 women and almost half the men reported were teachers in the maintained education sector (Taggart et al. 2000).

Findings that are particularly relevant to the literature review for this research, are reported in a sister publication to the main EPPE study, *Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY)*. Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002) found that the observed behaviour of setting staff when working alongside qualified teachers is noticeably enhanced. This finding is in line with previous UK studies. Hutt et al. (1989) carried out a comparative study of nursery schools, nursery classes, playgroups and day nurseries. The study reported that behaviour with a higher cognitive content was observed more frequently amongst nursery assistants when they worked alongside teachers and this was described as ‘associative activity’.

The REPEY study analysed data collected from 14 pre-school settings judged to be demonstrating ‘good practice’. It reported on interactions between teachers and children within the Foundation Stage only. When cognitive and social developments

are promoted in tandem, the authors of the report argue child outcomes are highest. The study scrutinised four aspects of observed practice:

- Adult-child verbal interactions;
- Differentiation and formative assessment;
- Parental partnership and home education environment;
- Discipline and adult support in talking through conflicts.

Based on the premise that learning is achieved through co-construction of knowledge, the concept of ‘shared sustained thinking’ has been developed to describe the quality of involvement between teacher and learner. The greater the number of these episodes, it is argued, the greater the potential for effective learning. Within the context of the Foundation Stage, teachers were found to spend more time than other colleagues on mathematical activities. Adults with no formal qualifications were found to spend more of their time on creative activities. Whilst all staff spent time with small groups of children, teachers spent more of their time with whole class groups. The study indicated that when staff worked alongside teachers a higher proportion of ‘sustained shared thinking’ was observed than by staff working without teachers in their settings. Similarly, teachers were found to influence the social pedagogic practice of other staff working alongside them. When working in a setting with a teacher, practitioners were more likely to use behaviour management interactions and fewer interactions categorised as caring. Children experienced greater curriculum content in the areas of literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world when they attended a setting with a qualified teacher on the staff. Learning activities, in which the children engaged, were more ‘academic’ when a teacher was present and more ‘play-based’ when practitioners with no child care qualifications were present (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002).

Whilst in the past, a lot of attention has been given to quality of interactions in settings with predominantly Foundation Stage children; less research has been focussed on the role of parents as the main educators. In Barbara Tizard’s study of four-year-old girls (1991), language use was compared between mothers and their daughters in the home and the girls and their teachers in the nursery. Evidence was presented to support the view that the language used at home was richer and encouraged more active participation on the part of children than when they were at school. This is explained by

the shared context of the child and parent at home and the ability of parents to refer to previous understandings, events and experiences. In other words learning can be embedded in meaningful contexts for the child and parent in the home situation. A range of parenting programmes have been introduced into SSLPs, for example, PEEP and Early Start, geared particularly at improving literacy skills through partnership with parents.

A parallel study to the REPEY study, the Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning (SPEEL) Moyles et al. (2002), set out to isolate characteristics of effective pedagogy for practitioners working within the Foundation Stage with the aim of developing a framework of performance indicators useful to practitioners. The framework drew on evidence from available literature, which was then developed and refined through input from acknowledged experts in the field and effective practitioners. The framework consists of 129 key statements organised under the headings of practice, principles and professional dimensions and is essentially a quality assurance framework. To date no evaluation findings are available to track the use and effect of this framework.

Reflective dialogue was used between researcher and practitioner to articulate thoughts and reasons behind observed practices. The rationale for the process of video-stimulated reflective dialogues employed in this project is stated as being:

- 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;
- To support developments in practice;
- To provide practitioners with meta-cognitive opportunities.

(Moyles et al. 2002: 160-161)

In contrast to the EPPE study, focussing on child outcomes, the SPEEL study considers the roles of adult practitioners. It uses the technique of video recording the practitioner in action and then replaying the footage to prompt reflective dialogue. The use of video footage to stimulate discussion about child development is also being used in

parent/practitioner interactions at some early years settings in Sure Start catchment areas and is discussed later in this chapter.

Research from the US

Evidence from the US supports and strengthens findings demonstrating notable differences in the practice of differentially trained early educators. In Bermuda, a study of 59 differentially trained caregivers in 22 early years day-care centres (Arnett 1989) found that attitudes towards children and the quality of the interactions with children were both positively related to levels of training. The study identified four groups of adults ranging from those with no training; those that received only two courses of college based training; a four-year college based course and finally a four-year college degree course in early childhood education. Arnett reported that adults with higher levels of training were more likely to be less authoritarian and less detached with the children. Adults who had received greater training scored more highly on a positive interaction rating scale in their contacts with young children. The group that held a four-year Early Childhood Education degree highlighted a further significant difference. In addition to scoring higher on the measures for positive interactions, and demonstrating attitudes that promoted independence and self-direction, this group scored lower on rating scales for levels of punishment and detachment. The adults that had received the highest level of training showed the greatest warmth, the greatest enthusiasm, were the most effective communicators and actively promoted cooperative styles of behaviour. This group also displayed less hostility towards children. When they disciplined children they used fewer threats, using explanations rather than assertions of power. The Caregiver Interaction Scale developed by Arnett during this study uses three measures; sensitivity, harshness and detachment. This small-scale study called for policy makers to consider training requirements of the growing childcare workforce. The caregiver interaction scale was used in the Cost, Quality and Outcome study in the US (Howes 1997), the EPPE study in the UK (Sammons et al. 2003) and the NESS evaluation of quality of play, early learning and childcare in SSLPs (Anning et al. 2005).

A similar conclusion regarding workforce development was drawn from work in Florida (Howes 1997), where an experimental study looked at the relationship between initial adult training and child outcomes. Five categories of teacher background were examined. These were; high school education with some workshop

training in child development; Child Development Associate; some college courses in early childhood education; a 2 year degree in early childhood education; a bachelor or more advanced degree in early childhood education. The study found that staff with a graduate qualification in early years education were more responsive, more sensitive and less harsh. In classrooms adhering to recommended staffing ratios, teachers with at least a degree were also less detached. The qualities of sensitivity and responsiveness, are regarded by some people as personality traits, and that *'too much'* schooling can cause them to be lost, She goes on to argue, however, that the research shows that higher level qualifications may help teachers to respond to children sensitively, rather than react on their first-level reactions. The study also found that in classrooms where teachers had at least degree level education, children were more likely to play with each other and toys in more complex ways, implying greater cognitive progress.

Relationships between childcare quality and outcomes for children are being explored in the States through a major longitudinal study, commissioned by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). The study selected a group of children and their families from diverse backgrounds at ten locations throughout the country. Now in its third phase, the study has started to collect data from children in their seventh year of schooling. Five hundred and seventy six, six-month-old babies were observed in a range of settings, being cared for by adults other than the mother (centres, child care homes, in home sitters, fathers and grandparents). The study found interactions were more positive when the ratio of children to adults was smallest, group sizes were smallest, and when the adults held less authoritarian attitudes about child rearing (NICHD 1986). These findings were reinforced in a later study with children at 15, 24 and 36 months (NICHD 2000). The highest level of positive care giving was provided by in home care givers, including fathers and grandparents, caring for only one child, closely followed by home based arrangements with relatively few children per adult. The least positive care giving was found in centre-based care with higher ratios of children to adults.

Drawing on a sample size of 827 children in first grade classrooms from over 700 schools, the year 2000 NICHD study reported that whilst the number of years of teaching experience was unrelated to the amount of emotional support given to children in their first year at school, qualifications did make a difference. Findings showed that

teachers with higher qualifications provided more emotional support and spent more time on giving instructional support for learning to first grade children.

Research from Scandinavia

The concept of ‘educarer’ has evolved to describe a practitioner working within both the traditional education and care roles. In a longitudinal study of children from birth to eight in Sweden, Andersson (1990) found that educarers with higher qualifications and training provide a higher quality provision for young children. In Sweden since 2001, pre-school teachers spend three and a half years of training alongside recreational instructors and first-year compulsory schoolteachers (Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar 2003). In addition to this qualification, about half of pre-school teachers have a university degree. In Denmark the title ‘pedagogue’ is used to describe the development of a highly trained practitioner working across the boundaries of education and care (Jensen and Hansen 2003).

2.3.1 The role of early years teachers in pre-school settings

In a study undertaken by the Thomas Coram Research Unit (Munton 2002) differences were reported on the role taken by qualified teachers within the private and independent sector, in relation to the amount of time they spent interacting with children. Some teachers spent the majority of their time undertaking administrative tasks, others interacting with individual children and a further group were found to interact with children following the same pattern as all other practitioners.

Working in Scotland, Stephen et al. (1998) have examined the perceived roles and expectations of a range of early years practitioners, including teachers working in playgroups, private nurseries and local authority settings. Their study used two approaches. The first, a framework derived from published guidelines and reports and then refined by a group of acknowledged experts in the field. Such a framework was designed to represent the outside perspective to be used as a tool to describe and identify good practice. It detailed three principle roles that practitioners fulfil, namely:

- Staff as planners and providers
- Staff as facilitators
- Staff as observers and assessors

The second approach was created to provide an inside, context specific view, which the researchers referred to as the '*situated perspective*'. The model that emerged from this second approach found that practitioners focus less on outcomes and more on maintaining patterns of activity and on the conditions that may affect events within a setting. These conditions could be, for example: the time of the day; the willingness of the children to engage; disruptive behaviour or group composition. The report describes practitioners as striving to create situations where children demonstrated '*desired states of activity*'. This model is rooted in everyday practice and enables a context specific knowledge base to be voiced. It is built on the professional craft knowledge of practitioners (see chapter on theoretical framework). The research team argue both approaches have merits and potential value in supporting practitioners' development needs.

The study identified fifteen actions that teachers (and other practitioners) might undertake in order to maintain the pattern of an activity. These actions included those categorised as: supporting activities; helping individuals; encouraging involvement; observation/assessment; questioning; planning; disciplining; routine/domestic; interactions with parents; providing resources; explaining/demonstrating; general interactions; giving instructions; interaction with other adults; stories/singing.

Reporting findings on the differences between roles played by staff, the research found teachers placed more emphasis, on progress made by children in readiness to learn, than did play leaders or nursery nurses. Play leaders were found to place less emphasis than other groups on cognitive and language development and nursery nurses more emphasis on supporting life skills.

It was generally agreed amongst the staff through interviews that, 'there was or should be no differences among staff, based on role or training background' (Stephen et al. 1998: 47). However, through observations of practice, teachers were more often found to promote knowledge and understanding of the world and less likely to be involved in activities promoting social and emotional development. Nursery nurses were found to be more likely to support security and relationships, whilst play leaders did less questioning and spent more time setting up and changing equipment. The authors of the research report go on to pose two reasons for these differences; the way practitioners think about their work and their organisational decision-making.

The work of Moyles and Suschitzky (1997) on differentially trained nursery staff concurs with the above findings. They too found that practitioners felt there was no difference in the roles staff undertook, but on observation found that differences were evident. Nursery teachers were found to question more frequently to elicit understanding and encourage problem solving. More nursery nurses perceived their roles to be as a model and a friend to children, whilst the teachers stressed their role in children's learning. Whilst the day-to-day actions of teachers and nursery nurses were perceived to be the same, differences were found in levels of responsibility.

In a later study, Stephen and Sime (2004) evaluated an innovative project involving peripatetic nursery teachers supporting senior nursery nurses and nursery nurses within nursery classes. It was revealed through staff interviews that implementation of the new model had caused tensions and anxieties amongst staff and these were largely connected to unclear roles and responsibilities. Management was flagged up as a development issue, as was training for senior nursery nurses in leadership skills and team building. In seeking the views of parents, the researchers found that some parents regarded the personality of the practitioner and their ability to meet the needs of the children as more important than qualifications or training. The peripatetic teachers perceived their roles in the nursery as:

- Being supportive and a role model for staff
- Observing individual children in play
- Observing staff's interactions with children
- Getting directly involved in activities as and when suggested or cued by the nursery teacher
- Having a 'scaffolding' input in interactions with individual children.

And in their wider role, teachers included:

- General administrative tasks
- Overview of planning and observation of children.
- Completion of transition records and Individual Education Plan files.
- Occasional contacts with parents
- Liaising with management
- Liaising with other Peripatetic Nursery Teachers
- Attendance at training and in-service days

(Stephen and Sime 2004: 38-39)

Recommendations stemming from this study included the setting up of communication networks with dedicated time for all staff to meet, developing clear understandings of roles and responsibilities of staff and that in managing change, staff must discuss expectations about roles, responsibilities and practice that they bring from their past jobs.

2.4 National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS)

Sure Start is striving to become evidence – based. Local programmes are expected to commit 3 – 5% of their revenue budget for evaluation. A recent health think tank, however, has questioned the validity of the evidence-base that the Government used for investing in Sure Start (Mc Gauran 2004). Suggesting that the Labour Government has ignored much of the evidence from Head Start programmes in the US, the report states that the political agenda is overriding research findings. Elections, it is argued, exert pressure on evaluators to provide messages to share with the public about success of social programmes. The think tank notes a significant gap between political rhetoric and practical experience. This is echoed by some academics working on local Sure Start evaluation programmes (West, 2002). The Kings Report (Mc Gauran 2004) states how difficult complex locally based programmes like Sure Start are to evaluate, often causing tensions that can arise between policy makers, researchers and local practitioners. This is recognised by the National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) team (Anning et al. 2004). Changes in social policy inevitably affect the conditions in which local programmes operate and availability of funding is often based on fragile and complex partnerships. Communities are not stable with demographic dimensions sometimes changing rapidly. Service provision fluctuates too, staffing alters and priorities change.

The National Evaluation of Sure Start (NESS) was designed to answer three main questions:

1. Do existing services change?
2. Are delivered services improved?
3. Do children, families and communities benefit?

(Anning et al. 2004: 2)

NESS research is structured in a very similar fashion to the US, Early Head Start programmes (Love et al. 2002). An implementation evaluation, impact evaluation, local context analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis form the core research components.

Sure Start local programmes reflect the characteristics of the area in which they are located. Designed to be community driven, programmes seek to improve outcomes for children in diverse ways, thus presenting a challenge for NESS. The implementation module of the evaluation includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data is collected in three formats; questionnaires to all Round 1 – 4 wave programmes (for three consecutive years); in depth case studies in 26 programmes and themed reviews. The NESS team (Anning et al. 2004) report the difficulties surrounding the target led agenda imposed by the Government, emphasising the evaluation and monitoring overload experienced by many programmes.

Sure Start evaluations include implementation studies and some themed reviews, for example, father's involvement in Sure Start; experiences of black and minority ethnic populations; children and families with special needs and disabilities and promoting speech and language, but no in-depth evaluation of the role of teachers has been undertaken. The results of an implementation study (Tunstill et al. 2002); a themed study on Getting Sure Start Started (Ball 2002); Preliminary findings on the impact of SSLPs on child development and family functioning (NESS 2004a); an impact study on the Quality of Early Learning, Play and Childcare (Anning et al. 2005) are amongst those so far reported.

One hundred and fifty Sure Start areas have been selected with 50 'Sure Start-to-be areas' acting as the control group, to provide data for the NESS impact study. A longitudinal study will use data from a 100 of these Sure Start programmes and be compared with each other and also a group from deprived, but not Sure Start families, from the Millennium Cohort Study. Outcome measures will be recorded at birth, three, five, and beyond. As with the EPPE study, multi-level analysis will be used in this study in order to isolate 'community effects' (NESS team 2004a). Initial findings from the impact study report that mothers in Sure Start areas are 'more likely to treat their child in a warmer and more accepting manner than comparison groups' (NESS team 2004b: 4). Evaluators stress that Sure Start is relatively new, and time will be needed to assess fully the impact of the intervention. The NESS team use a 'theory of change' model to explain how maternal outcomes would need to precede child outcomes.

Tentative conclusions from the NESS impact study suggest that Sure Start is more effective in deprived rather than not quite so deprived areas. This is in line with Head Start findings that point to greater impact of intervention programmes within the Hispanic and American black communities (Love et al. 2002) and the EPPE study (Sylva 2004) that points to greater benefits of pre-school education for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and ethnic minority families. A follow up report in 2005 (NESS team 2005) however, found little evidence of SSLP impact. Limited adverse effects were reported for teenage parents, whilst older parents were found to use less negative parenting and their 3 year old children were more socially competent and had fewer behavioural problems than the control group. Conversely children of teenage parents had lower verbal ability and social competence and higher behavioural problems. Children living in workless households and those with lone parents scored lower on verbal ability. This later study found children living in *moderate deprivation* do better than children living in *severe deprivation*. SSLPs led by health agencies were found to be more effective than those led by other bodies.

A themed study within the NESS implementation module, researching the quality of play and learning (Anning et al. 2005) offered a model for good quality services based on principles/shared understanding, practice and responsiveness to communities, as well as a self-evaluative framework. Like Stephen et al. (1998) (see above), Anning's findings were sought from an insider perspective and validated by some 'outsider' standardised measures. Parents, practitioners and managers perceptions of quality were sought. Interestingly, play services and early learning were differentiated in this report. From an initial sample of 60 programmes, 5 examples of high-quality provision were identified and described. No specific references were made regarding the role of teachers within SSLPs although it was noted that teachers are rarely trained to work with babies and toddlers. It was also noted that good quality innovative family sessions demonstrating appropriate activities were led by play workers, speech therapists or occupational therapists. The evaluation reported on 'little research to help us understand effective pedagogies in work with children under three' (Anning et al. 2005: 124).

2.5 Multi-agency working – what kind of professional?

Multi-agency working is at the core of Sure Start thinking. Sure Start asserts practitioners that are committed to viewing children holistically must work together sharing skills and expertise in order to contribute to a culture of ‘*joined-up thinking*.’

The NESS team recognise practitioners working within local programmes need to have a range of skills. Not only do they need to be able to use their professional skills within a multi-disciplinary environment, but also have:

a high level of personal skills, the ability to work with and empathise with parents and to develop new approaches to service delivery

(NESS 2004b: 4)

The concept of multi-agency work is not new. Nearly 20 years ago.

Hazareessingh et al. (1989) stressed the inter-related nature of education in the early years and presented a case for multi-agency approaches to meet the needs of young children:

In relation to young children, a holistic approach signifies valuing the ‘whole’ child, i.e. recognising the inter-relatedness of the child’s emotional, social, spiritual and cognitive qualities, while also being aware that the harmonious growth of these qualities depends on valuing the child’s sense of belonging to a particular family and community.

(Hazareessingh, as quoted in Abbott and Moylett 1997: 163)

At the same time, the Rumbold Report (DES 1990) came to the conclusion that a single person would not have all the knowledge and skills required for delivering early education and care. The difficulties experienced in reshaping early years services in Strathclyde in the 1990’s has been documented by Helen Penn (1994). Working within a feminist framework, she considered the needs of working mothers, and developed, in the face of considerable resistance, the concept of ‘community nurseries’. Within this project barriers to change included the fixed and inflexible attitudes of professionals.

Despite our initiatives, it proved very difficult to either pool resources or bring about changes in practice because of the entrenched nature of the views amongst professionals.

(Penn as quoted in Moss 1994: 18)

So there are conflicting views in the literature over multi-agency working. Evaluations of multi-agency work, unlike those measuring the effect of early intervention

programmes in the U.S. are predominantly qualitative and often based on narrative. Telling of stories (West 2003) and case studies, have emerged as preferred methods.

Early Excellence Centres (EEC) have been instrumental in pioneering integrated work practices. They try to bring together a spectrum of services available to young children and their parents into a unified practice. The Government launched Early Excellence Centres at the same time as the first SSLPs. Described as being ‘catalysts for change’, and ‘cross sector trailblazers in the development of integrated services’ their purpose is summed up below:

Early Excellence Centres give a practical reality to ‘joined up thinking’, offering one-stop shops where families and children can have access to high quality, integrated care and education services delivered by multi-agency partners within one centre or a network of centres. They are also intended to raise the quality of local early years provision and disseminate good practice through training and exemplification of integrated practice.

(Bertram and Pascal et al. 2002: 5)

Unlike SSLPs, Early Excellence Centres (EECs) are not area based, but they do include integrated day care and education for 0 – 5 year olds. Findings from the evaluation of the first pilot of 29 EECs, highlight ‘lessons learned’ and provide guidance for good practice. Features found to help an integrated service include:

- A shared philosophy, vision and agreed principles of working with children and families.
- A perception by EEC users of cohesive and comprehensive services.
- A perception by EEC staff teams of a shared identity, purpose and common working practices.
- A commitment by partner providers of EEC services to fund and facilitate integrated services.

(Bertram and Pascal et al. 2002: 7)

Bertram and Pascal as well as private consultancies commissioned for local evaluations of SSLPs (Cordis Bright 2003) have suggested different models of integration. Models within EECs have been categorised as unified, co-ordinated or coalition models.

Between 2000 and 2001 there was a significant shift from coalition models of integration to a unified model. The majority of EECs were former nursery schools and many of the first managers, former head teachers. It soon became apparent that professional development needed to be quite different from that available within traditional education pathways. Pen Green EEC, is piloting the first accredited

combined postgraduate qualification aimed at children's centre leaders (Nursery World 2004). For practitioners, working within an EEC, increased multi-professional and 'real-world' experiences were reported. Staff training on issues surrounding integrated services was found to benefit practice through:

a stronger sense of their own professional competence and particularly in the development of their understanding of integrated provision and its management

(Bertram and Pascal et al 2002: 95)

A team from Durham University (Bagley et al. 2004) reported a small-scale evaluation of how multi-agency approaches are regarded amongst practitioners in the earliest days of implementing a SSLP. Employing a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews yielded positive views from staff. A point was made by one team member of the importance of joining a team at the same time, when others have not had a head start in the process:

I really enjoy working with a wide range of professionals, and the beauty of this is that we are all starting off together, learning together, we have all come in at the same stage. It is evolving along the way.

(Bagley et al. 2004: 602)

As the research team stated:

evolving work practices appeared not only to have the ability to enhance individual professional knowledge, but through the development of trust, norms and networks, to have the capacity of breaking 'traditional' professional boundaries leading to a strong sense of team identity, high levels of morale and the professional confidence to introduce new working practices.

(Bagley et al. 2004: 602-603)

Factors identified within the programme that researchers felt contributed to positive features of multi-agency work practices included; the qualities of a manager to foster a shared vision and lead with a solution focussed ethos; to recruit staff with attitudes conducive to working across professional boundaries and working within the same building. Setting the Sure Start initiative in the context of New Labour policies, the authors seek to explain the origins of the concept of 'joined-up thinking to joined-up problems'. They go on to suggest the theory of social capital could be used to understand inter-agency approaches evolving within Sure Start programmes. They describe the importance of a shared common language, the sense of belonging to a network and making connections with others in the team, and development of strong relationships through reciprocity, trust, agreed social norms and sense of identification.

A framework for integrated working, identifying objectives, values and means, was used as a model to map optimal levels of integration within another local Sure Start programme (Cordis Bright 2003). In this small scale evaluation flexible working boundaries are cited as a condition for innovation.

Wigfall and Moss (2001) carried out a two year study of a network of family and children's services with seven individual service providers including nurseries, a parents' centre, homeless projects and services for children with special educational needs. The network of services was formed from public and private partnerships and lead by a voluntary organisation. This model of a multi-agency network of services is referred to as a Campus model. The findings revealed that whilst collaboration was evident at management level, there was much less at the level of front line workers. Limited time, space, and lack of awareness of a shared vision were cited as barriers to maximising the opportunities for joined-up work. Integration of services and generating a collective identity was found to be difficult, as service providers were accountable to their own managers leading to a sense of independence and autonomy. The researchers concluded that the Campus network had not achieved '*more than the sum of its parts*', but nevertheless contained useful messages for partnership programmes.

Professionals in Health and Education have traditionally experienced difficulties in working together (Atkinson et al. 2002). Charles Clarke, as Minister of Education, spoke about the need for multi-agency working in relation to children with special needs:

I feel the key to success is all the agencies working together. We've been massively reinforced in that by the reorganisation of government last July. The partnership aspect is terribly important. Unless we get real working partnerships, it's very difficult to deliver what's needed.

(Clarke as quoted in the Education Guardian 2004: 2-3)

Effective educational and health interagency working has been reported in the context of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and schools by Pettitt et al (2003). Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire (55% response rate from CAMHS practitioners throughout England) and then four case studies drawn up. The study recognised that different organisational and professional cultures can become barriers to joint working, but reported:

the majority of these problems were being resolved by close joint working, good communication, and sharing policies (Pettitt et al. 2003: 8)

From this study a list was drawn up of factors that were found to facilitate joint working, and these were:

- Secondments between organisations;
- Being based in the same location;
- Flexibility of recruitment so that people moved between posts across organisations;
- Having a clear understanding of different roles and expertise of members of staff.
- Having a clear rationale for working jointly which is shared with the team.
- Commitment to joint working from all levels of the service
- Joint working
- Informal meetings, networking and team building.

(Pettitt et al. 2003: 8)

This research stressed the role of personal and professional skills in multi-agency working. Reported skills that CAMHS practitioners demonstrated were:

- The ability to work flexibly and creatively
- A commitment to helping children (rather than focussing on the needs of the children)
- Confidence in their own skills and experience
- To be able to work in unfamiliar environments and adapt their way of working;
- Professional respect.
- Being able to pool professional territory and to recognise that they have different but complementary skills.
- Being friendly and approachable
- Being self motivated and tenacious
- Not being arrogant and willing to listen to others
- Experience and commitment to working in a multidisciplinary way.

(Pettitt et al. 2003: 61)

In their study of joint working practices in the provision of frontline services to the homeless, Kennedy et al. (2001) came to similar conclusions. Drawing on findings from the perceptions of front line workers and service users, they too highlighted the importance of interpersonal skills in facilitating successful multi-agency working. A small study of multi-agency work involving health, education and social work

practitioners was carried out in Norfolk. Walker (2004) describes and discusses a model established to facilitate closer inter-disciplinary working. He says:

the evidence from this study supports the notion that it is possible to establish, with relatively little difficulty, inter-professional teams who are able to integrate with primary care staff, within the social environments of children and families

(Walker 2004: 202)

Other studies would contradict this notion of ease when establishing integrated teamwork and identify barriers to be overcome and hurdles along the way. The NESS team (2004a) highlight the challenging and time consuming aspects of joint working. Indeed they identify key features of 'successful partnership' working to include:

- Early clarification of purpose
- Strong levels of commitment
- Ownership and trust amongst partners
- Clear administrative processes to support partnership development.

(NESS 2004b: 3)

A larger study of multi-agency working was carried out by Atkinson et al. (2002). Thirty multi-agency projects were chosen involving education, social services and health professionals and 139 interviews conducted. In-depth case studies were undertaken in 6 projects. The study identified five different types of multi-agency activity and found that in a decision making group a professional would be more likely to keep their specialist role, whereas in operational teams involving close working, professionals were more likely to experience merging of roles. Conflicting views exist on how far roles should be merged and indeed whether it is beneficial. Many professionals working within multi-agency frameworks regarded keeping a distinct and specialist role as important so that they could make unique and valuable contributions. This remains an under researched area. Peter Jackson (2000) questions the rush towards integration, he asks:

When does integration yield diminishing returns? Expertise implies speciality, and that implies difference. Professions have different aims, skills and standards. Too much integration blurs the purpose of differentiation.

(Jackson as quoted in Docking 2000: 101)

Conflicting views exist too, as to whether skills and expertise or personal qualities are the overriding factors in determining professionals' roles within multi-agency teams (Atkinson et al. 2002; Kennedy 2001). Exploring how roles and responsibilities within

multi-agency teams may be established, Atkinson et al. found that some interviewees saw their role evolve from an uncertain start, whereas others said that roles had been discussed jointly between the agencies or had been decided at a strategic level.

The NFER study (Atkinson et al. 2002) describes complex relationships involving roles and responsibilities for professionals moving between the initiative itself, at an interagency level and at the level of individual agencies. In ranked order, the most frequently cited roles within a multi-agency framework were:

- Representing one's own agency on a management or steering group.
- Management/development of the initiative.
- Providing training, advice and support to others.
- Information exchange and dissemination.
- Direct work with children and families.
- Management of staff.
- Ensuring agency appropriateness.
- Planning and implementing the initiative.
- Budget or funding management.
- Managing/leading the contribution of one's own agency.
- Initiation of the project.
- Coordination, i.e. bringing together agencies/ensuring partnerships.
- Providing an agency perspective.

(Atkinson et al. 2002: 84)

Interestingly, education was the dominant agency in providing training and advice to others, whilst social services played only a minor role. Information exchange was identified as a key component within all operational teams. The issue of staff being managed by personnel from a different agency highlighted perceived issues of legality. Needs of professionals to be managed from their own agency resulted in dual management systems. Appropriateness of an agency's involvement in activities was high among the concerns of education personnel, particularly those working in operational teams. It was suggested that when professionals work closely together, single agency identities could be lost or submerged. Whilst some professionals thought a blurring or overlapping of roles was positive, others felt distinct and separate roles enabled professionals to make unique contributions to multi-agency teams. To '*be strong professionally,*' a quality stemming from security and experience of ones job,

was deemed necessary in order to make decisions on appropriateness. This then led some respondents to discourage newly qualified workers from working in multi-agency teams. Linked to this is the role of providing an agency perspective. It was suggested that whilst health professionals could provide a medical and therapeutic angle, education could focus on learning and schooling. In this particular study, of the three agencies, only education indicated they had a role in initiating projects. However, health professionals noted they had a role in initiating joint working projects, particularly in the areas of mental health and speech and language difficulties, areas traditionally regarded as being housed within health.

Angela Anning presented papers in 2001 and 2002 on critical issues concerning practitioner's knowledge bases and identity within multi-agency teams. She exposed key areas of debate by posing two questions; who am I? and what do I know? She put forward strategies for overcoming challenges that were further developed and theorised by a larger project three years later (see below). Anning (2001) draws on the complementary theories of Wenger's Communities of Practice, and Engeström's Activity Theory to provide a framework for understanding practitioners' activity within early years multi-agency teams. She interpreted findings within the conceptual structure of participation and reification. Her work represents a groundbreaking move to theorise the deconstruction of knowledge and subsequent insecurity and discomfort experienced by early years practitioners as they strive to participate in a new context; joined-up work with practitioners from diverse professional backgrounds. Anning argues that it is through the process of activity systems colliding and merging, that focussed support can facilitate the transition through a cycle of change to create new practitioner identities and new learning. Her study draws heavily on the tensions caused through the integration of care and education practitioners and the ideological clashes that result. She identifies space, different pay scales and conditions of service, lack of time for discussing practice and perceived differences in roles as contributing to the turbulence when the activity systems of teachers and child care workers come together. As Anning asserts, traditionally work with under threes fell into the domain of the care-sector. All of a sudden teachers were encroaching on their territory, as was the good practice framework, *Birth to Three Matters*. As she reported: 'voices collided, emotions were expressed, tears shed for the loss of professional certainties and comfort zones' (Anning 2001: 6). It was also reported teachers in multi-agency settings missed the professional dialogue they were used to sharing with colleagues in schools. She puts forward a case

for time to be set aside and systems to be put in place to encourage practitioners to observe activities and reflect together.

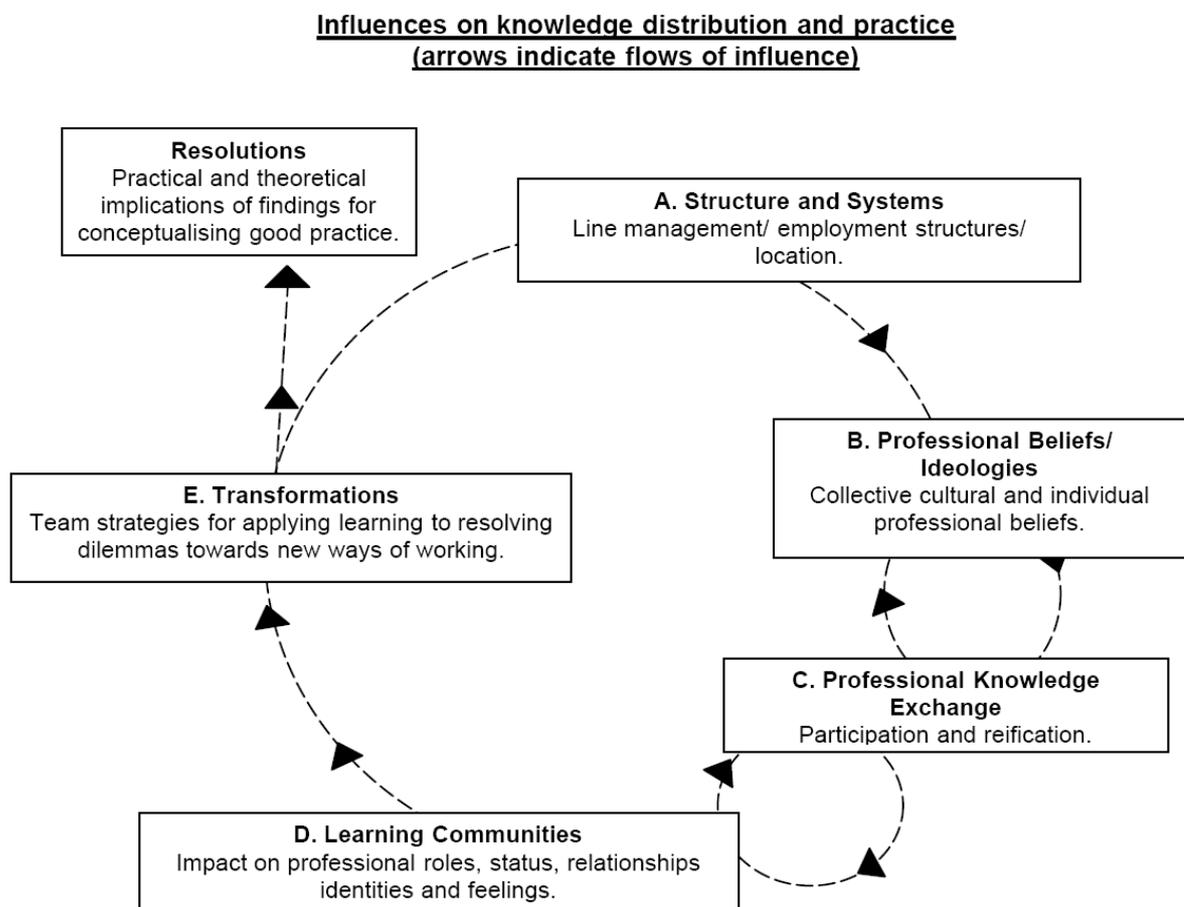
In the second part of the paper Anning (2001) explores the question of ‘What I know’. She acknowledges practitioners’ inability to articulate the strength of professional knowledge they hold and use in their everyday practice. She distinguishes between two forms of knowledge: codified and personal. This has strong parallels with the work of Stephen, et al (1998), who categorised two strands of knowledge bases: the outside perspective and the situated perspective. Anning’s 2002 paper reiterates the challenge of finding ways to get practitioners to articulate this tacit knowledge; referred to otherwise as the personal or situated knowledge. In the 2002 paper Anning tries to identify the professional values and belief systems through using categorised social situations. Vignettes of controversial issues were presented to practitioners from a range of backgrounds to elicit their responses. She found that there was a clear difference between the role and experience of practitioners in their responses. Lower status or less experienced practitioners tended to cite their own values, rather than the setting policy, and would also be more likely to refer to a higher authority in situations with parents.

Anning extended the research strand reviewed above, in an ESRC funded research programme on Multi-Agency Teams working for Children (MATCh), (Robinson et al. 2004). This widened the research base to explore multi-agency working beyond care and education to multi-agency groups that included for example, health practitioners, youth workers and probation services. The MATCh research sought to add to the evidence base around multi-agency delivery of services and develop a theoretical model. Robinson et al. (2004) report that knowledge exchange between professionals is tricky; it challenges beliefs and practices, so it can lead to insecurity, anxiety and conflict. They suggest that there is a need to work all this through using a common focus resulting in shared understanding and that if documentation, for example, is a result, it raises the value and reassures all participants that they are working together to a common end using knowledge and practices from a variety of fields (e.g. health, education, educational psychology).

The objectives of the MATCh research were to; study the implications of putting into operation joined-up services; study the building of new forms of professional knowledge; analyse the knowledge bases brought to the team; identify new

emerging ways of working; and explore the impact of beliefs and practices on multi-agency working. The MATCh team wanted to consider theoretical implications for conceptualising good practice and how best to get teams from a variety of backgrounds to work together effectively and efficiently. A multi method approach was used including analysis of documents, observation of team meetings, semi-structured interviews, diaries of critical incidents, focus group discussions within teams of dilemmas, and discussions across teams on emerging findings to give validity. Data was analysed in three phases; within the concept of participation and reification; professional knowledge, identities and roles; and Activity Theory. The model that was developed from the MATCh research is given in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Summary of the MATCh research



(Source: Robinson et al. 2004: 5)

Structure and systems (influence A) represents the situation at the point of initial set up. Within a multi-agency team different conditions of employment exist.

The study found that decisions in some teams were made when part-timers were not present. The location of team members also influenced team functioning. At this stage tensions surfaced over how individuals felt they were seen by other team members, affecting interactions and their productivity or willingness to engage. Influence B, found that diverse professional beliefs, affected how different professionals saw the same issues, so this affected what interventions were deemed appropriate. Clashes of belief systems meant cherished, dearly held belief systems were challenged (some people could not relinquish their beliefs). For some professionals this was perceived as affecting status and people felt deskilled. Influence C, revealed a clear need for the resolution of conflicting ideas, so that professional knowledge exchange could take place. Training, team meetings, supervision and appraisal meetings, working together, informal chats and coffee; shared offices and buildings, writing documents together were all found to facilitate knowledge exchange, so leadership style is vital. The start of a changing role emerges within learning communities (influence D). Tensions arise between professionals having to learn new roles and forge new professional identities, building on what they brought. New roles and responsibilities and new skills occur. The research found specialists felt they were moving towards generalists and perceived this as a loss of status. It raises the question; do professionals get their identity from their specific specialist field or from an increased sense of professionalism through working in a multi-agency team?

The MATCH team put forward five inter-professional team strategies to resolve conflicts and tensions:

- Respect specialist expertise and celebrate professional diversity.
- Stress interpersonal flexibility and value personal relationships within the team.
- Actively engage diverse perspectives
- Reflect collaboratively on problems
- Work towards mutuality of terminology

(Robinson et al.2004: 11).

The study emphasised the importance of management and leadership style in multi-agency teams. It also found some people find it easier to accept change e.g. founder members of the team, permanent members rather than seconded or part time, and those

with promising career prospects. Key dilemmas of multi-agency work for teams and individuals were found at four levels.

- Structural (coping with systems/management change)
- Ideological (sharing and redistributing knowledge/skills/beliefs)
- Procedural (taking part and reifying the services)
- Inter professional (learning through role changes)

(Robinson et al.2004: 10).

Finally the MATCh study presents a good practice framework for multi-agency work.

Practical implications arising from the research include:

- Achieving role clarification around defined workflow processes
- Addressing barriers related to status
- Acknowledging the contribution of peripheral team members
- Working towards 'specialist' skill retention
- Understanding the impact of changes in roles/responsibilities on professional identities
- Recognising professional diversity whilst nurturing team cohesion

(Robinson et al.2004: 13)

So in summary the messages from this research are, one can't just waltz in and say 'work together', one must enable appropriate structures and systems to be present, and be aware of, and recognise the difficulties when diverse professional beliefs/ideologies come together (at personal and team level). Teams must give time for professional knowledge exchange using the development of practical, joint, client focussed activity (for example), but above all else for a learning community to be sustainable, it needs appropriate leadership with vision and flexibility; not afraid to address barriers relating to status or hierarchy which often prevent progress: acknowledging value of part timers and others who may be peripheral to team members (or see themselves as); acknowledging professional diversity and respecting professional identities and paying attention to specialist skills and knowledge while nurturing team cohesion.

In a later paper, Robinson et al. (2005) looks at knowledge creation and professional identity of teachers. This research sets out to theorise dilemmas around knowledge creation and dilemmas of identity transformation with a focus on teachers.

The paper gives examples of dilemmas that joined up working poses and explores the effects on professional roles, identities and learning from working in a multi-agency team. It then gives strategies for resolving dilemmas and suggests that the ‘dilemmas’ could be seen as enhancing to ones professional identity. Finally the paper, by drawing on theoretical research into workplace participation and professional learning puts forward a model that takes account of creating new practices and knowledge; enhancing professional identity and building inter-professional communities.

It draws heavily on the MATCh research that investigated what it was actually like for professionals involved in multi-agency teams. The focus was on the implications of multi-agency team working for professional activities and the building by the team of new forms of professional knowledge. This paper focuses on two major aspects where it is likely that transformation will be needed for professionals working in multi-agency teams:

- Knowledge creation
- Professional identity transformation

Robinson sees these as the key to the continuing professional development of professionals, especially teachers. Traditionally professionals get their kudos from discipline specific knowledge, so sharing and redistributing knowledge within and across multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams can cause anxiety and conflict – where one’s specific specialist expertise is called into question. In the same way as the MATCh study draws on the theory of Communities of Practice (Wenger) and Activity Theory (Engestrom), this later paper does too.

Robinson et al. (2005) point out there is little empirical evidence of the effects of multi-agency teams on professional practices, but from the thin literature dilemmas such as the following exist:

1. Reconciling different professional beliefs and practices
2. Managing team members with different conditions of service and pay scales
3. Problem of combining funding streams from distinct service budgets
4. Need to invest in joint training and professional development are emerging

There may be joined up thinking at the top, but at the implementation grass-root level there may be conflicting priorities. Professionals need to discuss their roles in relation to; bridging roles between agencies; redistribution of knowledge and skills; changes in

specialist and generalist roles; positional roles within team structures. Robinson highlights the need for internal cohesion. He then reiterates MATCh findings and the model developed to illustrate influences on knowledge distribution and practice and the need in multi-agency teams for:

- Setting aside time for team building and open discussion
- Establishing joint activities for members from different agencies
- Development of shared protocols and documents
- Opportunities for staff training and development

(2005: 182)

Supportive examples are given in the paper. Robinson then goes back to the MATCh findings and finally says if you want improved service delivery to families and children you must invest in professional development to enable the practitioners to do it properly!

The NESS report on quality of Early Learning, Play and Childcare services (Anning et al. 2005) note the challenge practitioners face in changing professional identities as new roles and responsibilities emerge through multi-agency work. It too highlights the stresses and tensions that can be created as teams from different backgrounds begin to work together and urges teams to have strategies in place to address conflict.

Research from Sweden

Swedish research by Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar (2003) examined the processes and reforms leading to the integration of ECEC within the educational sector. They found that:

Personnel need time to adjust to new integrated work teams, document their practices and collectively reflect on changes.

(Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar 2003: 4)

In Sweden, young children are viewed holistically, with nurturing and learning bound together, so that health care, social care and teaching are interwoven, recognising that the well being of a child has educational implications. The differentiation between education and care is no longer regarded as significant; the national agency for education states, Children learn all the time and with all their senses', therefore 'it is

not possible to identify any specific occasions when development or learning actually occurs' (Skolverket 2001 as quoted in Taguchi and Munkammar 2003:8).

The services need to be seen as something that families cannot entirely provide by themselves; that produce stimulated learning situations and friendships as well as democratic, collective nurturing.

(Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar 2003: 29)

This marks a considerable shift in previous thinking and has been formalised in the pre-school curriculum that puts development and learning on a par with each other.

Similarly:

The concept of teaching was replaced to a large extent, but not completely, by learning reflecting the idea that children are active in their own learning processes, and need challenging learning environments.

(Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar 2003: 19)

Resistance to the integration of education and care at local level has emerged in part from conflict over the professional identity of some professional groups. Evaluation of the integration of pre-schooling (defined as voluntary schooling for children from the age of one), to schooling in Sweden stress the importance of team meetings to talk about everyday practices and the vital role of open discussion in change management.

The evaluation found that:

Integration could have gone further if teachers and other staff had been given time to reflect on their current practices, and the similarities and differences in relation to centrally formulated goals for pre-schooling and schooling.

The practitioners have stated that they need time to 'take up' new concepts – such as life long learning- and to formulate and reformulate what they are doing and what they would like to be doing in relation to their interpretation of the central goals. The central level must take greater responsibility for facilitating the exchange of ideas and practices, and discussion of new opportunities or specific conditions.

(Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar 2003: 31)

In response to this situation, and in an attempt to support the process of change at local level, the government put forward a number of actions. These included in-service training for all staff on equal terms; more time and support for discussion of practices within work teams; supporting new staff; evaluating school management; evaluating forms of school integration. The study showed changing the attitudes of practitioners towards their practice is not easy and it takes time. The Swedish experience suggests that teachers' philosophy on learning and teaching, though often

not articulated, is reflected in observed practice. Differences become evident for example, between those teachers who view children as being dependant on adults and those who view children as competent independent learners. One conclusion that the Swedish researchers reported was the finding that a pre-school was more readily able to take on board an educational approach, than was a predominantly educational pre-school to change and so to value and include a greater care element. It is suggested the reason for this lies in the relative status attached to education as opposed to care (Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar 2003).

2.6 The changing role of teachers

Whilst working in schools, teachers will have been exposed to and incorporated into their daily lives, the pervading school culture. As Hargreaves notes:

Cultures of teaching comprise beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar demands and constraints over many years.

(1994: 165)

When teachers move away from schools, to work in new and different work environments their habits and customs will be challenged. Teachers' inclusion in multi-agency teams can be thought of as part of the changing face of learning and teaching (Cooper 2004).

In a recent study the Institute for Public Policy Research, together with the Future Education Network, conducted an online survey to gather responses relating to the future of the teaching profession (Johnson and Hallgarten 2002). Individual respondents of the 'calls to vision' survey, suggested teachers would need to embrace:

A capacity for critical thinking about ideas and initiatives in education; skills of handling change

(Johnson and Hallgarten 2002: 172)

The role of teachers as key players in social improvement is a thread running throughout the responses. Change management is a central theme, with teachers arguing for this change to stem from, and come from within the profession itself:

Restoring teachers' abilities as agents of change would encourage more creativity, innovation and diversity in education in the future.

(Johnson and Hallgarten 2002: 172)

A substantial number of contributors thought that teachers should view themselves as situated within a 'broader, modern social context,' and inferred that being part of 'an extended learning community' was necessary. Changing practice was placed by many respondents within the context of extending relationships into the community and with other agencies. Challenging the view that teacher's only work within fixed age groups was voiced and it was proposed that teachers of the future would need to be flexible and adaptable to manage change. The following statement captures this view:

Future teachers should have strength, patience and the ability to dance on a moving carpet.

(Teacher governor as quoted in Johnson and Hallgarten 2002: 180)

Some participants in the survey perceived a move towards teachers taking on a more managerial and supervisory role. As regards pay, teachers as a whole compared themselves to city bankers and doctors. Within the early years sector where childcare workers are badly paid, this position has obvious difficulties.

Breslin (2002) discusses the difficulty of defining professionalism, professionalism and professionalisation. He offers the following definition of professionalism from a behavioural perspective:

An attitudinal outlook, a way of engaging with the world rooted in one's occupational location and operationalised through a code of ethics, implicit and explicit, that derive from, and through this location.

(Breslin as quoted in Johnson and Hallgarten 2002: 199)

It is argued that contradictions exist between the process of professionalisation, which distances the professional from the client, and their practice, which aims to provide a service to the wider society, giving rise to '*social detachment*':

The growing unpopularity of professionals, the elitism and subsequent social distancing that seems to accompany the professionalisation process and the pedagogic implications of professionalisation, all serve to warn teachers away from any professionalisation project.

(Breslin as quoted in Johnson and Hallgarten 2002: 203)

Johnson and Hallgarten analyse significant changes that have occurred within the teaching profession over the last few years. They suggest that poor recruitment and retention can be linked to loss of professional autonomy mainly through the imposition of National Curriculum strategies and loss of creativity. 40% of teachers leave the

profession within the first three years. Alongside the loss of what is described as 'intrinsic satisfiers'; autonomy and creativity and poor management are given as the reason for a quarter of teachers leaving the profession. Supply teaching and the consequent instability through temporary and transient staffing compares unfavourably with the situation of having experienced, permanent staff with advanced interpersonal skills:

Like all craft skills, despite the importance of training, they (the teachers) develop largely through experience and reflection upon experience.

(Johnson 2002: 38)

This strongly resonates with the theory of effective teaching and learning developed by Cooper and Macintyre (1996) and forms part of the theoretical framework for this study (see later). At the heart of multi-agency approaches is the need for a common vision, as one teacher recognised:

When various parts of the system are working at cross purposes, the enterprise lurches around like a carriage pulled by horses running in different directions.

(Johnson and Hallgarten 2002: 94)

Educationalists argue that teachers' perceptions need challenging. They need to see themselves as agents of reform rather than as targets for reform. Work in the U.S. (Rustique-Forrester and Haselkorn 2002) reveals that teaching is the profession, regarded as giving the greatest benefit to society. Within the debate of learning in a meaningful context and the role of social relationships in learning, the imbalance of ethnic minority teachers among paraprofessionals in the early years is reported (Ross 2002). Similar recruitment issues arise with increasing the number of men teaching in the early years and increasing the number of postgraduate students entering teaching from the 'elite' universities (Hutchings 2002; Haines and Hallgarten 2002).

Johnson and Hallgarten (2002) suggest target-led agendas limit innovative practice. The government is calling for evidence-based practice. Teachers will be expected to keep pace with developments through not only subject related skills and knowledge but also social skills and processes and the interplay between them. As one of the winners of the 2004 Teaching Awards said:

If you are interested in teaching and nothing else, this school is not for you. It is the whole child that we educate.

(NUT 2004: 10)

Johnson and Hallgarten go on to suggest that perhaps the subject – based model of teaching has resulted in a deskilling of teachers and discouraged the development of innovative programmes. Within a multi-agency team, close working relationships with colleagues are important for teachers. Structures and processes that support meaningful communication will therefore improve the knowledge base and practice of those practitioners working within the team.

2.6.1 New teacher roles - some findings from small scale action research

A small, limited, ethnographic study of teachers working as pedagogic advisers was undertaken at an Early Excellence Centre in the south of England (Pemberton 2003). Presented as a new way of working, the study indicated that teachers working within multi-agency teams influenced the learning and practice of differentially trained professionals, and that in turn, this affected child outcomes. The multi-agency component however, is not explored beyond teachers' work with nursery nurses and assistants. The question of what to call a teacher working in SSLPs varies from programme to programme. In the example above pedagogic advisers was used; Ofsted have referred to Sure Start teachers as both advisory teachers and teacher mentors (personal communication 2005).

A further small ethnographic study (Ford 2004), examined the roles of teachers in a SSLP community 'drop in' playgroup. Influenced by a parental involvement project pioneered at Pen Green by Whalley (2001), teachers engaged with parents to discuss patterns of play through shared observation of the child. Video footage was used to capture short episodes of the child at play and this was followed by reflective dialogue between the parent and teacher. The project identified four aims:

- To raise parents awareness of the role of play in their child's learning and development.
- To highlight the use of language and all forms of communication.
- To extend knowledge of schemas.
- To empower parents.

(Ford 2004)

No formal evaluation has been conducted to assess the impact of the work but the teacher expressed his view of working within a Sure Start project as follows:

In order to work in a truly multidisciplinary way, I believe that professionals have to be prepared to reinvent their roles. As an early years teacher, I have seen my role transformed.

(Ford 2004: 15)

Teachers in several SSLPs work with parents to develop storybags, a community resource to support young children's language and literacy skills. One such project has been evaluated and reported (Ford and Weinberger 2001; Weinberger and Stafford 2004). The earlier report described the teacher's role as one of liaison and organisation to get the project off the ground and as having a co-ordination and management role in sustaining the groups. The teacher provided training sessions to parents on how young children approach literacy and numeracy. She took the lead in demonstrating the composition, use and value of storybags to parents. Initial findings focussed on implementation and project development and the views of a group of 10 parents who reported a range of social gains from their involvement in the project. The later report describes how dialogue on early learning can be promoted amongst parents by linking the contents of storybags to the Foundation Stage curriculum. The project links closely with family learning agendas. No evaluations of child outcomes have been reported.

A local evaluation study, conducted by Sheffield University, has been reported on the role of a Sure Start Community Teacher (Marsh 2004). Stressing the pioneering nature of the post, the study identified three main areas of responsibility the teacher had developed; training, consultation and modelling. The work of the teacher was principally settings based, with a key role in networking practitioners from private and voluntary nursery settings. The teacher had characterised outreach education as being both proactive and reactive to groups of practitioners and parents. Challenges that were perceived by the teacher in this study included; overcoming the stereotypical persona of a teacher; the balance between parental autonomy in Sure Start funded projects and teacher input; prioritising work demands; and raising the profile of education within a care and health driven project. The first teacher in this role was in post for 4 years and then replaced by a second teacher. The second teacher felt a strategic planning role was essential. She also recognised issues of sustainability:

I feel there was a danger of setting up projects, on a short-term basis, establishing a dependence on them and then withdrawing them.

(Marsh 2004: 24)

Rehal (2004), in a different SSLP, set out to define the roles of Sure Start staff within a therapeutic model. She explored the concept of professionals taking the role of 'good' parents and offered five characteristics for new styles of working,

- Being prepared to fail
- Not needing to be in control
- Allowing clients to set the agenda
- Staying available despite setbacks
- Constantly challenging the worker's own prejudices and judgements

No evaluation has yet been conducted to find out how actual practice fits in with these criteria, but it is only experienced and confident professionals who could cope with these styles of working. Interestingly, the local evaluator for the same programme, derides the 'therapeutic ethos'; helping people to feel better about themselves, rather than tackling the root causes of their situations (Carlson and West 2005). The researchers go on to suggest that mothers in particular, often living fragmented and vulnerable lives, need both transitional and transactional space.

Autobiographical research presented in the form of stories, were gathered to provide qualitative information on the perceptions of front line workers in a Sure Start programme in the south of England (West et al. 2003). Collecting and recording stories was seen as part of an ongoing study that would enable the evolution of understandings and ways of working to be tracked over time. In particular the evaluation sought to document 'joined-up thinking between professionals and inter-agency practice', a concept at the heart of the Sure Start philosophy. Professionals expressed difficulties coming to terms with their changed identities. They also voiced concerns over the notion of becoming deskilled and the knock on effect that it would have if they moved back to traditional roles beyond Sure Start. This resonates with the work of Anning (2001; 2002): A teacher in the SSLP expressed how she viewed her role:

we are all trying to find what our role is, that is kind of one of the difficulties and not all of us are sure what it is our exact role is, so we all find a little niche to kind of say well that is what I do because that is what I am.

(West et al. 2003: 35)

In this same report the teacher said how hard the transition from mainstream teaching to Sure Start had been. She said that having to use her own initiative to set up timetables,

gather information and create a role was 'really difficult' at the start. But after a period of adjustment she found multi-agency work had broadened her outlook and provided opportunities to learn new skills. Feelings of isolation and frustration were voiced in the recall of some job related tasks when new into post.

Summary of the literature review

- Babies learn from the moment they are born. The learning and teaching of babies, toddlers and young children is therefore no less important than school or adult learning and is integral to the concept of life long learning.
- Learning for babies is most effective in meaningful contexts with emotionally available adults.
- A child's parent/carer is their first educator and the involvement in their child's learning influences the progress that the child makes. A child's home learning environment affects their social behaviour and cognitive skills.
- SSLPs deliver both educational and family support programmes. Teachers are involved in family learning programmes to support intergenerational learning that is, working with both children and their parents/carers.
- Early educational intervention for children over 2 years old attending high quality pre-school settings, can improve children's social and emotional and cognitive skills and these remain significant at the age of 7.
- In the U.K. and the U.S. early intervention programmes have found parents give greater emotional support for children and use less negative parenting than control groups.
- There is a consistent body of research evidence demonstrating staff qualifications do make a difference to the quality and nature of interactions with young children within pre-school settings.
- There are differences in the roles undertaken by teachers and staff with lower qualifications in Early Years settings.
- Research evidence suggests qualified teachers can affect the practice of other practitioners when they are working closely together.

- A holistic approach to child development necessitates practitioners with knowledge and understanding of the inter-relatedness of factors contributing to a child becoming a competent learner. Learning and nurturing cannot be separated; they are bound together.
- There is no research evidence to support one model of multi-agency working over another, that is, retaining and developing expertise within one agency and working in a joined-up way, or moving towards a new early years specialist with knowledge and skills from range of specialities. This remains an under researched area in the U.K.
- Multi-agency work is challenging and requires time to work. Factors contributing to positive multi-agency work practices include a common vision, strong leadership, flexible boundaries, co-location, joint working and ability to network. Tensions arise over unclear roles and responsibilities.
- Dispositions of practitioners in multi-agency teams are noted in the literature. Personality is cited as one factor influencing ability to work in multi-agency teams. Professional experience and confidence are also cited as factors affecting the ability to contribute to multi-agency teams.
- There is an emerging body of evidence from action research, detailing innovative projects involving teachers within SSLPs.
- A re-definition of the role of teachers is emerging from the inclusion of teachers in Sure Start programmes.

Chapter 3 Theoretical framework

This research brings together, and is based within, three social theories of learning. Common to all theories is the premise that practitioner learning results from active engagement in day-to-day situations. The theoretical framework for his study is encompassed by:

- Theory of Communities of Practice
- Activity Theory and Expansive Learning
- Theory of Professional Craft Knowledge

In this chapter the above theories will be elaborated so that subsequent discussion of findings can be analysed in relation to the context of a teacher working within a Sure Start environment. It is believed that this is the first time the theory of Professional Craft Knowledge has been linked to Communities of Practice and Activity theory to gain insight and understanding into the role of the teacher working within an early years, multi-agency context.

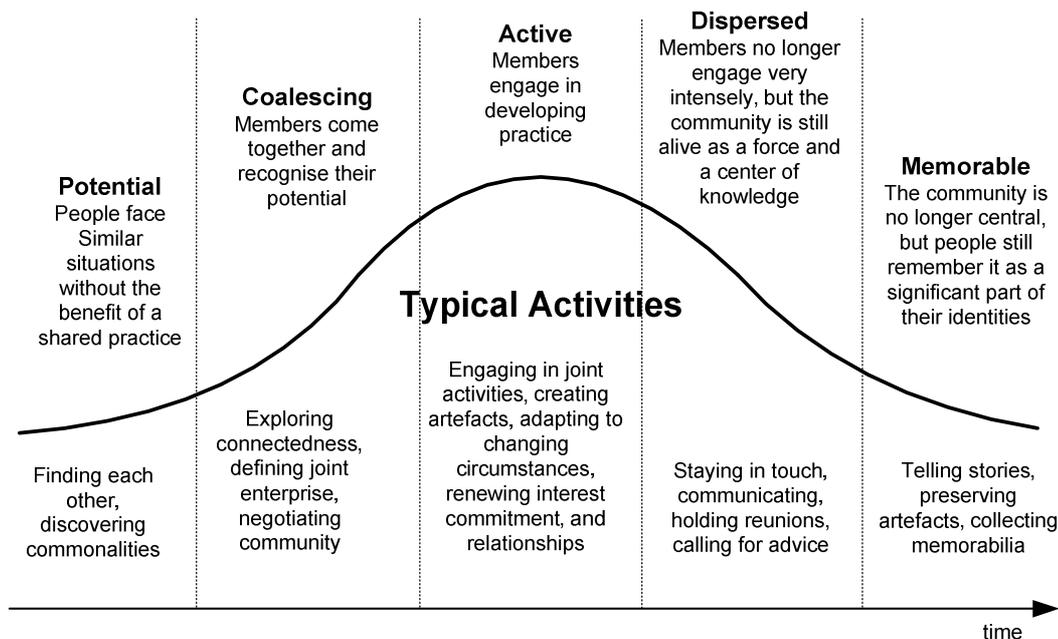
3.1 Theory of Communities of Practice

Central to this theory is the concept that learning arises through involvement and participation amongst a group of people holding a common, shared, sense of purpose, and who extend their knowledge and expertise by continual interaction. It is primarily about the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998a) and based on the principle that, 'learning is a process that takes place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind.' (Lave and Wenger 1991:15)

Communities of practice can be thought of as self-organised groups of people, bound together informally through engagement in joint learning enterprises. They are concerned with knowledge rather than task and it is the practitioners themselves who generate the know-how, rather than a higher authority. The value that communities create for their members, (rather than say, project deadlines) will determine the life of such a community. Figure 3.1 shows Wenger's stages of development of a community of practice, from initial membership through to increased engagement and then final disbandment of the group. The pattern of development is represented as a normal

distribution curve, peaking during the active phase. In this study it is this period of activity characterised by joint working that is of particular interest. This is the phase when members are fully participating in their community of practice and are operating at the core. It is the period when identity transformation of members and reification is most active.

Figure 3.1 Stages of development of a Community of Practice



(Source: Wenger 1998b: 4)

Wenger defines a community of practice within three dimensions;

- As a joint enterprise as understood and continually renegotiated by its members.
- Through mutual engagement that binds members together into a social entity.
- Producing a shared repertoire of communal resources (routines, sensibilities, artefacts, vocabulary, styles, etc.) that members have developed over time.

(Wenger 1998b:2)

In essence, members of a community of practice are brought together by joining in common activities or *joined up* working, and what members learn is through this social engagement. As the process deepens, identity, language, responses and behaviour emerge to characterise that community of practice. For teachers joining a Sure Start community of practice (as newcomers), participation will therefore necessitate; access

to mutual engagement; access to their negotiation of the enterprise and access to the repertoire in use. There exists a real need to know what other people know within the group, or community of practice, to be able to create new knowledge. The knowledge base that people have at the start of an enterprise will reflect the culture and beliefs of their own history of learning. For Sure Start teachers finding mechanisms to articulate their practical knowledge (or Professional Craft Knowledge) becomes increasingly important.

One of the key tenets behind the theory is that the learner will be involved to varying degrees. The level and complexity of participation will change over time, as interactions within the group deepen and evolve, and as participants become more competent. In this way people move from the periphery to the centre of a particular community. As Etienne Wenger suggests:

Communities of Practice move through different stages of development characterised by different levels of interaction among the members and different kinds of activities.

(Wenger 1998b: 2-3)

Legitimate peripheral participation describes the position of a person (usually a newcomer) in a group, their relationship to other participants, activities, identities, and communities of knowledge and practice. It is based on the notion that one person will be more skilled or expert in a particular area than another, within any community of practice:

Peripheral participation is about being located in the social world peripheral to full participation, when full participation is described as the full diversity of relations involved in varying forms of community membership.

(Lave and Wenger 1991:36)

Within a community of practice, participation and non-participation will both co-exist, because people will be coming into contact with a number of communities of practice, some of which they do not belong. A useful distinction can be made between peripherality, in which participation dominates and marginality in which non-participation dominates. Therefore peripherality or marginality will depend on whether non-participation is either enabling or problematic.

Lave and Wenger draw on examples of craftspeople around the world (for example, midwives, tailors and quartermasters), to illustrate increasing participation of members within communities of practice and their consequent learning. By analysing the changing participation and identity of people who are engaged in sustained participation from newcomer to old-timer, or from novice to master craftsman, the transformation of the community of practice and the creation of new knowledge through social practice can then, it is argued, be understood.

Alongside participation, the concept of reification is central. It involves the process of giving form to experiences by turning them into objects, for example a document, report, a shared protocol or a new language. Wenger stresses the products of reification reflect the practices that produce them. Reified objects; a tool, procedure, symbol or story, then create points of focus around which negotiation of meaning can be organised. The complementary nature of participation and reification constitutes a dynamic relationship; 'they shape each other, but they have their own shape' (Wenger 1998a: 71). Participation and reification are dual modes of existence in time, two forms of power to influence practice. The negotiation of meaning, that is learning, is when the process of participation and reification come together.

A community of practice can be thought of as shared histories of learning, and these shared histories are a balance of participation and reification brought together over time. There must be enough time for a community of practice to establish mutual engagement in a joint enterprise in order to negotiate meaning and thereby share learning. Participation and reification are central concepts that Wenger argues are ways of remembering learning, and so provide a means of influencing the development of a community of practice.

Communities of practice exist everywhere and individuals maybe involved in several at the same time. In some groups a particular person may be central, whilst in other groups he or she may be more at the margins. Connections between communities of practice, that is, its external relations, may be brought about through two different channels; that of artefacts or documents known as 'boundary objects', or alternatively, through people, who introduce aspects of one practice into another (a brokering role). Boundary is an important concept within the theory. It refers to the edge of the Community of Practice; the continuity and discontinuity between membership and non-membership. Both boundary and periphery can be thought of as distinct entities. Any

potential member of a community of practice must have legitimacy to be accepted into the group, which conveys a form of protection to it:

Communities of practice have boundaries, and access to community activities and knowledge base is controlled in order to build and maintain trusted relations between its members and to nurture high quality conversations among peers.

(Dugage 2004)

So, participation means being active in the practices of social communities and constructing identities of belonging in relation to these communities.

Our identity includes our ability and inability to shape the meanings that define communities and our forms of belonging.

(Wenger 1998a: 145)

Identity, and the process of identity transformation, can be viewed within this framework of participation and reification. Changed ways of thinking, emerging from membership of a community of practice, can then provide a sound theoretical structure for understanding the concept of 'joined-up' thinking. As identity transformation evolves and relationships of trust emerge, conditions for knowledge sharing grow and a climate of knowledge creation is established, with resultant innovation and new ways of working.

We expect that mutual trust and a common identity are very crucial for the willingness to share knowledge and develop innovative ideas.

(Andriessen 2004: 8)

Throughout life, individuals constantly renegotiate their identity through the practices in which they engage. As individuals experience different types of participation, their identities constitute different trajectories. Categorising identity within trajectory types can provide a framework for understanding identity direction (Wenger 1998). Responsive to influences, trajectories are constantly moving; they are temporal in nature rather than being fixed entities. Trajectories can represent a variety of degrees and types of potential participation and identity. A peripheral trajectory never leads to full participation whilst an insider trajectory, inferring full participation, leads on to new events or new demands. A boundary trajectory finds value in identities straddling and linking communities of practice, calling on a brokering role. Finally inbound and outbound trajectories can be identified, one moving towards future full participation and the other, as the term implies, leading away from that community. So Wenger views the main agent in identity transformation being the social influence of

the community of practice. Identity transformation through increasing levels of participation within a Sure Start community of practice constitutes a central theme in this thesis.

Recently an upsurge of online communities of practice has surfaced, accessed through web logs. This informal format, free from protocol, facilitates the free exchange of knowledge and information without restrictions placed by membership rules. It provides a powerful and global means of exchanging knowledge and thereby creating the conditions for new knowledge to emerge. Industry recognises the impact such communities of practice can have on market success. Linked to innovation, companies understand that when introducing new products on the market, bloggers can make or break the success of the product. The value and implications of supporting communities of practice is therefore potentially huge. Indeed a report from the American Productivity and Quality Center included a recommendation on actively forming communities of practice:

Build communities of practice (CoPs) to provide forums for intra-disciplinary knowledge sharing among professionals. CoPs also play the essential role of expeditor to overcome barriers created by formal structures.

(2003)

The value of encouraging communities of practice in the commercial sector is gaining ground. This study proposes the benefits to the public sector too, of recognising and nurturing communities of practice, and utilising e-technologies to bring together practitioners across the country is potentially immense.

3.2 Activity Theory

Activity theory links to communities of practice in so far as communities of practice studies the relationship between newcomers and old timers within a changing shared practice, whilst activity theory places learning in the context of the conflicting nature of social practice.

Activity theory is an interpretation of Vygotsky's concept of zone of proximal development, (the distance between actual development and potential development) in relation to acquired learning (internalised learning). It is characterised by a societal approach rather than an individual one. The theory is not a fixed body of accurately defined statements; rather it is the application of the original ideas Vygotsky and

Leontiev, developed in a way to take into account communities. Yrjo Engestrom, a Finnish academic, has developed and extended activity theory over the last twenty years and it is in the main, his work on which this thesis draws. Engestrom's model suggests conflict is inevitable as tasks are redefined and redistributed within changing organisations and teams in the world of work. It is proposed these conflicts need to be articulated and debated in order that progress is made towards creating new forms of knowledge and practice. Engestrom argues that change should be anchored to actions that are real within the workplaces, while at the same time connected to a clear vision of the future. He develops the notion of expansive learning cycles when different professionals come together to pursue a common goal triggering a cycle of articulating differences; exploring choices; modelling solutions; examining an agreed model and implementing activities.

Activity theory belongs to the constructivist paradigm; knowledge is actively constructed by the learner through interaction with the social environment. The theory studies activity systems, that is, actions that involve goal-directed, historically situated co-operative interactions between people. It stresses the importance of integrated systems of experiences rather than isolated units of analysis (Sillars 2003).

Activity theory fits well with multi-agency and holistic approaches to learning. The Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research at the University of Birmingham, established in 2000 and initially led by Anne Edwards and Harry Daniels, set out to explore pedagogy from a sociocultural perspective (Edwards 2001). Their work here provided the theoretical platform for a later ESRC funded project, 'Learning in and for interagency working' (LIW). This project, driven by activity theory, is contributing to the debate on new forms of multi-agency learning (Daniels et al. 2007). As well as researchers from education, the cross boundary nature of human computer interactions has attracted researchers to this theory. Kari Kuutti (1996) views activity theory as a cross disciplinary framework for studying different forms of human practices as developmental processes. She identifies three principles;

- Activities as basic units of analysis – the minimal meaningful context for individual actions must be included in the unit of analysis and this unit is called an activity.

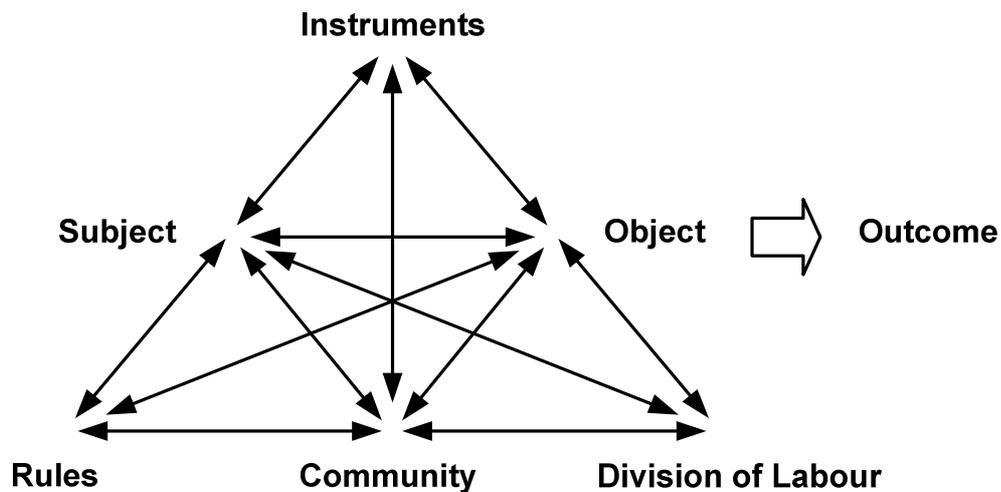
- History and development – activities are under continuous change and development. They are not linear, but uneven and discontinuous.
- Artefacts and mediation – an activity will contain several elements, or artefacts, for example, instruments, procedures, policies, methods, and social interactions. A fundamental concept in the theory is that artefacts have a mediating role. Artefacts will be created and change during the development of the activity itself.

(1996)

Within the theory, activity is conceptualised as a form of doing directed to an object. In its simplest form it can therefore be thought of as someone (the subject), doing something (action) in order to transform something (the object). Tools mediate the relationship between the subject and the object. These tools will include the history of the relationship and experience and skills collected over time. Mediation is seen as the key to linking the individual to the society and to the culture. Mediating artefacts are viewed as culturally constructed instruments that may be a tool or symbol system for example, machines, concepts, theories, genres, logical reasoning, signs; they include both external implements, and internal representations. Internal representations can become externalised through speech, gesture, writing or manipulation of the material environment.

The simple subject-object model described above, mediated by tools, or instruments, has been developed further to include the community, in order to understand more fully the relationships between an individual and the environment in an activity. Consequently this introduces new relationships: community-subject and community-object. In this extended model the community –subject relationship is mediated by rules, whilst division of labour mediates the community-object relationship; in other words, it describes how the object of the activity relates to the community. Activity therefore has both an individual and a collective dimension, one goal driven, the other driven by an object related motive, but both driven by the conditions existing at the time.

Figure 3.2 Triadic representation of Activity Theory



(Source: Engeström 1987)

This web of relationships, presented by Engeström within a triangular model of interconnecting relations, and conceptualised as a multi-voiced formation, is shown in Figure 3.2.

The motive force for change and development are the internal tensions and contradictions within an activity system. Events happening may cause a misfit of elements, resulting in problems, ruptures, clashes and breakdowns. As Kuutti points out:

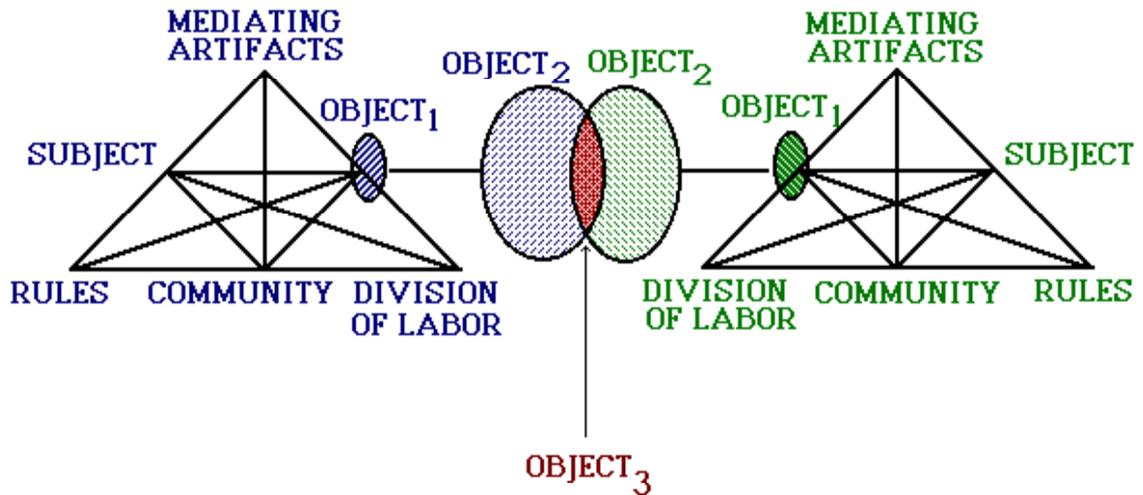
Real life situations always involve an intertwined and connected web of activities, which can be distinguished according to their objects. Participation in connected activities having very different objects cause tensions and distortions.

(Kuutti 1996: 9)

So contradictions are viewed positively as opportunities for development. Indeed Engeström (1999) argues that it is the turbulence and conflict within activity systems that are the motive force for individual progress.

New learning can be conceptualized when activity theory is expanded to include at least two interacting activity systems (see Figure 3.3). This is known as learning by expanding and represents the third generation of activity theory. The colliding and merging of activity systems can be thought of as the emergence and resolution of its inner contradictions.

Figure 3. 3 Two interacting activity systems with a partially shared object



(Source: Engeström 2001: 136)

Engestrom (1997) describes five underlying conditions on which he develops the theory of learning by expansion:

- The collective activity system is the prime unit for analysis of human conduct.
- Historically evolving inner contradictions are the chief sources of movement and change in activity systems.
- Expansive learning is a historically new type of learning which emerges as practitioners struggle through developmental transformations in their activity systems, moving across collective zones of proximal zones development.
- The dialectical method of ascending from the abstract to the concrete is a central tool for mastering cycles of expansive learning.
- An interventionist research methodology is needed which aims at pushing forward, mediating, recording and analysing cycles of expansive learning in local activity systems.

Engestrom (1999) argues that development necessitates a partially destructive rejection of old practices; that development is not confined to individuals but should be seen as collective transformation, and should not just be across vertical levels, but horizontally too, across borders. An expansive cycle begins with individuals questioning the accepted practice, and it gradually expands into a collective movement. Innovations are regarded as a stepwise construction of new forms of collaborative practice. Therefore

the process of expansive learning is seen as the construction and resolution of successively evolving contradictions in the activity system. These contradictions and their resolution are represented in Figure 3. 4.

Engestrom suggests multi-agency contexts, referred to in the literature as divided terrains, where object-orientated activity is operating through multiple activity systems, frequently ignore or fail to nurture collaboration, despite clear needs for such actions. This is expressed in the quotation below;

In such divided terrains, expansive learning needs to take shape as renegotiation and reorganization of collaborative relations and practices between and within the activity systems involved.

(Engestrom 2001)

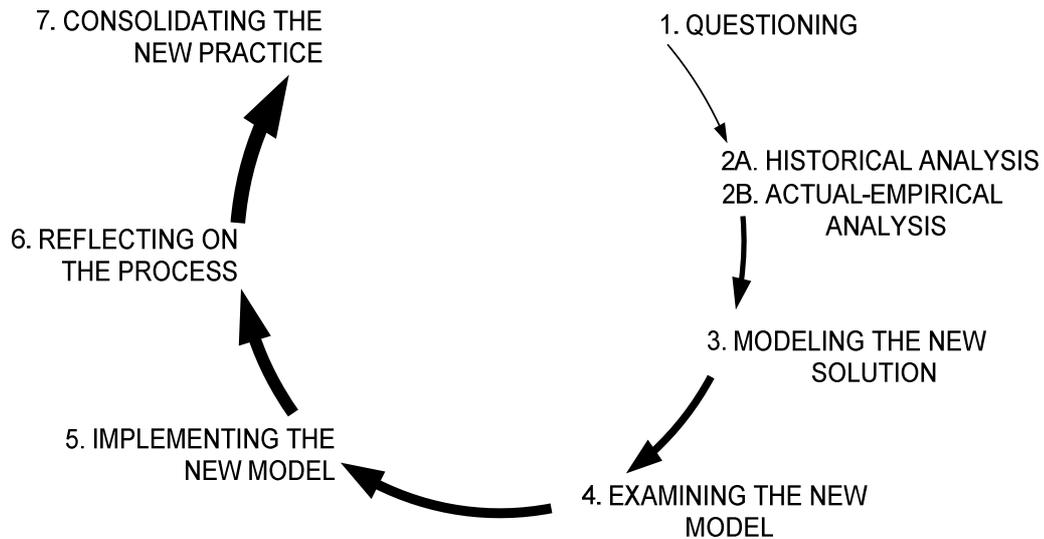
He goes on to argue that a new way of thinking about learning within workplaces is needed. He points out that an expert in a narrow field, only moving vertically with knowledge cannot meet the demands of the work styles of today, when boundary crossing and horizontal movement are both necessary. The role of specialists (or experts) in multi-agency environments throws up challenges as they move between activity systems, as highlighted below:

In their work, experts operate in and move between multiple parallel activity contexts. These multiple contexts demand and afford different, complementary but also conflicting cognitive tools, rules, and patterns of social interaction. Criteria of expert knowledge and skill are different in the various contexts. Experts face the challenge of negotiating and combining ingredients from different contexts to achieve solutions.

(Engeström, Engeström and Kärkkäinen 1995: 320)

Expansive learning actions are conceptualized as boundary-crossing actions. The sequence of actions in an expansive learning cycle is represented in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Ideal-typical expansive cycle of epistemic learning actions



(Source Engeström 2001:152)

Engestrom offers an ideal-typical sequence of such actions, as detailed below:

- questioning, challenging and rejecting existing practices across boundaries,
- analysing existing practices across boundaries,
- collaborative, mutually supportive building of new models, concepts, artifacts or patterns of conduct across boundaries,
- examining and debating suggested models, concepts, artifacts or patterns of conduct across boundaries,
- emulating and appropriating new ideas, concepts, artifacts or patterns of conduct across boundaries,
- negotiating, bartering and trading of material or immaterial resources related to new ideas, concepts, artifacts or patterns of conduct across boundaries,
- reflecting on and evaluating aspects of the process across boundaries,
- consolidating the outcomes across boundaries.

(Engestrom 2003)

So the expansive learning cycle is triggered when individuals question accepted practice, and this questioning then expands into a collective movement. The above sequence suggests that research itself can make visible and push forward the contradictions of an activity under scrutiny, challenging participants to use conceptual tools to analyse and redesign their own practice. Indeed Engestrom has developed a

research tool based on practitioner analysis of videotaped sequences showing disturbances of activity. With reference to this, the LIW team has developed a model of intervention based on 'dual stimulation'; that is, providing practitioners with tools (neutral objects) to solve problems or the means by which they can construct tools to solve problems (Daniels, Edwards, Warmington and Brown et al.). Using this methodology, practical sessions with front-line practitioners are organised through 'developmental work research' workshops in which day-to day understanding of multi-agency work is set against analysis of practices that hinder or promote joined-up work. The tool in these workshops is triple sets of surfaces to represent the work activity (one set for models and vision, one for ideas and tools and one for mirror data with each set comprising a past present and future activity surface). Each workshop includes a researcher-interventionist whose role is to facilitate the session. Video footage of work situations is generally used to stimulate discussion, which is itself filmed for later analysis of critical events. Within the workshops, team members discuss their practice articulating potential conflict and difficulties and putting forward new and different ways of working. This type of intervention recognises that multi-agency work creates tensions in teams, particularly when practitioners cross agency boundaries, but by organising the learning of new forms of practice, as described above, such tensions can be analysed and effective multi-agency working reformulated. As the LIW team conclude:

'In a professional context where so much emphasis is placed on skills and knowledge, this form of work is important because it tacitly recognises forms of practice require professional ways of being as well as skills and knowledge'

(Daniels, Edwards, Warmington and Brown et al.)

In his study of health care in Helsinki, Engestrom (2003) refers to 'negotiated knotworking' to facilitate ways of collaboratively working together across organisations and co-configuration as a participatory form of work focussed on clients as well as practitioners. Working together requires learning from dialogue across organisational boundaries so that the horizontal dimension of learning through expansion is opened up. As Engestrom notes, the process of learning through expansion is vigorous and active:

the whole process is seen as energised and often radically refocused by negation : questioning, criticising, even rejecting the accepted wisdom

(Engestrom 1999: 383)

Boundary-crossing actions must occur in both directions. If only one person tries to cross a boundary but receives no response, the action is incomplete and cannot be regarded as true boundary crossing. To trigger expansive learning, actions need to be characterised by mutual engagement and commitment to change practices. Determining boundary-crossing action as expansive can only be judged in the broader context of transformation in the activity systems involved.

Both small and large-scale innovations can be potentially expansive. Whilst large-scale expansive cycles may operate at an organisational level, a growing focus on small phases and cycles that may take minutes and hours and intermediate cycles that may take weeks or months are emerging. In this way the expansive learning cycle is a useful framework for analysing smaller scale innovative learning processes.

Although interventions to change the practice of multi-agency practitioners based on activity theory is being trialled within the LIW project, this approach is still in its infancy. Issues surrounding the creation of conceptual tools to understand working in and for multi-agency contexts, remain an area of underdevelopment. No long-term gains on effective team working have yet been reported as a result of developmental work research workshops. Although anticipated, the MATCh research (Robinson et al. 2005) chose not to utilise activity theory to interpret findings. It did however, recognise the need for team strategies to be developed for resolving team dilemmas in relation to new ways of working (see discussion in literature review, and Figure 2.1) but did not place this within an activity theory framework. Rather, they identified key dilemmas for teams and individuals and offered strategies for resolving such dilemmas. They concluded by presenting a good practice framework for multi-agency team work.

3.3 Professional Craft Knowledge

Professional Craft Knowledge (PCK) is a situated model of learning. It provides a framework for theorising effective teaching and learning through an approach accessing teachers' classroom thinking and decision-making (Cooper and McIntyre 1996; Stephens and Sime 2004). Unlike Communities of Practice and Activity Theory, which primarily examine relationships between adults, PCK is based on analysing the interactions between teachers and pupils; making it pertinent to the distinctive practice (or activity system) of a teacher.

Teachers' day-to-day work provides researchers with evidence of what teachers actually do. The situated perspective is different from the 'outside' perspective (as detailed in standards or good practice guidelines, for example the Foundation Stage Curriculum) in that it is grounded in actions and behaviours; what actually happens in the reality of a classroom, when teachers respond to a myriad of both overt and unspoken situational conditions. This ability of a teacher to shape actions and behaviours to specific contexts, reflect and engage in practical problem solving, gathered over time from experience, is referred to as a teachers' Professional Craft Knowledge (Cooper and McIntyre 1996; Stephen et al. 1998). PCK can be thought of as teachers 'inner knowing', their practical knowledge, of how to respond to circumstances in order to facilitate effective learning. It is one form of knowledge that teachers possess. This tacit knowledge is by its nature difficult to quantify, indeed teachers are not always conscious of using it. It is a mode of knowledge that is therefore rarely spontaneously articulated by teachers. PCK is described as the knowledge that underpins what teachers regard as successful teaching. It can usefully be defined as:

The knowledge that experienced teachers gather throughout their careers, that enables them to make decisions about how best to approach professional tasks.....it is the knowledge that teachers develop through the process of reflection and practical problem solving that they engage in to carry out the demands of their jobs. As such this knowledge is informed by each teacher's individual way of thinking and knowing.

(Cooper and McIntyre 1996: 75-76)

PCK arose as a concept stemming from the need to examine teaching from a classroom perspective, rather than importing external theories (Cooper and McIntyre 1996). In one of the first detailed studies of PCK, Brown and McIntyre (1993) found that teachers in school settings were more likely to take actions to establish what they termed 'normal desirable states of pupil activity' than actions directly related to pupil outcomes within curriculum frameworks. Alongside this dimension, types of progress, was revealed by teachers to be important when they evaluated their teaching effectiveness. Brown and McIntyre's study also found that individual teachers draw on an extensive range of actions in response to a number of factors in the classroom, but particularly those relating to pupil characteristics.

A later study was undertaken by Cooper and McIntyre (1996) shortly after the introduction of the then, new National curriculum, and set within the subject boundaries

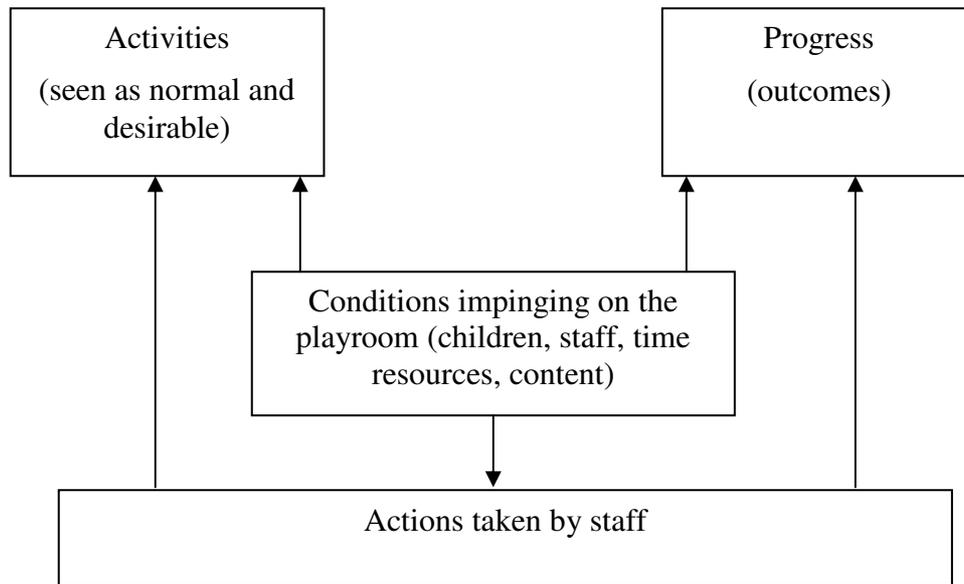
of History and English. Participants were drawn from secondary schools, again placing research within the context of classrooms and lessons. This research not only investigated teachers' perceptions, but also pupils' perceptions of effective *learning*, thereby developing and extending the earlier Scottish study that focussed on strategies for effective *teaching* (Brown and McIntyre 1993). Cooper and McIntyre (1996) found teachers thinking about their effectiveness could be described within four areas:

1. Long-term affective and cognitive aims in relation to pupil outcomes and
2. Short-term affective and cognitive objectives in relation to pupil progress including technical and affective normal desirable states of pupil activity.
3. Teachers' performance in terms of appropriateness of tasks and quality of interactions.
4. Teachers' preferred image relating to communication of aspects of craft knowledge.

Whilst the above framework has theorised teachers thinking and use of professional craft knowledge largely within a secondary school context, research conducted by Stephen et al. (1998) studying the perceived roles of practitioners working with pre-school children in educational settings in Scotland, also drew on a situated perspective. One conclusion to arise from this research was the potential scope and value of building continuing professional development for practitioners around their PCK. From this study, in the context of early years practitioners, the concepts teachers use in evaluating their own practice, namely establishing Normal Desirable States of Activity and types of progress, is presented in a simple diagram (Figure 3. 5).

Teachers working within SSLPs represent a specific context, one that is a radical departure from established educational settings. Not only is the environment different, one based in communities, managed and owned by agencies other than education, but also the focus group is extended to include intergenerational communities (spanning babies to grandparents). The theory of Professional Craft Knowledge helps provide insight and understanding into the very particular expertise that teachers bring to their practice. It helps provide a framework for understanding individual teachers' uniqueness and the attributes they can bring to the multi-agency terrain. The question of whether PCK can be generalised within a community context and wider phase of learners, will be examined in this thesis.

Figure 3. 5 Framework representing ways early years practitioners make sense of their practice



(Source: Brown, Cope and Waterhouse 1998: 13)

As previously discussed, mediating artefacts in an activity theory framework (3.2) are central and critical features of individuals regulating their interactions with the world and each other. Such socially constructed instruments, which may be internal or external, can be linked to the exposure of teachers' professional craft knowledge. This thesis suggests it is through constructing tools to facilitate articulation of PCK that mediation of a Sure Start teacher's activity system can be usefully viewed. The ability of teachers to explain their thinking behind their actions can be regarded as a positive enabler, whilst inability will limit activity. The conversion of tacit to explicit knowledge enabling teachers to communicate and share with others their often highly personal and sometimes hard to formalise knowledge, may then facilitate expansive learning and create possibilities for new forms of learning to emerge.

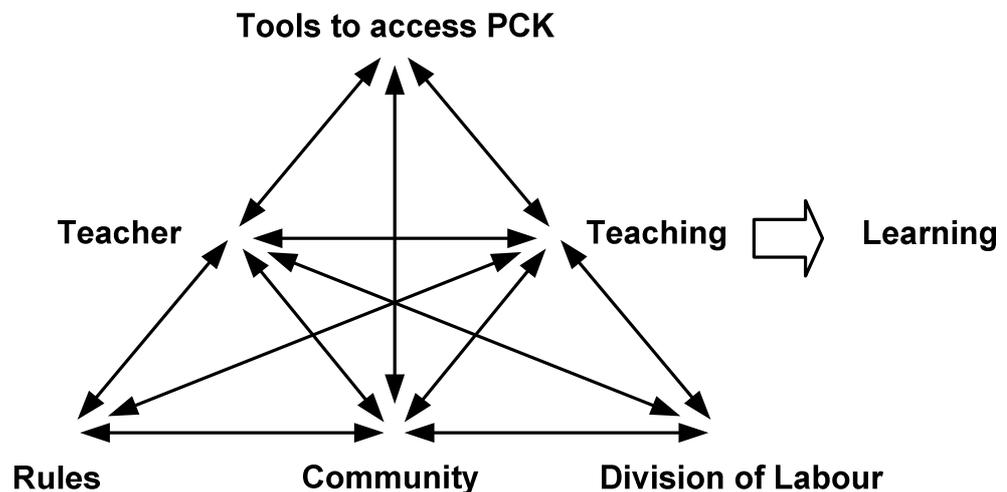
It is suggested tools to promote the articulation of craft knowledge, in the context of Sure Start Teachers, could be image capturing technology. Such tools, as reported in the literature review (pages 33 and 60), provide the means for practitioners (providers) as well as parents and children (users) to engage in reflective dialogue. The technology (video and digital cameras) becomes a tool through the users activity. In

situations where conditions for reflective dialogue flourish, the articulation of professional craft knowledge becomes possible.

Summary of the theoretical framework

By incorporating aspects of the above theories, a framework for understanding the role of teachers in SSLPs is proposed. Communities of practice provide a one-way system for members, with novices on the periphery and experienced masters of a given practice at the centre. What is missing from this theory is movement outwards or in unexpected directions: questioning of authority, criticism, innovation and initiation of change, alongside instability and inner contradictions of practice. Activity Theory and expansive learning provide the framework to incorporate the elements described above. Professional craft knowledge (PCK) brings to the fore the issue of tacit versus explicit modes of knowledge representation. PCK by its nature is tacit, yet it is the ability to externalise, to justify concepts and articulate effective practice that enables expansive learning to be developed.

Figure 3.6 Activity system of a teacher



Communities of practice are primarily built around the tacit knowledge practitioners hold, transformation is brought about through joint work, sharing of knowledge occurs through socialisation (sympathised knowledge). Activity Theory, on the other hand, necessitates explicit knowledge; transformation is brought about through learning by expansion. Innovative learning arises from resolution of conflict when activity systems, with a common object come together. Historicity and culture is inherent within teachers Professional Craft Knowledge and it is the externalisation of this knowledge, this thesis suggests, that will enable teachers to engage in new multi-agency learning. The elements of the activity theory triad are illustrated in Figure 3.6.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

This chapter begins by setting out the initial research questions. It is from these questions that the study took form; with a design constructed to take into account both the theoretical framework and also practices surrounding ethnographic research. These conditions set the basis for the subsequent pilot study that was then refined to form the final mechanism for data collection. The last section in the chapter reflects on the limitations and possible drawbacks of the research methodology employed. The study is qualitative and ethnographic in nature. Large-scale longitudinal studies such as EPPE have been undertaken (see literature review), but within early years research, calls have been made for in-depth small-scale ethnographic research (Whitmarsh 2005).

4.1 Research questions

The principle question for this research was:

What is the role of teachers in Sure Start Local Programmes?

Within this leading question the following supplementary questions were investigated:

- How, and in what ways, are the roles of teachers in Sure Start teams constructed?
- What are the causes of change in teachers' roles?
- What are the perceived qualities teachers bring to SSLPs?
- What specific activities are teachers involved in?
- How do teachers fit within multi-agency teams?
- How is it perceived that teachers facilitate innovative work?

Relationship of methodology to the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework (see previous chapter) within which this research is based, informed research methods. As Cooper and McIntyre (1996: 30) stress: 'of central importance in research of any kind is the need to achieve an appropriate fit between the research objectives and the research method'.

The theoretical background for this study steered research techniques towards the collection of personal and sensitive data; the perceptions of SS members on the

inclusion of a teacher on the team and the ability of practitioners from different cultural and ideological backgrounds to work together. Methods of data collection necessitated face-to-face contact with individuals working in SSLPs in the context of their own work space. These included opportunities for discussion based on shared experiences between teacher and researcher, but were also designed to allow tensions to be voiced within the confines of the confidential interview.

Methodology was selected to open a window on the situated perspective of teachers working within the Sure Start context. Gathering qualitative data on daily observed activities of teachers and accessing their thinking behind their engagement with families was informed by the concept of Professional Craft Knowledge. This dimension, the investigation of craft skills, was built into the research design through the inclusion of the semi-structured two-part interview with Sure Start teachers. The first part of the interview provided the context for the second interview, which was planned to be more collaborative and fluid in nature. This structure was intended to permit exploration of the reasons behind actions and decisions taken by teachers during activity with groups of families.

Multiple methods of data collection were employed to gather evidence on the activity of the teacher in the Sure Start community of practice. These included individual interviews with members of the team from different agencies, work shadowing to observe interactions within the learning community, and scrutiny of documentary evidence.

.Teasing out contradictions and tensions within SSLPs, indicative of activity systems colliding, necessitates access to a wider group of Sure Start members than teachers alone. Included in the study were group members who interact with teachers to varying degrees as part of their daily work. Research methods focussed on listening, talking to practitioners and observing interactions to gather empirical evidence, rather than placing demands on written responses from participants. In general it was anticipated that the intertwined and complex theoretical demands of the study would benefit from a degree of flexibility in data collection to optimise unplanned, but rich streams of data.

In summary the methodology employed enabled investigation of the interrelated aspects of:

- Team members' perceptions of teacher legitimacy in Sure Start teams
- The experience of practitioners from a range of agencies working alongside teachers and vice versa
- How teachers make decisions about their practice in new situations
- The articulation of tensions arising at an individual level, from the perspective of both manager and front-line worker
- The impact of new ways of working on teachers' professional identity and personal feelings
- New forms of practice involving teachers in a community context

Data analysis was conducted through progressive refocusing of emergent findings within a framework of:

- Wenger's constructs of participation, reification and identity transformation
- Professional Craft Knowledge guiding the analysis of teacher actions in facilitating group learning
- Engestrom's Activity Theory in relation to boundary crossing and expansive learning

which together was guided by the overall focus generated by the research questions.

Consideration of researcher identity and bias

It was recognised from the onset that research is a social process and that no researcher can be totally neutral. As the quality of data would hinge on the relationship developed between the respondent and the researcher, it was important to be transparent and honest and endeavour to engender trust and confidence. Programmes participating in this study were told that the researcher was a teacher working within a SSLP in the Midlands. A clear statement of the need to separate research concerned with the study and networking, was given to all participants at the start of the visits. This was intended to avoid difficult situations and misunderstandings on the purpose of the research. Opportunities to share experiences, if the participants wished, were arranged after completion of fieldwork. Using language common to Sure Start rather than educationalists was intended. This was hoped to put the interviewees on an equal

footing whichever agency they represented. Measor and Woods (1991) stress that not all relationships are equal; it was important to take into account the researcher's teacher status, whilst interviewing participants. It was acknowledged responses from all team members might have been influenced by their knowledge of researcher professional identity, resulting in bias.

This study sought to foster an open approach and minimise participants feeling threatened, or feeling there was a hidden agenda. The style of interviewing was designed to help participants feel comfortable and at ease. It was hoped teachers would be able to explain their practice in the same way as they would with any other professional. Strategies employed included:

- 1 Not stopping the flow of dialogue by using body language to indicate understanding or agreement.
- 2 Encouraging participants to reflect on their practice.
- 3 Refocusing the direction of the interviewee. If the respondent said anything along the lines, 'well you know how it is...' then a reply along the lines with – well, tell me how *you* feel, might follow
- 4 Not making any judgemental statements.
- 5 Valuing and respecting the interviewees' responses.

Overcoming possible ethical issues

An ethical code was developed to guide this study (Appendix A). Issues surrounding anonymity were considered and some changes in detail were implemented so that participants could not be identified in the written report. Traceability of the male teacher in the study was thought to be quite likely, so in some sections gender has been changed. SSLPs were not named, and although they were reported by region, this was felt to be acceptable as each region had many programmes operating. Coded labelling (A – F) of programme data was undertaken to avoid identification of programmes during transcription of audiotapes and in the written report. Fictitious names were used in the vignettes.

Informed consent was sought from all staff participating in the research and the voluntary nature of participation stressed. There was one case of a teacher not wishing to fully participate (she declined interview) and her wishes were respected. The purpose

of the research was shared with all participants. All programme managers and teachers were sent a written explanation of the research objectives prior to the start of fieldwork (see Appendix B). Careful consideration was given to reporting sensitive issues, in line with advice offered by Walford:

In all research, researchers are not free to report everything that they observe, but must take care not to do harm to those who have given them access.

(Walford 1991: 10).

Sensitivity to interview content, as well as eliciting complete trust by the interviewee in not divulging any information that could adversely affect work place relationships, was essential. In fact one interviewee, despite being in a room with a closed door, lowered her voice so much, being aware of the potential impact of her responses, that the recording became inaudible and much of the transcript was lost.

4.2 Research design

Sample size

A small sample size, six programmes, was selected for this ethnographic study. It was expected rich and complex data would flow from in-depth research and a larger sample size carried the risk of the data becoming unwieldy. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the programme teacher/s, programme manager and were planned to include two other team members. In the event two programmes were unable to supply a second team member to be interviewed, whilst in a different two programmes three team members were interviewed. This provided data from 25 interviews in total. Each interview lasted between 30 – 45 minutes (see Figure 4.1).

Ensuring validity

Triangulation of findings was undertaken within the framework of; what teachers said; what was observed and what the documents said. Triangulation by method of data collection (see Table 4.3) enabled verification of details in relation to teacher's conditions of service, job descriptions and weekly activities. The independent measures did not reveal any significant contradictions between teachers' verbal responses on these matters and documentary evidence.

Timescale for fieldwork

Fieldwork began in May 2004 and was completed three months later. The data collection period was kept to a minimum so that the social climate was comparable, thereby minimising the effects of national changes in social policy. This timetable dovetailed with new developments surrounding the setting up of Children's Centres.

Two consecutive days were spent at each programme to gain an overview of the role of the teacher, so that connections could be made between different aspects of teachers work. Cohen notes the importance of obtaining a holistic view:

by being immersed in a particular situation over time not only will the salient features of the situation emerge and present themselves but a more holistic view will be gathered of the interrelationships of factors

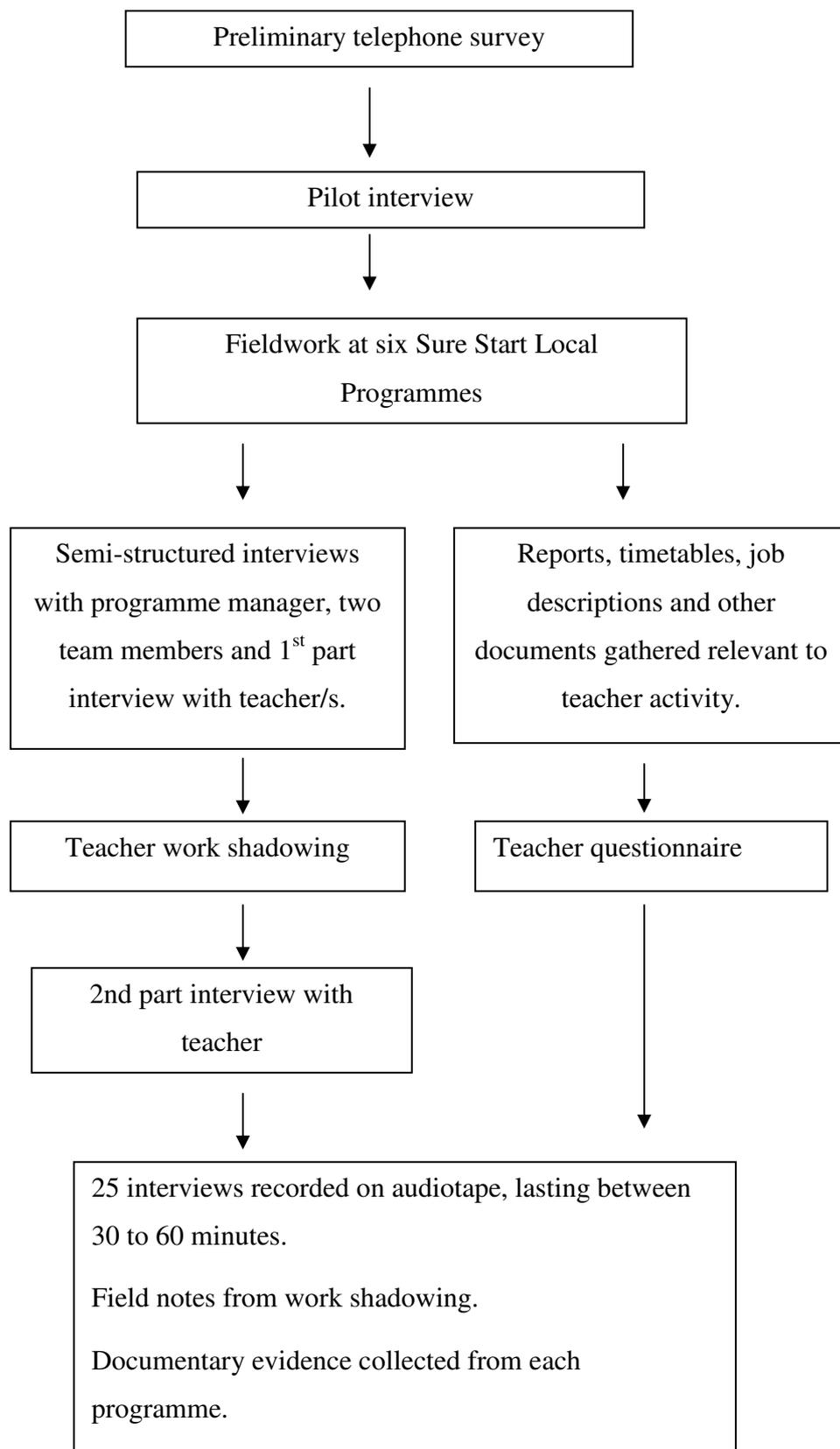
(Cohen et al 2000: 311)

In two programmes it was not possible to organise consecutive days and fieldwork was conducted on separate days. This may have influenced the quality of data collection.

In order to collect data to contribute to the understanding of the role of teachers within SSLPs, the research design illustrated in Figure 4.1 was implemented.

Although the research plan was determined prior to fieldwork, flexibility was assumed to allow unexpected pathways to be followed and permit new lines of direction to be taken that had not been anticipated in the initial stages of research planning. As Measor and Woods, reported from their work in the Changing Schools project: 'ethnographic projects are by intention or definition open ended: problems are not specified in advance of fieldwork' (Measor and Woods quoted in Walford 1991: 60). This position fits with grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and the notion that as the study develops and material is revealed, the theory becomes more grounded; this model is applicable to this current study.

Figure 4.1 Flow chart summarising research design



Preliminary telephone survey

Identifying SSLPs with teachers, in a teaching role, was achieved through a telephone survey. 260 SSLPs were telephoned over a six-week period in August and September of 2003. Each call started with the name of the researcher and the purpose of the call. A standard closed question was asked, 'Do you have any teachers on your team?' The telephone survey was intended to provide a rapid, but accurate picture of the position across the programmes, so that a sample could be selected later for more detailed follow-up. A higher response rate was required than that usually obtained from written questionnaires (Cohen, L et al. 2000) and though an e-mail approach was considered it was thought that the more personal touch of a telephone call would produce more reliable results. If the person who answered the telephone could not help or pass the researcher on to a better informed colleague, a follow-up e-mail was sent to that programme.

The telephone survey achieved a 96% response rate and revealed thirty-one SSLPs from Rounds One to Four employed teachers, representing 12 % of programmes (Hastings 2004). Criteria for selecting a sample of programmes to participate in the main study were twofold; the programme location and the job title of the teacher. Programmes from different areas of the country were chosen rather than those clustered in one region. It was felt this would reveal greater interest and diversity of roles. Teachers' job titles signalled a specialist teacher role or a universal role. The job title, together with brief descriptions of teachers' jobs gained from telephone responses and summaries of SSLP activities on the Sure Start web site, helped to determine which programmes to approach for participation in the fieldwork. It was hoped the teachers selected would cover a diverse and broad range of activity. The study did not intend teachers selected to be representational, but rather to illuminate roles being undertaken by some teachers in SSLPs. It is a snapshot of the role of teachers at a fixed point in time in the constantly changing world of Sure Start.

The final programmes selected for participation in the study, represented teachers from a spread of regions across the country, drawn from the first three rounds of programme implementation (programme start dates ranging from September 1999 in the earliest programmes to March 2001 in the later ones). This data is reported in Table 4. 1.

Table 4.1 Selected SSLPs invited to participate in fieldwork

Region	Programme wave	Job title of SSLP teacher
South West	Round 1 Trailblazer	Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Teacher
Yorkshire and Humberside	Round 1 Trailblazer	Community Teacher
South East	Round 1 Trailblazer	Early Years Teacher
East Midlands	Round 1 Trailblazer	Teacher
South East	Round 1 Trailblazer	Pre-school Advisory Teacher
East Midlands	Round 2	Early Years Teacher
West Midlands	Round 2	Early Years Co-ordinator
London	Round 3	English as an Additional Language (EAL) Teacher
North West	Round 3	Early Years Support Teacher

From an initial list of nine, six programmes were eventually available to participate in the study. Earlier programmes, particularly the trailblazers, represent more established teams. It was possible that some of these programmes had re-adjusted their staffing, to include or exclude teachers, in the light of local evaluations and financial reviews.

Pilot study

The research instrument, a semi-structured interview, was refined after a pilot run. As Powney and Watts (1987) suggest, a pilot interview enables the researcher to practise crucial details including the organisation, logistics and the social interaction skills needed for successful interviewing. The pilot involved a SSLP teacher colleague in the researcher's home town. Advantages included:

- 1 Easy access, therefore efficient use of time and no additional expenses incurred.
- 2 Positive relationships already established with teachers in a SSLP, enabled work colleagues to feel they were contributing to the study.
- 3 The pilot would not be published, so absolute confidentiality was secured and openness ensured.
- 4 A frank and honest discussion with colleagues on interview design and technique, without the sensitivities that could stem from discussions with unfamiliar participants, was extremely helpful.

Main issues emerging from the pilot interview

The existing relationship between the researcher and respondent clearly affected the nature of the interview. Knowing each other well as colleagues meant assumptions were made as to the meaning of certain comments and contexts and examples were not fully elaborated. Useful information escaped recording as interesting and pertinent stories were told before the interview started. When the tape recorder was active the interviewee was much more guarded in her comments despite assurances of complete confidentiality. Researcher anxiety concerning the reliability of technology affected body language, as frequent glances to check the recorder was running correctly were noticed.

During the interview too much structure was applied, rather than an exploration of the issues arising from the respondents themselves. Also, the balance of leading questions needed adjustment, as did the need to refine probing techniques. Strategies for probing the subject and asking supplementary questions were given more consideration. Strategies to encourage elaboration included:

- repeating the last three or four words of the respondent's sentence back to them
- not interrupting the respondent
- using positive body language to encourage continuation of the respondent's response
- theming and re-examining the wording of questions
- asking for specific examples when generalisations were made
- emphasising the positive aspects of responses

- practising the smooth and discrete operation of the tape recorder

The need for a trained audio typist to transcribe the tapes was quickly realised.

Negotiating access to SSLP teachers

The co-operation of SSLP managers within this research was pivotal to its success. Accessing managers by telephone was difficult and called for perseverance. Initial contact was made at the end of the financial year, which meant some managers were unusually busy. It was a time too, when restructuring of services were placing additional demands on programme managers. Some managers were protective of their teacher's time; one manager appeared weary of being approached by yet another researcher and quoted a huge number of research studies already undertaken at their programme. This extent of research overload was not anticipated. The majority of managers were interested, supportive and positive about the nature of the research and keen to participate. One manager spoke about her programme '*blazing ahead*' and there seemed to be an unspoken agenda to seek recognition of what this manager judged as innovative work.

The pathway taken to gain access to teachers was as follows:

1. Telephone conversation with programme manager to gain co-operation and request contact with teacher. Outline of the purpose and processes involved in the research, explaining who I am, why I am doing the research and what it will entail.
2. Telephone conversation with the teacher and as before outline of the purpose and process of research study, detailing who I am, why I am doing the research and what it will involve.
3. Information sheet sent to programme manager and teacher, including a description of the study; what it means for the participant: how long participant interviews will last and a statement on confidentiality. Also researcher contact details were supplied for participants wishing to ask further questions or seek clarification (see Appendix B).
4. Programme contacted by telephone or e-mail and time arranged for visit. Specific days of the week were negotiated several weeks in advance of the fieldwork to be inclusive of teachers on part-time contracts.

4.3 Methods of data collection

The fieldwork comprised four strands of data collection. The first was semi-structured, collaborative two-part interviews with teachers employed on the programme, and single interviews with the programme manager and other SSLP members; the second was gathering data from work shadowing; the third was gathering data from a teacher questionnaire and the fourth strand was collecting documentary evidence of teacher activity within SSLPs.

Semi-structured interviews

Whilst interviews with the SSLP manager and programme teacher were determined prior to fieldwork, interviews with team members were more flexible. Selecting SSLP practitioners to participate in interviews was organised by the programmes themselves. The only criterion for inclusion was that the practitioner was an employee rather than a volunteer. Professionals that were regarded as working closely with the teachers were in the main selected (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Team members participating in interviews

Programme	Job title of team member
A	Programme Manager Health Visitor Community Worker ECEC Practitioner
B	Programme Manager Community Worker
C	Programme Manager ECEC Practitioner
D	Programme Manager Speech and Language Therapist Health Visitor
E	Programme Manager Speech and Language Therapist Adult Educator

F	Programme Manager Community Worker Adult Educator ECEC Practitioner
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General categories, Early Childhood Education Care (ECEC) practitioners and Community Workers have been used to disguise job titles that could be attributed to specific programmes.

Interviews were based on respect and as Cooper and McIntyre (1996) advise, questions were avoided that might appear to threaten or undermine practitioners competence. The interviews took place within a framework of:

- Thanking the interviewee for their participation.
- Ensuring confidentiality.
- Reassuring respondents that within the report traceability would not be possible.
- Agreeing on recording methods.
- Beginning with an open-ended question.
- Using active listening techniques.
- Valuing and respecting participant's responses.

Questions were grouped according to themes to provide a loose mental guide for the interviewer (see Appendix C). They were not read or referred to directly during the interview, but acted as a prompt for the interviewer prior to contact. Themes related to the research questions. As Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest, such schedules should be regarded as open-ended so that questions can be re-ordered, digressions taken or expansions made.

For teachers, the second-part of the interview took place following a period of work shadowing and was constructed to enable the teacher to reflect on actions and for the interviewer to gain access to aspects of teachers thinking. This later interview was planned to be more fluid in nature, pursuing lines of thought as they emerged. Interviewer prompts stemming from the observation of practice, were offered to guide

the interviewee to reflect on aspects of their practice (a section of transcript is inserted in chapter 5, part 5.3.5). Therefore the two-part interview enabled reflection on a shared experience between the interviewer and interviewee, and meant responses were grounded in real situations and were meaningful to both parties.

All participants in this study gave consent for interviews to be recorded on audiotape. As soon as possible after the interviews, additional notes were made to document points that may have been lost during the recording. A transcript of each tape was made in full. A decision was taken not to send transcripts to participants for verification and/or alteration unless requested. One teacher requested a copy of an interview transcript but did not ask for changes to be made.

Work shadowing

The second strand of data collection involved observation of the teacher during the course of a days work. This was built into the methodology to give a snapshot of teacher activity during a set period of time. It was not intended to be representational of work carried out by the teacher, but instead illuminate aspects of teacher activity within SSLPs and provide a context for data analysis.

Building a rapport with the teacher was prioritised, and although teacher behaviour was expected to be different whilst being shadowed, it was not expected to significantly affect the nature of the findings. Comments made by Mercer were taken into account:

Only the most naive of researchers would not expect their visible presence as an observer to affect the behaviour of those being observed.

(as quoted in Walford 1991: 48)

The context for teacher activity during work shadowing, e.g. the immediate environment, group dynamics or time factors, were noted, as well as the nature of interactions. Researcher interest was directed to the detail of actions and relations both between adults and adults and children. Significant episodes or moments of teacher action were recorded to act as a prompt for dialogue in the second-part interview with the teacher participant.

To minimise the effect of an unfamiliar adult in small group activities, a peripheral presence, rather than total unresponsiveness was adopted. Children and adults who approached the researcher were responded to in a friendly and interested

way. Explicit terms of reference belonging to group sessions were honoured through appropriate low profile responses. Any recording was kept as unobtrusive as possible and conducted in a way that minimised disruption to the normal flow of activities.

Field notes

Field notes were kept to strengthen evidence and contribute to rich data collection. The presence of a researcher at the Sure Start programme over a period of two days meant that conversations and observations were frequently spontaneous and often in situations outside the workplace, for example, walking from one site to another or being a passenger in a teachers' car, when the use of an audiotape recorder was not feasible. Relevant and valuable information was captured at such times when sometimes people seemed more relaxed and motivated to express their real feelings. With the permission of participants, this information was jotted down on a notepad in situ to avoid inaccuracies of memory later when trying to recall conversations. These unplanned opportunities to extend the semi-structured interviews were welcomed and the researcher encouraged stories to unfold. More natural environments may be perceived by some people as less threatening and allow the respondent to feel more in control. Field notes were written up, correcting errors and extending or revising sections lacking clarity immediately after the visits.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was used to gather factual data on teachers participating in the study (Appendix D). This was designed to be simple and straightforward and completed by teachers without the presence of the researcher. The response mode was a mixture of circling appropriate categories and closed questions. No names were requested, but the researcher added a programme code, so they were not anonymous. However, the risk of identifying the teachers in the written report was considered to be unlikely as none of the programmes were identified beyond the region of the country in which they were based and the year that they had come into operation. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain basic demographic details of the teachers and their conditions of employment. A questionnaire was felt to be a more appropriate method than face-to-face questioning to obtain this information. Requesting precise ages and actual salary levels were excluded, instead age bands and salary scales were sought. Several teachers, did though, disclose their salary points voluntarily. A 100% response rate was

sought and achieved. The collated results of the teacher questionnaire are reported in Appendix E and discussed in Chapter 5, parts 5.1 and 5.2.

Documentary evidence

The need to access relevant documents was included in the initial letter sent to teachers and programme managers explaining the purpose of the research (Appendix B).

Documents were gathered during fieldwork and for those teachers unable to locate key documents, a follow up phone contact was made. All teachers supplied their job descriptions, weekly timetables and programme documents with references to areas of work they had been involved in (Table 4.3). Discussion and analysis of findings relating to teacher job descriptions are reported in Chapter 5 and in particular in part 5.3.2.

Weekly diary sheets, or their equivalent, indicating the type of activities a teacher is involved with over the course of a week, were accessed. This provided additional data to judge how similar or unusual the observed day was in the context of a longer period. Some teachers supplied dairy sheets extending to a six-week period. Local Sure Start evaluation reports commissioned through private consultancies, universities, or research workers employed on the team, were scrutinised to search for references to teacher activity on SSLPs. Some teachers forwarded reports they had written for partnership boards or annual reports of their work for programme managers. These revealed priorities and development work that had been undertaken over longer periods of time and gave further insight into the roles some teachers undertook. Documentary evidence provided opportunities to triangulate findings.

Table 4.3 Documentary evidence

Programme	Type of document
A	Job description Diary sheet Multi-agency staff flow chart Early Years SEN Business Plan Information sheet on communication project SSLP Performance Reports

B	<p>Job description</p> <p>Published paper by Programme Manager (see Lit. Review)</p> <p>Local area EYDCP magazine</p> <p>SSLP Evaluation Report (A space for new stories? – see Lit. Review)</p>
C	<p>Job description</p> <p>Service Level Agreement</p> <p>SSLP Evaluation Report (Community Childcare, play and learning opportunities in Sure Start: a first year report)</p> <p>SSLP Evaluation Report (Developing a story sack project within a Sure Start initiative – see Lit. Review)</p> <p>SSLP Evaluation Report (Using story sacks to talk to parents about young children’s literacy learning-see Lit Review)</p> <p>SSLP Evaluation Report (The role of the Community Teacher-see Lit Review)</p> <p>SSLP services information sheet</p> <p>Mapping sheet summarising SSLP teacher training role</p>
D	<p>Job description and person specification</p> <p>Weekly diary sheets</p> <p>SSLP Education Team Report (on Improving Children’s Ability to Learn)</p> <p>SSLP Evaluation Report (Lessons Learnt)</p> <p>SSLP Evaluation Report (New Approaches to Service Delivery)</p> <p>Research paper: Examining the impact of using teachers as pedagogical advisers (see Lit. Review)</p> <p>Research paper: The use of video Feedback in Parent and Child Groups (see Lit. Review)</p>
E	<p>Job description</p> <p>SSLP milestones for Improving Children’s Ability to Learn</p> <p>School Project Progress Review</p> <p>SSLP activity and information Pack</p>
F	<p>Job description</p> <p>LEA/SSLP Performance Management Review Statement</p> <p>SSLP newsletters</p> <p>Information sheets on transition to school project</p>

4.4 Data processing

In accord with accepted norms of qualitative data analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994; Cohen et al 2000), interview transcripts and field notes were analysed through:

- Initial close reading and reflection of data
- Noting and identifying themes
- Categorising segments of text through coding
- Making marginal notes
- Data linking – connecting relevant data segments together, generating clusters of information.
- Memoing - elaborating ideas and reasons behind emerging patterns and forming a small set of generalisations
- Connecting generalisations with the theoretical framework for this study

In addition, the following decision rules were taken in relation to data management:

- Themes relevant to this study that had emerged from a preliminary telephone survey were revisited to test their validity
- To note clearly when data was missing
- Source tag all verbatim quotations on transfer to draft findings
- Paginate field notes and transcriptions so that data could be easily located
- Begin with codes originating from research questions (see 4.1) but adding new ones as they emerge

4.5 Reporting style

Extended text is the dominant form of data display for this study. Embedded within the text is the inclusion of a substantial number of verbatim quotations. These quotations elaborate specific theoretical points and illuminate particular themes. They add a real life quality to the report and convey the style of language and subtle nuances respondents used that can be lost in secondary reporting. Inserting direct quotations is intended to confer additional validity to the findings. Tables summarising data and

figures illustrating links to theoretical elements are incorporated in the thesis to provide reference points for the reader as well as reinforcing clarity.

Vignettes

Vignettes have been included in the appendices of this study. Miles and Huberman (1994: 81) define a vignette as a ‘focussed description of a series of events taken to be representative, typical or emblematic of a case’. Employing a narrative style and set within a specific period of time, it can be thought of as a ‘vivid portrayal of the conduct of an event of everyday life, in which the sights and sounds of what was being said and done are described in the natural occurrence in real time’ (Erickson 1986, as quoted in Miles and Huberman 1994: 81). Traditionally used in educational research as a method of accessing teachers’ perceptions, the use of fictitious scenarios has proved a useful research technique (Poulou 2001). In this study vignettes have been used to present pockets of data illustrating real events and responses, gathered from observation, interview and incidental remarks captured during the fieldwork. Fictitious actions have not been included; instead the vignettes have been grounded in genuine events, drawn from a range of sources over a two-day period. This type of vignette has been used by Wenger in his work on Communities of Practice (1998) to ‘*give some life*’ to theoretical discussions. The vignettes in this study are based in reality and are included to represent an episode in the teacher’s day. They are intended to reflect interwoven aspects of the role and life of the teachers in SSLPs. Vignettes have been generated to represent diverse aspects of teachers’ roles and will be referenced to illustrate theoretical discussion points. They will also provide the reader with a platform to shape their own responses, in a way similar to that described by Poulou (2001) eliciting teacher’s perceptions from fictitious vignettes.

Five vignettes have been incorporated, each depicting an episode during part of the teacher’s day. Each vignette draws on the experiences of a teacher from a different SSLP and is focussed around an activity that represents a substantial part of their work. This activity has already been largely self-selected in that the teachers themselves decided on the days that the researcher should visit. As already noted, teachers, with the exception of the teacher based in a local school, were keen to show case their own particular projects and the researcher was invited to programmes coinciding with times when these projects were running. Difficulties were experienced work shadowing the

teacher in the school-based project. A decision has been taken not to include a vignette from this project due to paucity of data.

4.6 Limitations and possible drawbacks of research methodology

National context

Although SSLPs themselves are very new (with programmes operational from 1999-2000), the fieldwork took place at a time when the creation of Children's Centres had just been announced (2003). This initiative raised the profile of teachers by making their inclusion statutory to Children's Centre designation. Some programme managers were already starting to reflect on changes and the role their teachers could have within new structures and this may have influenced their responses during fieldwork.

Issues surrounding a teacher ethnographer

Some underlying tensions surfaced between perceived programme needs and the core purpose of the study. After completion of fieldwork, one SSLP member, a research worker, requested access to the content of participant interviews. Although the request was framed in terms of anonymity, it was considered unethical to agree to this request. One programme manager overtly expressed the opinion that her programme was a model of teacher activity that should be adopted nationally. An element of competitiveness was sensed and it was felt she expected the study to report favourably on her programme, despite the researcher reiterating the guarantee that all participants and programmes would be unidentifiable. Another programme manager disclosed an agenda hoping the study would strengthen programme moves to restructure the teacher post through networking with the researcher. It may, or may not, have been coincidental that the researcher and the teacher participant worked in the same region of the country. It is understandable that many teachers, lacking opportunities to network with other teachers throughout the country, were eager to share experiences and discuss ideas. It was at times difficult to remind participants of the need to focus responses on their own programme and that opportunities for general conversations would be possible at the end of fieldwork. This situation highlighted the difficulties of a teacher ethnographer.

Characterisations of the teachers in the study (see part 5.2.2) were assembled from information gathered by the researcher. They were not produced collaboratively

between researcher and participant, so issues of bias may have arisen on the part of the researcher.

The use of vignettes

It is recognised that vignettes are reduced accounts, as it is impossible to represent all facets of an original event. It is acknowledged too that it is an abstraction constructed by the researcher, and therefore subject to the researchers perspective; as Miles and Huberman note, the vignette is a 'potentially dangerous tool that can be used to mislead as well as inform' (1994: 83). In this study vignettes were not viewed in isolation, but they represented an additional tool to illuminate the complex and holistic nature of the teacher within the Sure Start community. Too much emphasis or significance could have been attributed to particular events, so that incidents were built up out of proportion, thereby skewing their validity. It is also acknowledged that there is a danger of vignettes reading rather like success stories. This was not the intention, although it is accepted that this tendency exists.

Access to the community of practice

Two SSLP team members were invited to participate in interviews with the researcher. A limitation of this method of selection may be that peripheral members were under represented, either because they were reluctant to be involved or were judged to be too distant from the key research focus (the teacher). No midwives were invited for interview, or social workers. In fact only one programme employed a social worker. Therefore the views from practitioners in these disciplines are absent from this study.

Data collection

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather basic data on individual teachers; in retrospect this could have carried more depth and detail, requesting actual ages and current salaries of the teachers. The questionnaire could have been extended to probe for example, views on teachers' career ambitions without impinging on its accessibility or making it too arduous.

The relatively short period of time spent in each programme was a limiting factor in establishing relationships necessary to collect in-depth qualitative data. This was truer of the interviews with the programme managers and team members, than with the teachers, as they were held without any prior social contact. This may have affected how forthcoming or honest they were, although many respondents disclosed views that

required additional reassurances on issues of confidentiality. The rapport and relationship established with teachers may have been positively influenced by the presence a teacher ethnographer, when unspoken empathy may have surfaced. Often complex team dynamics and programme activity took time to understand and digest. A follow-up visit, for example 4-6 weeks after the principle fieldwork, to clarify points or pursue lines of enquiry after preliminary scrutiny of the data may have been beneficial. The study represented a snapshot in time; no opportunities were available to revisit participants at different points in the life of the programme. It is acknowledged that the sample size was small and time-specific and therefore makes no claims to generalise the findings beyond the context of this study.

Chapter 5 Findings and Discussion

5.1 Structure and rationale for reporting

Findings and discussion will be reported together rather than sequentially. Discussion will flow from reported findings as they occur, providing immediacy, and avoiding distraction by physical distancing to enable threads of thinking to be sustained. It is hoped this approach will provide continuity and offer cohesion and clarity to the reader. Each section is introduced, developed and then concluded with reference to key theoretical links.

The structure of this chapter reflects the research questions posed at the beginning of the study. The first section (5.2) begins with a short description of those teachers participating in the research, highlighting characteristics pertinent to their roles. It places teachers within the context of the SSLPs in which they work, i.e. their community of practice, thereby providing points of reference for the reader, as detailed findings emerge from subsequent sections in the chapter.

The next reported section (5.3) focuses on the early days of teachers' inclusion in SSLPs. It examines the initial set up, getting started in a new post and the influences that affect teachers' roles. Employing teachers in SSLPs is new and uncharted. No frameworks exist to guide or support their entry to such roles. Role determination at this formative stage and the influence of people from different backgrounds is investigated, followed by structures governing teacher employment. Once in post, internal and external factors affecting job construction are explored. Teacher disposition and teacher knowledge base constitute a significant influence and these are reported within a discrete section of writing. Following on from this section, a further dimension, teachers Professional Craft Knowledge (PCK) is analysed. PCK is central to the theoretical framework of this thesis and forms a major part of the analysis. It is one dimension that teachers bring with them to the Sure Start community, providing a structure to aid understanding of teacher's everyday activity with young children and their families. The distinctive features of teachers' everyday activities are reported in Part 4 within three identified role descriptors; knowledge exchange; intergenerational learning and leadership. These aspects confirm the interconnectedness of teacher's Professional Craft Knowledge and the influence of social relations within the Sure Start community and builds on the conceptual framework developed in the previous section.

The next major theme reported and discussed, Part 5, responds to the research question on how teachers 'fit' within multi-agency teams. This is the longest part of the chapter. It explores multi-agency dimensions and their impact on the evolving roles of teachers. It examines perceptions of teachers' participation within the Sure Start community and factors restricting or facilitating their levels of participation and reports on teachers crossing into the workspace of other agencies, particularly health. Turbulence of activity systems coming together is analysed alongside issues of conflict resolution. The changed thinking of teachers emerges as a result of participation within the Sure Start community. Identity transformation is reported and discussed followed by the last component in the cycle of change; new learning.

5. 2 Teachers who participated in the study

5.2.1 Characteristics of the teachers as a group

All seven teachers participating in this study had at one time been Foundation Stage teachers and whilst most had moved directly from classroom-based teaching, others came from an advisory or support services background (Appendix E). There was a fairly equal mix of graduate to non-graduate teachers. Three teachers were part-time (0.5 full time equivalent) and of these, two were employed in other work within early years educational settings. Two of the programmes in the study employed two teachers, whilst the others employed a single teacher.

Teachers appointed to work in SSLPs, in this study, were in the main middle aged (41 – 60), with substantial experience of teaching young children (Appendix E). This age band was reported in the EPPE study of workforce dimensions to be characteristic of managers of early years settings rather than front line practitioners (Taggart et al 2000).

Teachers participating in the research were mainly, but not exclusively, women (Appendix E). This is as would be expected and fits the national picture of gender imbalance amongst teachers working in the early years sector (Johnson and Hallgarten 2002; Taggart et al. 2000). The male teacher represented in this research spoke positively about the responses he received; 'most people actually say it's great to have a man in early years and really pleased to see you and a good role model for children' The Sure Start unit expects SSLPs to be proactive in developing services that include fathers (Sure Start 2004). Often this role falls to male workers, whatever their own

work focus within a programme. This was not the case for the male teacher in this study.

None of the teachers were from a black minority ethnic background, again reflecting the national picture (Johnson and Hallgarten 2002). No data was collected on the socio-economic or socio-cultural background of teachers or their personal life histories. In this study none of the teachers lived in the defined geographical programme area; nor did they live within walking distance. All the teachers used cars to travel to work. These teachers can be regarded as outsiders as they are not part of the culture or history of the area in which they work. This is unsurprising as few teachers who live within deprived communities are recruited (Johnson and Hallgarten 2002).

5.2.2 Characteristics of individual teachers and their programmes

In this section, individual teacher characteristics are described within the context of the programmes in which they work. This enables some of the distinctive features of their posts to be drawn together. Labels have been attached to each teacher role. These labels are not intended to convey rigid stereotypes, but rather to provide broad categories to distinguish, and refer to, the diverse role types represented in the study.

Programme A - Community Teacher Role

The teacher in this programme is employed as a specialist teacher to support children with SEN and their families; her job title is Early Years Teacher. As a founding member, she had been employed in the SSLP for over four years. Previous experience included work as a nursery teacher in both mainstream and special school settings. She was seconded from her current post as LEA early years support teacher to work on the Sure Start programme. Holding a permanent full time contract with, and line-managed by, the local authority, the teacher was critical of the lack of LEA support she received and said she felt isolated and under valued by them. She has a flexible work style and is confident crossing agency boundaries. Instrumental in creating new Sure Start posts, this teacher leads a mini multidisciplinary team within the programme. She presents as a strong professional (Atkinson et al. 2002). Being able to '*think outside the box*' is a quality the SSLP manager attributes to her. This teacher works in a range of settings including homes, the Sure Start Centre and linked sites. A central focus of her work is developing an outreach project based on a family learning model. Team members describe her as open, transparent and empathetic.

The SSLP lead agency is a voluntary organisation and the programme manager has a voluntary sector background (Appendix H). The programme is a trailblazer (first wave of implementation). The teacher is based in the central Sure Start building, sharing an office with other members of the multi-disciplinary team. The teacher's role is family driven and characterised and referred to in this study, as the community teacher role. A vignette focussing on one aspect of her role; pedagogic leader is included in Appendix N.

Programme B – Area SENCO Role

The teacher in this programme is the youngest in the study (aged between 20 – 30 years). Employed as a specialist teacher, her job title is Pre-School (SEN) Advisory Teacher for Sure Start. She is unique in the study by holding dual NNEB and QTS qualifications. Her last post was a reception class teacher in a mainstream school. Employed by the LEA, she holds a temporary part-time contract funded by Sure Start. Due to LEA restructuring uncertainties exist over line-management. The SSLP manager leads on overall management, whilst a health visitor acts as team co-ordinator. The bulk of this teacher's work is supporting the learning and teaching of Foundation Stage children within pre-school settings, predominantly within the private, voluntary and independent sectors. She manages the onsite Sure Start nursery as well as a voluntary run nursery. A key focus to her work is training childcare practitioners on inclusive (SEN) practice.

The SSLP lead agency is a voluntary organisation, whilst the manager is from a health background. The programme was set up as a trailblazer programme and has recently moved to a new purpose built centre. The teacher has dedicated workspace within a large multi-disciplinary office within the centre. This teacher suggests there is little to distinguish between her role and that of an LEA Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (DfES 2002). Her role is referred to as a patch based Area SENCO role and is primarily driven by the needs of pre-school settings. A vignette of her role focussing on aspects of training is included in Appendix K.

Programme C – Extended Nursery Teacher Role

This teacher is unusual in that she replaced a previous teacher on the SSLP and was the only teacher in the study that had been in post for less than 12 months. The first

teacher's work was, in the words of the current teacher '*finished and then re-negotiated*'. She has a permanent contract with the LEA and spends half her time in the SSLP and the other half supporting pre-school settings in the authority. Her initial job title of community teacher was replaced to reflect the perceived additional authority conferred by the title Advisory Teacher. The teacher has a background of mainstream teaching within the Foundation Stage. She receives dual line management from the LEA and SSLP manager. The majority of the teacher's work involves practitioners working in Sure Start funded nursery settings. The teacher says she is able to provide '*fresh ideas*'.

The programme lead agency is a voluntary organisation and the programme manager is from a health background. The programme represents a Round One project, building on an existing family centre. The teacher has shared office space within the main Sure Start Centre, which she uses infrequently, preferring to work from a nursery base. This teacher is characterised as having developed an extended nursery teacher role. Her work is driven by the needs of Sure Start supported nurseries. A vignette of this teacher's role in extending partnerships with parents/carers is included in Appendix O.

Programme D- Consultant Role

This SSLP is characterised by funding two Early Years Teacher posts. They are in daily contact, sharing an office. Some aspects of each teacher's work are distinct whilst others are carried out jointly. The work of both teachers is guided by a strong commitment to environmental issues.

Teacher 1

Being the original teacher employed to work in the SSLP, this teacher influenced the partnership board to extend his contract from part-time to full time and then to create a second teacher post. The teacher is male with a broad range of qualifications including forest school leadership, portage and autism specialism. His previous experience includes volunteering in mainstream schools, teaching reception classes, early years advisory work and lecturing in early years education.

This teacher is co-ordinator of the 'education team'. He latterly spent 12 months as project manager of a new nursery build. A central focus of his current work is a project involving reflective dialogue with parents using sequences of video film. He

supports practitioners within pre-school settings and together the two teachers have established a networking group of early years practitioners. He presents as a strong professional (Atkinson et al. 2002).

Teacher 2

This is a part-time post, stemming from pressure from the above teacher to increase teacher capacity within the SSLP. The teacher has substantial prior experience as a Foundation Stage teacher in a mainstream school. She is a qualified forest school leader. She has been particularly proactive in working with babies and their families and in promoting outdoor learning. She too is involved in the reflective dialogue project, networking early years practitioners and has a role in modelling practice in pre-school settings. She presents as a strong professional (Atkinson et al. 2002).

The programme lead agency is social services and the manager has a background in the voluntary sector. The two teachers share an office on the central site with members of the education team. The LEA employs both teachers on temporary contracts and an LEA officer line-manages them. Both teachers in this programme are characterised as having developed a consultant role. Their work is driven by the needs of pre-school settings and families in outreach and centre venues. A vignette of these teachers working within a reflective dialogue project is included in Appendix M.

Programme E –School Role

The SSLP funds two part-time teachers located in different mainstream schools within the Sure Start area.

Teacher 1

This teacher moved from a previous post working within an LEA central service (learning support). She holds a temporary, part-time contract and is line-managed by the head teacher of the school in which she is based. Her job title is Teacher. The focus of her work is to promote the language development of children aged 3 to 4 years old in the school setting. She is involved in a child centred language development project within the classroom and a community loan resource called story sacks. She supports the transition programme for children moving to the Foundation Stage. At the time of data collection, this teacher's post was in the process of being restructured and remodelled following the appointment of new programme manager.

Teacher 2

This teacher did not fully participate in the study, so limited data was gathered. Her role appeared to be that of an additional language support teacher within a mainstream school and was predominantly child centred. The teacher said she was leaving the Sure Start project after 12 months in post to return to mainstream teaching.

The programme lead agency is a voluntary organisation and the current manager has a background in health. Both teachers in this SSLP are referred to in the findings as belonging to the school role.

Programme F – Co-ordinator Role

The teacher on this programme is employed and funded by the local authority but line-managed by the SSLP manager. This makes the project unusual, as all other teacher posts are partnership services, funded by Sure Start. The teacher holds a full-time permanent contract reflecting locally agreed pay and conditions and giving her a holiday entitlement less than that of a schoolteacher. Her title is Sure Start Early Years Teacher. This teacher has a background of Foundation Stage teaching and management. A key feature of her work is co-ordinating a multi-agency transition to school programme based on a family learning model. She manages centre based childcare practitioners. She is strong professionally (Atkinson et al. 2002). There is a strong programme ethos, developed by the local health authority, guiding the teacher's work.

Viewed as a health dominated programme, the programme lead agency is a voluntary organisation. The original manager came from a health background whilst the acting manager is from a social services background. The teacher is based in the central Sure Start building, sharing an office with an adult tutor and community worker.

This teacher's role is referred to as the co-ordinator role. A vignette of her role on implementing a transition to school project is included in Appendix L.

5.3. Factors affecting teachers' roles

The following section reports findings relating to the construction of teacher posts within SSLPs. It examines the influence of local authorities on initial job creation including structures and systems governing teacher employment. Factors contributing to job determination are then analysed. The final part of the findings in this section examines the perceived contribution teachers bring to multi-agency teams in relation to their dispositions and knowledge base. This part of the findings, together with the preceding part, constitutes the conditions determining the original creation of teachers' roles. These sections provide the foundation for subsequent analysis of role evolution, identity transformation and new learning.

5.3.1 Key players in the initial construction of teachers' posts

Decisions to employ teachers in SSLPs are made by the partnership board. As noted in previous chapters, no national guidance is available on teachers' roles within SSLPs; programme managers together with managers from the LEA determine job descriptions prior to appointment. The relationship between these two groups is indicated in Table 5.1. It shows that for some programmes, the employment of teachers was in response to Sure Start objectives; identifying children with SEN at a young age. This was the case

Table 5.1 Drivers for teacher inclusion in SSLPs.

Programme Teacher	Local Education Authority	Sure Start Partnership Board
Community Role (A)	LEA partnership with SSLP	SEN agenda met
Area SENCO Role (B)	LEA partnership with SSLP	SEN agenda met
Extended Nursery Role (C)	Contribute to teacher ratio within private, voluntary and independent settings	Quality of settings agenda met
Consultant Role (D)	Enhance teacher ratio within named settings	Value of teacher input to children's learning
School Role (E)	Additional teachers for primary schools within Sure Start area	Sure Start link to schools
Co-ordinator Role (F)	Informed of Sure Start developments	Value of educational experts

for teachers in the community role and area SENCO role. In the extended nursery role and consultant role, the rationale for teacher employment was to raise 'quality' in settings, whilst the school role saw the teacher exclusively to improve children's learning within a school setting. The co-ordinator role stands alone, with a generic brief to utilise the skills of an educational expert, with the LEA being kept informed of Sure Start developments by an insider. For the teacher in the consultant role programme, the driving force for inclusion stemmed directly from pressure exerted by the educational representative on the partnership board:

It was really constructed by somebody that sits on our management group, who represents education, I think it began with the Early Excellence Centre fighting for Sure Start to buy some teacher time and presenting that to the management board; the importance of teacher time within a pre-school setting. They really did us a favour because we looked at it and said yes, actually they're right. But it's not going to be at your centre. It's evolved from then onwards.

(programme manager D)

Findings suggest SSLPs were regarded by some local authorities as sources of funding to extend their own bases. This was the case for the head teacher who secured Sure Start funding for an additional teacher based in her school (programme E). Decisions taken by partnership boards in the early days of job determination had an impact on role formation. Differences are acknowledged in comments made by the manager of the consultant role programme (D):

I think there was a quite a lot of involvement (by the LEA) in the early stages in terms of putting together her (the teacher's) job description, I think the local authorities agenda in terms of the teacher's role was quite different, to how Sure Start had envisaged the teacher's role.

Programme managers recognised the newness of employing teachers; no scaffolding or blueprint existed on which to hang roles. This was particularly true of the first round of programmes, the trailblazers, which were heavily represented in this research (Appendix H). The only exception to this was the SSLP where the teacher had an extended nursery role and replaced a founding teacher. The deficit of existing good practice amongst SSLPs in relation to teachers evoked a sense of working in a vacuum that was generally acknowledged across programmes.

5.3.2. Employment structures governing teachers

Job descriptions

Job descriptions were seen as starting points, statutory employment documents, but findings suggest that there was no expectation that they would be rigidly adhered to. Many teachers claimed their job descriptions bore no relationship to their current work. As one of the teachers stated:

It hasn't actually been referred back to by anyone since I've been working here. It hasn't actually, you know no one has come up to me and said are you doing what it says on your job description. It's not been like that at all.

(programme D)

A speech and language therapist (SALT) in the school role programme (E) was critical of the perceived ambiguity in the teacher's job description, regarding it as an obstacle to role development. Whilst not specifying detailed approaches to tasks, the job description was prescriptive in two critical areas; the setting (school) and user group (3-4 year old children). The SALT voiced concerns about the vagueness of the teacher's job description:

One of the problems is that the job description hasn't been clearly written so they didn't know what they were doing they were just told to work within the nursery and to, to work with children just part of the nursery entry to improve language development.

Grouped according to actions to be taken, in order of frequency, from top to bottom, the tasks detailed in teachers' job descriptions were found to fall into the following categories:

- Provision
- Development
- Implementation
- Management
- Leadership

Diverse job descriptions were found across programmes. Phrases like '*develop a innovative, flexible service*' or '*ensure all families have access to good quality services*' or '*explore the future potential for the development of work with pre-school children and their families*', point to broad guidelines, open to wide interpretation. The quality

of job descriptions varied according to how customised they were to the Sure Start context. The job description for the teacher in the school role (programme E) was a standard format issued to assistant teachers. In contrast the job description for the consultant role (programme D) was tailored to the specific nature of Sure Start. An authority with Beacon status for the early years constructed the most pertinent job description. Even though teachers generally regarded job descriptions as unrelated to their later roles, those teachers with peripheral participation in their SSLP also held the weakest job descriptions.

When tasks within the teachers' job descriptions are grouped according to areas of work, the following broad areas emerge:

- To provide information, advice and support for parents.
- To be involved in staff development: both with early years practitioners within settings and other Sure Start professionals, through training, modelling good practice, advice, line management and supervision.
- To establish effective relationships through partnerships with parents and practitioners, liaison, links to other services, attendance at meetings.
- To develop a work style that is flexible, multi-disciplinary and collaborative.
- To be creative and able to develop innovative ways of working
- To be accountable through monitoring, evaluations, reviews and audits.

Job descriptions reveal a wider and broader role for teachers in SSLPs compared to roles of peripatetic nursery teachers reported in the study by Stephen et al. (1998). There is a clear emphasis within the job descriptions on provision of services, development of services, and the opportunity for developing new ways of working within a flexible framework. All the job descriptions refer to work with parents in varying capacities and broaden the role of the teacher. The documents give the go ahead for teachers to influence other key workers, so that they may bring their professional knowledge to help others better develop and provide their own specialist skills. Features of teachers' job descriptions are recorded in table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Features of teachers' job descriptions

Job Title	Salient features of job description
Early Years Teacher Programme A	Work with children with SEN and their families Provide leadership, management and training Liaise and work jointly with health therapists and community support services Model good practice Promote children's communication skills
Pre-school (SEN) Advisory teacher Programme B	Support 'quality' early learning Promote Book Start (library service initiative) Organise after school clubs and adult education classes Work with social services and health practitioners Provide management and training Establish parent support groups
Advisory Teacher Programme C	Set up family learning groups Collaborate with wide range of community workers, parents and LEA personnel Support teaching and learning of FS children within settings Share good practice with child care providers Research into learning and effectiveness of teaching methods
Early Years Teacher Programme D	Support and enhance quality of learning and nurturing Outreach good practice into the Sure Start locality Work within settings on SEN issues Provide joint learning/teaching episodes with practitioners in settings Work with parent support groups Provide staff development
Teacher Programme E	Teach language and social skills to 3 and 4 year olds in schools Supervise the work of an NNEB Liaise with parents
Early Years Teacher Programme F	Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate a 0-3 Quality framework for settings and homes Provide training relating to the 0-3 framework Work in partnership with community education staff

Challenge was voiced by the teacher (programme F), charged with the task of writing a curriculum for the under threes, who felt:

There was an awful lot about quality framework for nought to three....quite a challenge and I thought well, I've worked in the inner ring for long enough, and it's an awful lot about differentiation and doing things different.

Although the teacher expressed confidence in her ability to tackle the situation, calling on skills gained from her previous experience, she nonetheless realised this was quite a challenge. Her job description had been written before the release of the national guidelines, Birth to Three Matters (DfES 2002).

Teacher contracts and salaries

There was a fairly equal balance between those teachers on permanent and those on temporary contracts (Appendix I). Local authorities released temporary contracts as part of a three-year cycle of service level agreements. Many respondents referred to the length of time it takes to establish job patterns and ways of working in SSLPs as illustrated in the comment below:

I do think a one year contract, whilst I think you could do it, I think you'd have to be quite specific and focussed in what you were going to achieve. But I think certainly if it was a contract for three years or more, then I think you can do that, I think you can do work that's more in depth, and probably has more long term impact of change.

(programme manager D)

With success dependent on the quality of relationships established, short-term contracts for teachers are questionable. For teachers in this study, the minimum contract length was three years. In terms of teacher recruitment, job insecurity may deter teachers holding permanent contracts from applying for temporary short-time contracts.

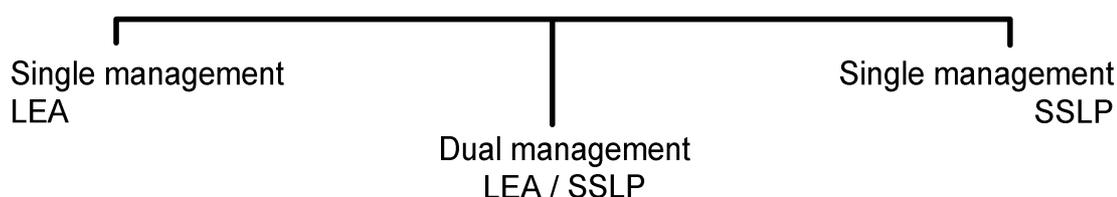
The ratio of full time posts to part-time posts in the study was fairly equally matched (Appendix I). There is no discernable relationship between permanent/temporary contracts and full time/part-time contracts. All four combinations of contract were present amongst the teachers; permanent full-time; permanent part-time; temporary full-time; temporary part-time. At the time of the fieldwork the teacher in the school role, holding a temporary part-time contract, was anxious about job permanence. Her teacher colleague had decided to leave the SSLP to return to school based work and the post was being shed. Interestingly, no job share arrangements operated for any of the teachers.

All the teacher posts were funded by their SSLP with the exception of the teacher in the co-ordinator role (programme F) whose post was funded by the local authority. Similarly, all complied with teachers' pay and conditions, with exception of the teacher funded by the local authority whose contract was locally negotiated. At least two of the teachers had reached the upper pay scale and regarded themselves as expensive, pointing out they earned more than their programme director. At least one other teacher (part-time) received additional responsibility points. One teacher had been the first in the country to present evidence to the DfES citing Sure Start experience to gain performance threshold. She described the process as long and unusually rigorous with several interviews with DfES officials in London to defend the application.

Management of teachers

Procedures for managing teachers, as recorded on job descriptions, varied across programmes (Appendix J). At one end of the spectrum a head teacher line managed a teacher whilst at the other end of the spectrum a SSLP manager undertook that role. Sitting between these single management models are dual management systems, with a LEA officer acting as overall line manager, and a SSLP manager acting as day-to-day manager, as shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Management of teachers in Sure Start Local Programmes



LEA managers were perceived by several Sure Start teachers as lacking knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of multi-agency work. Whilst possessing specialist skills and expertise within the field of education, middle managers had not necessarily undergone their own expansive learning cycles. This resonates with the MATCH study (Robinson et al. 2004). It could be argued that whilst working within their own professional silo they lacked grounded experience of multi-agency work, thereby calling into question their credentials to be managers of teachers in SSLPs. The programme manager of the consultant role teacher (programme D) suggested that the

LEA management role should more akin to a professional mentor, rather than a traditional line management model, as illustrated in the passage below:

(Local authority managers) are not used to, of course, having to take into account health, social services and voluntary sector and parents who want to get involved. So it's been quite a challenge to say actually I don't want you as line-manager to tell them (teachers) what they are doing in a term. I want you as a line -manager to say how's it going, how are you and how are you coping with your workload....and what about this new piece of research or reading, what are you doing about that.

Line management of the teacher by the manager of the co-ordinator role programme (F) was viewed primarily as informative so that she, as manager could co-ordinate programme activity. The teacher said her manager '*had left her alone*'. This may have reflected the dynamics between a temporary manager and a strong team member:

I supervise (the teacher) you know just checking out targets and joining-up thinking within the project....in no way is it a kind of clinical supervision, because I don't have those skills to provide that

(programme manager F)

From the evidence, it would seem that teachers felt more in touch with Sure Start than they did with their LEA employers. Commenting on local authority input, one teacher felt no interest had been taken in the work of Sure Start teachers. She said she felt '*really out on a limb*' and would choose to approach her Sure Start manager if she had difficulties rather than the local authority line manager. The exception to this was the consultant role programme, where teachers had high regard for their LEA manager. Interestingly, when no local authority management input was forthcoming, due to authority restructuring, one SSLP manager (programme B) found that despite reservations of apparent lack of experience and knowledge in the field of teaching, she was in fact able to provide satisfactory management. So lack of management by the local authority in this case, contributed to a change of attitude in the programme manager. In this same programme the teacher received group supervision from a team co-ordinator, a health visitor by background, once a month. Complementing group supervision, individual supervision with the programme manager was planned twice a year to provide further opportunities for reflection and review. The teacher had no issues with this system. This teacher had spent the shortest period working in a school environment and was the youngest teacher in the study. In response to issues of supervision, the teacher in the extended nursery role (programme C) said she would,

'just do my own thing really'. Her line manager was supposed to be the nursery manager but had left, leaving a vacuum.

Tensions between being an LEA employee and Sure Start team member were clearly identified in this study. This included difficulties between performance management conducted by the local authority and day-to-day supervision carried out by Sure Start managers. In the following excerpt a teacher illustrates the lack of clarity within management structures:

We have a parallel line management whereby we are obviously answerable to (name of SSLP manager) but not ultimately responsible to her...she is our boss, but not our line manager.... I think it would be better if that were formalised more clearly, that the responsibilities were more clearly delineated as to whom we are answerable to, for what, and that the relationship with (name of Sure Start programme manager) as project manager should be more clearly defined.....and that we should perhaps have regular liaison meetings to discuss what we are doing within our roles as teachers in the Sure Start programme.

(programme D)

In the same programme, a school management model was proposed for the teacher but failed to materialise due to lack of commitment from the school:

We started up negotiations at school, but they weren't willing to take on the management of the teacher in the form that we wanted them to i.e. senior management level. So unfortunately those negotiations rather fell down.

(teacher)

Communication structures

All SSLPs organised planned meetings when practitioners had opportunities to participate in team decision-making. Expectations and actual attendance by teachers, varied from programme to programme. Attendance and frequency of attendance at Sure Start team meetings was incorporated into the job description of some teachers but not others. So teachers' contributions were regarded as mandatory in some programmes and optional in others. For example, the Sure Start meeting in programme C is held every 2 weeks, the teacher said she might attend some. Another teacher (programme A) describes the pattern of meetings at her SSLP:

We've got a team meeting which is over lunchtime....the smaller teams, they have their own meeting. We have away days as well, I suppose to try and keep in touch.

Some team meetings were inclusive of all members regardless of role; others distinguished between practitioners and operational staff. Frequency of team meetings

also varied, ranging from weekly to monthly. Within programmes, smaller workgroups or focus groups were often in place. Teachers were sometimes part of interagency groups, strengthening commonalities and pushing an educational focus, and sometimes intra agency groups strengthening multi-agency approaches.

Maintaining links with schools

Teachers' contact with mainstream education was found to be variable. Some teachers attended regular teacher cluster groups; others met school colleagues at local authority events. Some teachers had, at the start of their jobs, offered to release teachers from class teaching for limited periods. However, this practice faded as SSLP teachers became more established in their programmes. Apart from the teacher in the school role (programme E) most teachers reduced their contact with school colleagues as membership of the Sure Start community of practice became more important in their daily lives.

Several teachers were critical of Sure Start policy constraints of working with only 0-4 year olds and their families. A consequence of this policy resulted in compromised communication with colleagues in mainstream services and hampered smooth transitions for some children to school. As one teacher commented:

I think that is something I feel has always been a bit of a gap in the way that Sure Start was originally set up with the cut off at four years.

(programme D)

To overcome this situation some teachers operated flexible boundaries, turning a blind eye to government regulations, despite the adverse effect on programme monitoring returns, as illustrated below:

So I just felt that we should just carry on working with them (four year olds) but it did have implications for our reporting, for the statistical analysis and so on, because we were not officially supposed to record them. It's crazy. And then all this work about transition to school, which you know I felt was absolutely vital, you know, again was actually outside the remit of the Sure Start targets, but nonetheless we have built up relations with the local schools.

(teacher, programme D)

In the co-ordinator role programme (Programme F), the teacher felt the local authority actively discouraged Sure Start teacher interventions with schools. The rationale given for this was that the relatively small number of primary schools in the authority could suffer from advisory overload.

Physical location of teachers

With the exception of the teacher in the school role (programme E), all teachers occupied workspaces on the main Sure Start site. The location of dedicated workspaces and co-location of other practitioners in the immediate physical environment is recorded in Table 5.3. The sole practitioner co-located with health visitors was the

Table 5. 3 Physical locations of teachers in SSLPs

Programme teacher	Location	Dedicated work space	Co-located practitioners
Community Role (A)	Main building	Small room at end of corridor. Daily use by teacher	Communication workers Inclusion worker Sure Start teacher (multi-disciplinary team)
Area SENCO Role (B)	Main building	Central, large, open plan office (through space). Daily use by teacher	Social worker Community workers. Health visitors Play worker Fathers worker Speech and Language therapist Sure Start teacher
Extended Nursery Role (C)	Main building	Small room off corridor. Rarely used by teacher.	Sure Start teacher Community development worker
Consultant Role (D)	Main building	Far wing of building, 'attic room' Daily use by teachers	Sure Start teachers Ed. Psychologist Librarian Speech and Language Therapist (Education Team)
School Role (E)	School site	No dedicated desk. Opportunistic use of available space by teacher.	School staff. Sure start NNEB. Sure Start teacher

Co-ordinator Role (F)	Main building	Large office Daily use by teacher	Adult tutor Community worker Sure Start teacher
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teacher in programme B. Here the office was large; the health visitors' desk was apart from the teacher's desk, although both were visible to each other and just within earshot. Hot desking, that is not having a defined personal space, but moving around a shared office, was not practised by any of the teachers in this research, although it was the policy in the strong ethos led programme (F). Every teacher had an allocated desk, with the exception of the teacher in the school role programme. Similarly, all teachers had access to networked computers except the teacher in the school role programme.

5.3.3 Intrinsic and extrinsic factors influencing job construction

This research develops the case for understanding changes in teacher roles through increasing participation within a Communities of Practice framework. This is reported and discussed later in a dedicated section on multi-agency work. However, within the above framework, this study identified dominant influences affecting job construction at the point of initial set up, and these are summarised in Table 5. 4. For several teachers, roles were influenced by building on existing models of teacher involvement in pre-school settings; the extended nursery role, consultant role and school role. The teacher in the co-ordinator role (F) was particularly influenced by programme vision. It was the original programme manager, who, coming from a health background, had

Table 5.4 Influences affecting the construction of teachers' jobs

Programme teacher	Key influences in initial job construction
Community Role	The need to find a non- clinical model for promoting communication skills Consideration of parents' learning needs
Area SENCO Role	Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets
Extended nursery Role	Locality based implementation of LEA community teacher model
Consultant Role	Community delivery of EEC model of teacher input
School Role	School agenda

Co-ordinator Role	Programme vision and ethos
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influenced the initial job construction of this teacher, by establishing a strong programme ethos. In other programmes Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets influenced role development. Findings point to triggers for role development stemming primarily from practitioners and managers, rather than the voices of the community. This is perhaps unsurprising since families living in SSLP areas often lead complex and fragile lives and have as yet not experienced the transactional and transitional space to *talk back* that Carlson and West (2005) suggest is necessary to empower Sure Start communities.

In addition to the influences identified in Table 5.4, this study identified particular catalysts affecting decisions in relation to teacher activity and direction during the early days of teacher employment. Both proactive and reactive factors emerged. Some of the factors are pertinent to a particular phase of teacher activity, for example, the nature of the induction period, whilst other factors influenced teacher decision-making at different points in the cycle of programme activity.

Table 5.5 Reported factors affecting job determination

Teacher response	Factors affecting job determination
Proactive	Networking Centres of Excellence Reflective practice Perceived community needs
Reactive	Induction experience Programme evaluations Target led agendas Management styles Staff recruitment

Networking

Opportunities to network at national and/or regional level were possible for some, but not all teachers. Attendance at a regional conference sparked the development of a teacher led project in one SSLP, enhancing parent/child and teacher /parent interactions in programme D. The value of networking is evident from the impact voiced by this teacher:

Within (county name) each year, there is an early years conference and staff from Pen Green did a presentation at the early years conference of the work that they are doing and it seemed to me to be so appropriate to what I felt was so important about the communication between parents and children, looking at the ways in which parents can help their children develop through their play and that sort of interaction, that we (teachers) were very keen to start something up here. So we actually did visit Pen Green a couple of times ourselves and liaised with them and have developed our project from there.

In contrast, the teacher in the school role programme (programme E) spoke about restrictive practices in relation to attendance at conferences:

Most of the training is linked to speech and language or Sure Start partnership days...I haven't really had the opportunity to go to conferences, any training was a bonus really, other than what the school was offering, because what I wanted was you know, some of the school based training wasn't really appropriate to my role.

In the co-ordinator role programme (F) it was the programme manager herself who had been inspired at a national conference and returned to disseminate information to the teacher, requesting that a similar model be initiated in their SSLP. This was the catalyst for the beginnings of a transition to school project and one that was to form a large component of the teacher's job. In fact several teachers introduced practices already established in other parts of the country. As well as the transition to school project, initiated following a networking opportunity, one programme (D) adopted the Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP) intervention to work with families. The teacher describes the delicate and gradual process of introducing the proposal to colleagues:

I introduced this into team meetings and so on, and indeed held some meetings specifically to discuss that proposal as it became more of a definite concrete proposal that we should set up a PEEP group. So with the PEEP thing I gathered people together to discuss it and also I have been part of countywide network that was loosely coming together, around groups of people around (name of local authority) that were interested in developing the PEEP idea; a sort of two-way thing. And then, um, gradually I managed to win some support and some favour

for this within Sure Start, to the point that it was finally agreed that yes it would be a good thing to run a PEEP group.

The teacher in the school role also built on existing projects. A story sacks project extended and developed work already set up by the local library service and a language extension project operating in the Foundation class was adapted from a project running in another region of the country for English as Additional Language (EAL) pupils in mainstream schools.

Centres of Excellence

Early Excellence Centres (EECs) featured in initial discussions on teachers' roles in SSLPs (already mentioned in part 5.3.1). The EEC model, as illustrated below, provided scaffolding upon which to build the teacher's role:

This (job) was really modelled on the teachers working in the Early Excellence Centre...so some elements of the job description relate more comfortably to that sort of a role working within a specific setting and we've kind of generalised it out to work in a more consultative way with other pre-school groups.

(programme manager D)

In another instance, an EEC shared the practice of displaying inspirational educational quotes in public spaces, to stimulate reflective thinking and discussion. Following a visit to the centre one teacher adopted this idea. The manager and teachers in the consultant role programme (D) were committed to promoting young children's creative use of outdoor spaces. Influenced by the forest school movement, the programme manager articulates her vision as follows:

We want practitioners to be able to go outside and do things like build fires with children and cook baked beans on it and make dream catchers and build rope bridges and things like that. All that learning can't be lost.....so (teachers name) will change again slightly. She'll be more focussed on what they'll (practitioners) be doing with their outside spaces and are they using them.

Reflective practice

One programme manager (D) spoke about the importance of practitioners being able to reflect on their practice. In the example cited, the manager spoke about the need for teachers to view children holistically:

It allows them to step back and think about their teaching practices, think about when you've got families coming in and you've got a child that is not learning or there is something going on.....(think about) what have you wanted to do that you haven't been able to do...make sure the child is having breakfast in the

morning, make sure that the child is getting sleep routines.....the whole picture really.

In a reflective vein, the teacher in the community role (A) was able to be openly critical of a practice she herself had introduced:

It is laborious and their planned activity, they have to write up and I am wondering really whether we should have a much more simple screening...if you are using more people that have got good knowledge in small areas, screening is really hard for them because they do not know what they are looking for. In the end it's unworkable and we spent hours doing it.

The teacher characterised as having an area SENCO role (B) inferred that the research visit for this study had triggered reflection. On the second day of field work she indicated to the programme manager that she wanted to change the direction of her role, 'to move away from being a nursery settings advisor, because new area SENCO jobs and pre-school teacher jobs have just been created in the local authority'. This is interesting, as the teacher had been fully involved in a local evaluation lasting two years and incorporating lengthy individual practitioner interviews (West, 2003).

Perceived community needs

SSLPs were designed to be responsive to consultation and reflect the needs of distinct Sure Start communities (Glass 1999). Most teachers' job descriptions referred to the development of flexible services, as one teacher commented:

We have really been given the scope to develop our role as early years teachers as we have found the need coming from the community and the groups within it.

Many practitioners had difficulty pinpointing precise events that sparked new activities.

One teacher used the expression *crop-up*; to describe how new directions emerged:

Things just crop up, don't they, like we're going to have a big push on kind of physical things and I think, I think it's a developmental process really. Parents want information and so they needed groups, now I think we're reaching a stage where some of it will be targeted.

(programme F)

Another team member in the same programme however, thought it was the lack of outdoor space that had triggered this particular initiative.

The knock-on effect of a nursery moving out of a Sure Start area, led to one teacher becoming project manager of a new nursery build, causing a dramatic shift in role for a 12-month period. A community consultation exercise had identified the need for a new neighbourhood nursery. By seizing an opportunity, the teacher became a key

player in the development of the project, taking on board a role that she said she had previously 'never dreamed possible'. So a new and exciting role emerged for the teacher in the consultant role, who had the confidence and motivation to grasp an opportunity another teacher may have shied away from. '*Meeting the needs of the community*' was a phrase frequently volunteered by respondents in response to questions surrounding changes in job direction. One programme manager noted the relationship of community needs with the changing nature of the teacher's role saying it:

Grows and develops with the needs of the community really and I think that a lot of the community work that they are doing with the parents is something that has evolved.

(programme D)

Induction experiences

The first few months in post were characterised by teachers searching for direction and clarity. Difficulties existed in finding other programmes in the region to exchange ideas with. No national database showing teacher employment in SSLPs existed (Hastings 2004). This meant that many teachers felt isolated. For trailblazer programmes, no established practice was available for Sure Start teachers to observe; there was no 'master craftsman' to learn from. A teacher from a second wave programme (E) described her experience of organising her own induction experience:

My own induction was really about just going out and finding out what the area was like, and the other groups and settings and agencies that were operating within the area I visitedand I asked the programme co-ordinator (name) if he knew of any Sure Start programmes that had teachers that were you know within reasonable reach within a day.....it was useful to get a feel for another Sure Start area....my induction was more about me going out and just ringing people up and saying can I come and visit you.

Programme evaluations

The trigger for change in the direction of teacher activities in one programme arose from judgments made by a team of external evaluators. Changed priorities on the part of the teacher were directly attributable to the outcome of an evaluation identifying gaps in provision for children with SEN. So listening and responding to internal as well as external evaluations, within the principle of reviewing and refining service delivery, also acted as a catalyst to redirect programme thinking and agency input, including that of teachers.

Target led activity

National Sure Start targets provided the impetus for role formation in some programmes. The excerpt below highlights the level of autonomy given to the teacher concerning interpretation and implementation of targets:

When staff came into this programme, I said to them, these are your targets here. You are the teacher now, you go and spend some time within the programme and you come back and tell me how you are going to achieve these targets. I am a health visitor by background so I shouldn't be saying how a teacher would actually achieve these skills or achieve these targets.

I needed to give people the space to be able to construct their roles.... I talked to them, and I supported them and I looked at options.....I could kind of question.....and see how the role of the teacher could link in with the speech and language therapists and the health visitors.

This programme manager (B) expected the teacher to be able to work on her own, use her initiative, be self-motivated and have at her command the necessary strategic thinking to undertake service level planning. It placed confidence in the abilities of the teacher, and recognised that teacher expertise could be utilised within a framework of professional autonomy. The programme manager here saw her own role primarily as one of co-ordinator. Rigour was built into the process through teacher questioning in order to unpick the underlying rationale for decisions taken. An example of teacher activity directly attributable to targets is given below by the teacher in the programme (B):

It was because one of the targets in this area is to reduce the number of children with behavioural problems....it was only because it was linked to one of my targets that I was asked to do it (set up a behaviour group).

But whilst targets were formative for the teacher in one programme (B), in another programme (F), the teacher said she had no working knowledge of her targets. Similarly, targets were interpreted in a narrow sense by some programmes, whilst in other programmes practitioners reflected on the underlying causes of difficulties and pioneered new ways to bring about improved learning opportunities for children.

Management styles

SSLP managers effective in empowering team members increased some teachers' abilities to tackle challenges. One teacher was asked to write a business plan for a nursery, an area of work she was not accustomed to, but *'the programme manager simply said I know you can do it and I did!'* The consequent sense of achievement

resulted in the teacher saying she felt she could then do anything. In this case the manager's positive approach had fostered a 'can do' climate within the programme.

Staff recruitment

For some teachers, unfilled staff posts proved to be instrumental in changing the focus of their own jobs. In one programme (A), for example, a teacher led family learning project evolved because speech and language therapists were unavailable:

Speech and language therapy couldn't provide us (with staff), nobody wanted to work in Sure Start. We had had some speech and language therapy and they wanted to run it like a clinic type approach. So they had a room here and then invited people. But they found that people did not understand the jargon so people did not turn up and they had loads of DNAs....it all came together in a really bitty way over a period....the project was purely run by SALT and I asked to be involved in it. Then they pulled out and in the end (name of OT) and I took it over.

(teacher, programme A)

Difficulty in teacher recruitment in neighbouring SSLPs resulted in the same teacher covering vacancies in two other programmes, in order to keep going a project she had initiated: 'the other two Sure Starts wanted a teacher, but nobody would be seconded'.

5.3.4 Perceived qualities teachers bring to Sure Start Local Programmes

A theme that emerged from these research findings related to the qualities that teachers do, and should, bring to multi-agency work. Responses fell into two broad categories concerning the skills and attributes teachers hold; firstly the dispositions of the teacher and secondly the knowledge base they possess (Appendix F). These categories concur with the MATCh project (Robinson 2004) and work by Anning (2001; 2002).

5.3.4.1 Teacher dispositions

Reflecting on qualities that teachers hold, respondents frequently emphasised people skills. Within this broad palate of skills particular aspects came to the fore. Skills in understanding people surfaced as a distinct entity. Phrases used by respondents to refer to individual teachers' attributes included, '*warm and totally approachable*', '*very open and honest*', '*open and transparent*', '*non-threatening*', and '*non-judgemental*'. In the main, respondents referred to teachers' effective communication with adults, rather than with children and babies. Only in the school role programme was '*enjoyment of children*' explicitly mentioned as a quality attributable to teachers.

Responses indicated Sure Start team members thought that teachers should hold qualities that encourage and sustain meaningful relationships, as illustrated in the excerpt below:

The way that you interact with people is very important...people very quickly pick up on vibes. .they need to know you're not judging them.... And it's very much the language you use, the words that you use and the way that you say it actually gives out a message.

(community worker, programme F)

Succinctly expressed by one teacher: '*we have to be trusted for parents to tell us things*'. A speech and language therapist used the term 'personality' to describe qualities that she perceived necessary for effective teacher interaction with children and parents. She identified trust, warmth and a positive outlook as essential teacher attributes:

The sort of personality that children take to, if when you enter the room the children want to be with you.....approachable to the children.....the sort of person that you're quite happy to let into your house.

(programme E)

One teacher indicated that qualities of diplomacy and sensitivity were called upon when initiating change management. The teacher (consultant role programme) explained the delicate steps she took to persuade a health visitor to change the focus within a family learning group:

I had to tread quite carefully, I felt, because I didn't want people to see that I was coming in kind of steam rolling something that particularly the health team had taken quite a long time setting up...and I didn't want it to appear that I was coming in saying, I don't think those groups are working and we need to do something different, but I was trying to say there's a slightly emphasis here I think we could be bringing out – a slightly more structured approach, something that was perhaps bringing more overtly if you like, educational information and support material for parents. Gradually I think I won people over with that.

Being visible in role, so that families could more readily approach and access teachers, was pointed up in the study as integral to forming relationships. The gradual building up of trust is described by a team member in the excerpt below:

They (the teachers) need to be in the community. The families need to know who they are, you know, you can't make a difference unless you get the parent's involved.....that does take a little while, you know if you're coming into a new group and you have to be prepared to just spend a little bit of time just watching and then eventually the parents get to know you, you know before showing them how to play with their children.

(community worker, programme E)

Respondents did not identify a lack of communication skills amongst Sure Start teachers. For those programmes employing a lone teacher, comparisons of styles of interpersonal skills did not arise. In the programme with two participating teachers, and the programme with a replacement teacher, shades of personality surfaced but no comments were elicited on the effectiveness of one style over another.

Being flexible; open-minded; creative and innovative, were attributes assigned to teachers in the study. One programme manager described her teacher as being able to '*think outside the box*'. Coupled to this, motivational skills were given significance. A community worker highlighted a teacher's positive attitude to learning, exemplified in the comment below:

There's also a desire to learn yourself, not to walk away from new ideas that, you know, they may be a bit frightening, or you may have not done it like that before, but say, oh well, we'll have a go... and we'll say to the parents actually, we've never quite done it like this, but it's worked really well hasn't it.

(programme F)

Another teacher involved in designing learning spaces for young children, spoke about the pace of learning and the need for personal research:

Well, it was a challenge and it was fascinating, and I'd never done anything like it before in my life..... It was a complete very steep learning curve as they say for me, but fascinating and I had learnt an enormous amount through doing it... I had to do a lot of research into architects, from the outset.

(programme D)

Teachers recognised their capacity for self-motivation. The absence of intrinsic satisfiers was pointed up by one teacher, saying: 'It's without any recognition, you don't get thanked; it's not a job to get your own needs met'.

In most programmes contacts with teacher colleagues were minimal; there were no 'corridor or classroom chats' to bounce ideas off (Robinson 2005). Interestingly the teacher in the school role included herself in this category: 'I think you've got to be able to work off your own initiative...and work independently if you're the only teacher'. Teachers in the consultant role (D) were the exception. They worked at the same centre, shared an office space and were in daily contact. Both teachers were motivated to learn new skills and knowledge and were innovative and creative.

Several teachers identified the need to be reflective, to question and engage in critical thinking, as noted in the following comment: ‘you’d need to be a reflective person, that actually thinks well why does this work or how does this work’. One teacher referred to experience of life as a dimension she considered added to the richness and suitability for work with families in SSLP areas:

I feel my years of experience of life and what it’s like working with children in schools, helps with the role I’m doing now with dealing with parents, perceiving what the needs were within school and valuing perhaps that everything actually comes down to the children being able to communicate.

(programme D)

Whilst another teacher felt her experience as a parent, had contributed to increased empathy: ‘it brought a whole new perspective, so I think this time when (I do training), I will have a lot more empathy and a lot more examples to use’.

Respondents acknowledged vision and commitment were qualities teachers brought with them to Sure Start. A community development worker summed up this sentiment in a short sentence: ‘her belief in the families and the way that you can make a difference’.

Cultural differences

It could be said that teachers in schools work in an environment perpetuating a child-centred view of education. Their core purpose would be to raise child outcomes through effective teaching and learning (DfES 2002). In the current study, a child centred philosophy was questioned by many Sure Start practitioners, who believed it was not the children, but the parents, that interventions should be aimed at: ‘our main person would be the parents, but that isn’t really how teachers work is it?’ Such comments made assumption about individual teachers’ views. In fact the teachers on the above programme (D) held views valuing parents as the main educators and their motivation for a career change had been to work with families (see later in this chapter 5.5.1.1). This clash of assumed ideologies nevertheless caused resentment particularly in relation to the teacher in the school role (programme E):

We’re supposed to have all these professionals on the team that are trained, lots of money being spent...we’re supposed to be supporting them (the parents).

(community worker)

These findings resonate with studies by Robinson et al. (2004); Pettitt et al. (2003), and Atkinson et al. (2002), who also note differences in professional cultures causing

barriers to joint working (see literature review 2. 4). Inter disciplinary clashes in ideology also surfaced in this study surrounding the care and education divide:

There's a slight tension between the crèche workers and the teacher, there's a slight tension between an educational approach and a childcare approach.

(Community worker, programme F)

This is in line with studies investigating approaches to integrated ECEC in both the UK (Anning 2002) and Sweden (Lenz Taguchi and Munkammar 2003) where differences in attitudes of childcare workers and teachers were identified (see literature review 2. 4).

The quantity of work achieved by a teacher was noteworthy for one programme manager, marking her out from other practitioners:

The input we get for her part time role is substantial, it may be down to the level of education, the level of support, that we get really good input from the teachers, within that 20 hour post, that they've got, they put in possibly more than another worker may put in, in a thirty hour post.

Interestingly, this was the school-based teacher (Programme E). It suggests that some teachers may work at a more intense pace than their Sure Start colleagues. This could reflect the shorter working hours of those holding school terms and conditions. However issues surrounding work ethic were not explored further.

Teachers are used to functioning in structured environments in schools; they do not usually experience high levels of autonomy and creativity (Johnson and Hallgarten 2002). In this study respondents felt teachers brought a structured approach and good organisational skills to SSLPs. The manager from the Area SENCO role programme (B) highlighted this aspect as a positive feature of a teacher's make up and one that distinguished her from other team members. In another programme (D), a health visitor questioned the imposition of structure less favourably. The composition of a parent group had changed from hard to reach to middle class families, and in her opinion, this reflected the transition from an informal to a formal approach introduced by the teacher. She explains her thinking:

The other thing that I've just observed this week actually was their beep group, which I guess they've explained to you about And that's quite interesting for me because we run several groups but they're much more unstructured, and it was interesting seeing a group that was more structured And I think that parents seem to really enjoy that.

The only thing that I would say about that is that the parents who were there when I went on Monday were perhaps more middle class parents, not all sure-start families, there was a mix. and I do know that some of our teenage mums who used to come to one of our pregnancy pals group here, some of them did move on to beep and quite liked it but none of them were there when I was there so Well that's just a bit of a shame 'cause they would be the main people we would really want to encourage to do that.

Whilst viewing the structured approach a teacher brings as an asset to her team by some respondents, one manager suggested teachers would find the loss of structure and greater autonomy within SSLP, a considerable challenge:

I think many teachers probably would not adjust easily to Sure Start programmes. I think the structure within education does not lend itself easily to the less structured approach that is needed within the Sure Start programmes.

(programme B)

This scenario was found to be true for teachers during their first few months in post and is revisited later in the chapter (5.5.5).

Early years teachers come from a background of responsibility for the learning and welfare of a class of children for the majority of the school day. In SSLPs, teachers relinquish such responsibility; children are either with their parents or in a setting managed by childcare staff. As one teacher noticed, moving to SSLP meant a 'great change of structure – in a school all the children are in your face'. Some teachers inferred a feeling of loss of ownership and control over children.

Opening doors through understanding school language and culture was highlighted in this study. The ability for teachers to act as bridge between the community and school was regarded as a positive attribute teachers bring to SSLPs. The teacher in the co-ordinator role programme acknowledged the impact of using school language to access school leaders:

I think you've got to put it into speak that matters to head (teachers).....it needs to be in results doesn't it? Or in school improvements.....so I'm able to be a bridge to start putting those things in.

Respondents suggested that sensitivity to the rhythm and patterns of school life; understanding school language; being able to empathise with the pressures school face and understanding drivers for change, were all attributes that only a teacher having taught in a school could hold. The excerpt below is typical of this view:

I think it's really useful to have a teacher working within here that can make links for schools in a very positive way, by recognising what their difficulties are, and showing what they've been able to achieve in a slightly different context.

(community worker, programme F)

Several teachers in this study exploited a teacher persona in their Sure Start work. The teacher in the Area SENCO role programme (B) used this persona during practitioner training: 'I am the teacher, so I might put you in groups'. The teacher communicated with the audience drawing on techniques from the classroom:

I just find it an easier way to get across what I want them to do...because I directed it at the people I knew as well which helped, because I knew that they would take it in jest.

Another teacher called on her teacher persona selectively, by saying, for example:

Just today I'm going to be the teacher, the boss, if you don't want to join in then you can go to another room.

(programme A)

The teacher in this example conjures up an authoritarian image of teachers; the teacher is the boss, a non-negotiable role. So the teacher here is exploiting her identity as a former schoolteacher.

School culture – an attribute or barrier?

Programme managers viewed the value of employing teachers from school backgrounds differently. One opinion expressed was that experienced teachers bring entrenched, unyielding cultural attitudes; that they are conditioned. Whilst on the other hand managers valued and recognised Professional Craft Knowledge and teacher's knowledge and understanding of school culture. The programme manager of the school role programme (E) felt strongly about 'teachers' set ways'. Having inherited a situation from a previous manager who had been heavily influenced by head teachers, she was engaged in remodelling and restructuring the teacher's role:

I don't think the teacher needs to have years of experience, and sometimes that could be a negative thing because that teacher can be set in their ways, this is the way we've done it....It's a completely different way of working.

Some programme managers reflected on the option of employing newly qualified teachers, feeling that 'you could have an NQT that comes forward who is innovative, creative and flexible, and not conditioned' (programme D). The term 'conditioned,' implies dimensions of permanency and an inability to change from the cultures and

norms of one community of practice to another. The same manager however, goes on to value teaching experience within a specialist context: '(teacher's name) SENCO experience, has been absolutely priceless and you may not get that with an NQT'. In this SSLP the two teachers were very experienced, but also innovative and creative, fully participating within the team.

So programme managers seem to present a dilemma between wanting to employ teachers with craft knowledge and who understand the language, culture and expectations of schools, whilst at the same time not wanting what they perceive as ingrained attitudes and beliefs. This thesis argues that as teachers participate within new communities of practice, new identities emerge. So teachers can and do adjust, respond and participate in new contexts in imaginative and informed ways, breaking free of school culture and beliefs to extend and enrich multi-agency teams.

Whether barriers to participation include the dispositions of the teacher is interesting to consider. As mentioned earlier, no remarks were made by respondents to suggest teachers in this study lacked appropriate people skills. The teacher in the school role programme who decided to leave Sure Start, and teachers who spoke about eventually wanting to return to school based teaching, had not managed to fully participate in their programmes. If these teachers had been in different SSLPs, with fewer structural and procedural barriers to participation, it is interesting to speculate whether the same attitudes and outcomes would have arisen.

5.3.4.2 Perceived knowledge base of Sure Start teachers

Understanding, explaining, and putting into context curriculum frameworks and Ofsted standards, as well as improving curriculum accessibility to parents and practitioners, were recognised in this study, as attributes teachers possess. One teacher noted: 'the way the curriculum has gone....that's something we bring in, so we can support parents to understand the system' (programme F). Being informed, up to date and conversant with regulations, guidelines, and processes, as well as having an understanding of procedures in relation to educational entitlements, was regarded as an asset and feature of a teacher's knowledge: 'it takes somebody who actually has up to date information and good contacts out there'(community worker, programme A).

One programme manager (programme B) identified a teacher's theoretical understanding of educational practice as part of their unique contribution to a multi-agency team:

Having a teacher in the programme brings an academic theoretical framework in terms of education coupled to development, all areas of development, within an educational perspective.

The term '*quality*' frequently surfaced in relation to the skills a teacher brings to the Sure Start team. Implicit in respondents comments were the ability of teachers to promote high quality provision in terms of learning opportunities for children. Quality was measured in the EPPE study (Sylva et al 2004) and researched in more depth in the REPEY study (Siraj-Blatchford et al 2002), (see Literature Review, part 2.2). In these studies quality was associated with effectiveness of child outcomes. None of the interviewees mentioned *sustained shared thinking*, or similar expressions for referring to child/teacher interactions. REPEY and EPPE are both high profile research reports and the findings would be familiar to many early years educators during the time of fieldwork. Sustained shared thinking is a measure of the quality of involvement between teacher and learner, and the number of episodes thought to be an indicator of effective learning (Siraj-Blatchford et al 2002). However it should be noted none of the programme managers came from an educational background and were possibly less likely to have closely read the REPEY findings and be conversant with the concept of sustained shared thinking.

Knowledge of learning was associated with teachers; the phrase '*knows how children learn*' was voiced by several team members as a skill teachers bring to multi-agency teams. Teachers themselves felt their experience brought a sound understanding and knowledge of how to extend children's learning on an every day basis. Frequently this concept was expressed by teachers as, '*knowing what the next steps are*'.

The sense of teachers preparing children for school was brought up by several team members, but not by any of the teachers in the study. Typical of the responses was that given by a speech and language therapist:

And I do think they have got a lot of skill in knowing how to develop the early learning in children. They've got knowledge of concepts; they know what skills they want children to have to be ready to learn within school.

(programme E)

Viewing the teacher's role in terms of school preparation, several programme managers commented on their ability to facilitate a smooth transition for children by focussing on their internal knowledge of the ways schools work and realistic expectations of

children's capabilities. In this sense 'next step' was viewed by non-educationalists as the move to the next phase of education:

She can bring the next step for children. When children get to four what are they going to know, what are we looking at, how do we kind of work with schools.

(programme manager F)

Child development was highlighted by respondents as a significant area of knowledge teachers bring to SSLP, eliciting comments such as, 'her foundation is phenomenal, her knowledge of child development, her knowledge of working with little ones' Responses from team members concerning in-depth knowledge of child development revealed no significant difference for specialist teachers. Holding textbook knowledge of child development did not feature in any team member's responses.

In one SSLP (programme B) raising expectations of team members' attitudes towards children's achievements, was attributed to the teacher. Interestingly, in the same programme, another team member expressed concern that working in areas of deprivation might impact on teachers' judgements, resulting in lowered expectations. Fundamental to understanding young children's interests and styles of learning is the ability to observe and then reflect, either individually or with parents or colleagues (Moyles et al 2002). Observation was identified by one teacher as a critical skill she feels she brings to multi-agency work: 'it's watching what children do, close observation, of what children do with things, it really makes you think'.

Overall, responses relating to the knowledge base teachers hold, fell broadly in line with the principles of effective early years education within the Foundation Stage curriculum (Appendix G).

Respondents stressed the significance and importance of teaching experience. An example of this stem from a teacher reflecting on a session focussing on children separating from parents on entry to school:

I think in some ways (parents) find it reassuring to know that you're coming from not just what's in your head, but that you've seen patterns enough times.

(programme F)

For the same teacher, craft knowledge was perceived by her manager as relating to the teachers ability to ensure the smooth running of a setting. The practical skills and understanding that experienced teaching can bring was noted within the context of every day practice in a nursery; 'she brings some very practical things about day to day

running of a nursery' (programme manager F). In another programme (D) the manager talks about the teachers:

Years of training and history behind them, they know what the gaps in the services are; they have worked the system long enough. They know the stuff that they would have loved to have been doing for years but haven't had the resources or time to do it.

The concept of teacher's Professional Craft Knowledge is central to this thesis and is reported and discussed in depth within the next part of the findings (5.3.5).

Perceived gaps in the knowledge base of teachers

1. Management skills

The shortage of early years teachers in SSLPs with management experience was identified and reported in an earlier study (Hastings 2004). This re-emerged as a dimension in the main study. The following comment was made by a speech and language therapist concerning teachers in the school role programme (E):

My view of the teaching staff is that they haven't really worked out how best to use the staff (NNEBs) and how best to organise the roles within the setting um you know I would have liked um there to be far more of an emphasis on different things happening, the nursery nurses using their skills.

The manager of programme B articulated the lack of management knowledge and skills that teachers hold, and directly linked this to their effectiveness in improving quality in pre-school settings:

This is all new to her as a teacher and I feel very strongly that we need to actually enable teachers to increase their skills in terms of interviewing; in terms of understanding governance of pre-schools and pre-school settings....if you are a manager on a pre-school group, you can see then how to influence the implementation of Ofsted requirements. But if you're not knowledgeable about those issues, you're far less effective.

Two teachers who held line management responsibilities volunteered that they strongly disliked this aspect of their jobs. Both teachers had come from non-management backgrounds. They elaborated by saying they felt uncomfortable with employment legislation and appraisal procedures.

2. In-depth knowledge of language development

Speech and language therapists identified knowledge of young children's language development as lacking in teachers, although no other team members identified this as a

weakness. This issue is analysed later in the chapter (5.5.2) in relation to the activity systems of health and education practitioners coming together:

I think they have struggled with the language aspect I don't think they've had an awful lot of, um, solid view about how language develops and how to create opportunities to develop language.

(SALT, programme E)

3. Knowledge and understanding of work with children under three

The question of whether teachers hold relevant and meaningful knowledge for children under the age of three emerged in this research. From the evidence it would seem that there was a growing realisation by teachers that principles of effective learning and teaching do indeed span age groups. What was lacking for Sure Start teachers was experience of working with children under three in group care so they were not able to draw on examples of practice. This was overcome by some parent-teachers using examples of their own children's learning styles and development in training sessions.

For some of the teachers it was only when they began to engage in actual practice with under three groups that they discovered how meaningful their previous experience and competence, in fact, was:

I did assume when I first came that the childcare staff, because they are birth to seven trained, they would know far more than me, and it took me a long time to realise that actually I did know quite a bit about what I was talking about, but hadn't got that confidence, because it was a different age group.

(teacher, programme F)

After working with child care practitioners, the teacher in the co-ordinator role programme (F) speculated: 'I think we've got knowledge that we don't realise that other people don't have'. Research examining the roles of differentially trained staff (Moyles and Suschitzky 1997; Sammons et al. 2002 and Stephen and Sime 2004) certainly supports the notion that qualitative differences exist between the practices of teachers and the practices of practitioners with lower qualifications working with Foundation Stage children (see literature review, part 2.3). No national research evidence however, is available on the comparative practice of differentially trained staff with children under three.

4. Entrepreneurial skills

Identifying areas of work that would not be called upon within a traditional teacher's job, marketing of services was highlighted. Unlike schools with ready-made audiences,

in SSLPs the client group is largely self-selecting. The ability to advertise, cajole and promote is important. As one practitioner commented:

They have a lot of selling to do, so you need to be able to work well with groups of people who don't even know they need your service. You need quite a bit of sales skills to sell the benefits of Sure Start and clearly express what Sure Start is all about.

(health visitor, programme A)

Relationship between teacher disposition and teacher knowledge

The term disposition in this study is intended to convey a teacher's prevailing frame of mind that will affect their behaviour. It is used to represent a combination of qualities (temperament, character, personality) that can be attributed to an individual practitioner. It is a key construct that is used by interviewees in this study to account for differences in teacher performance.

Findings indicated that programme managers regard a teacher's personality as crucial in their ability to form effective relationships. The programme manager of the community role teacher (A) reflected on whether teachers' dispositions are moulded by experience of working with children or whether they are organic to the person: 'I do not know if that is working with children that she has adapted to use to work with the parents, or if it's just (teacher's name)'. Challenges surround quantitative measures of teacher disposition. The manager of programme F commented: 'I think it's a lottery recruiting to any of these posts, but you need a certain type of personality to work with this type of community'. Indeed teacher dispositions do not present as static entities, rather, as more fluid and dynamic qualities. The apparent qualities of a teacher at one point in time may be significantly different at a later point. This is illustrated in the excerpt below when the teacher in the community role speaks about her initial lack of experience with uncooperative parents:

With the school it was the parents that wanted to engage that came and that was great. Because I worked in a special school the children were bussed in so I didn't have some time with the parents either in the morning or the evening. So parents are quite an unknown quantity to me especially the ones that did not want to cooperate.

However, in her Sure Start role, one of the strengths of this teacher, as perceived by her manager, was the ability to form relationships with families, perhaps indicating an intrinsic rather than learned quality: 'She's got a very good attitude towards families, doesn't make assumptions and will work with the parents, at their pace, that's

important'. In another example, despite general recognition of the unsatisfactory role of the teacher in the school programme, creativity was nevertheless attributed to this teacher, suggesting extrinsic rather than intrinsic constraints impacting on role development:

They need to be innovative, they need to be prepared to take a chance, try something different, not stick with the old traditional ways (teacher's name) is very innovative, she's very creative.

(programme manager E)

This research did not set out to measure how effective teachers were. It did though, show that levels of participation within the theoretical framework of Communities of Practice, is strongly associated with teachers that are able to 'think outside the box', are self motivated and confident within their professional domain and that these attributes may be transmitted through different shades of personality. Features of people skills will emerge and develop as teachers engage and negotiate meaning within the groups of which they are members of.

Table 5.6 reports findings relating to the perceptions of Sure Start members about the most valuable contribution a teacher can bring to their team. Managers from programmes characterised as having teachers in the SENCO role and extended nursery role both pinpointed staff training as the most valuable contribution their teacher made. The teacher on the consultant role programme felt the most valuable contribution she could make was to nurture confident parents that enjoy being with their children, so that they in turn can promote their own child's learning. This view is shared by the programme manager (D) and the manager of the co-ordinator role programme, who identified strengthening child/parent bonds as a teacher's most valuable contribution.

So there appears to be a difference between programme managers that regard teacher's value mostly in training roles, and those that view their worth in creating conditions whereby parents enjoy being with their children and in doing so enable learning to accelerate. This finding contributes to the body of evidence on the identity transformation experienced by teachers and is analysed within the frameworks of Activity Theory and Communities of Practice in part 5.5.5.

Table 5.6 Perceptions of the most valuable teacher contribution

Programme teacher	Attributes a teacher brings to a SSLP
Community Role (A)	Educational approach; ability to give strategies and advice to help children progress (play worker) Raise expectations (programme manager) 'Quality' (programme manager)
SENCO Role (B)	Provide staff training (programme manager)
Extended Nursery Role (C)	'Quality' through training and relationships with staff. (programme manager)
Consultant Role (D)	Lots of creative ideas in relation to child development. (health visitor) Specialism in early years (SALT.) Develop practice in settings (SALT) Experts in their field with ability to make trusting relationships (programme manager) Ability to nurture confident parents that enjoy being with their child and can promote learning. (teacher 1) Raising (parents) awareness of what their children do and how important it is that they join in and value child's play.(teacher 2)
School Role (E)	Strong view of the development of the Foundation Stage. (SALT)
Co-ordinator Role (F)	Promote positive early experiences for children. (programme manager) Strengthening child and parent relationships (programme manager) Giving practical, low cost advice to parents in small achievable steps (programme manager) Achieving confident parents that enjoy being with their children so that they learn together (teacher)

5.3 5 Surfacing of Professional Craft Knowledge (PCK)

PCK has been a useful concept in this study to help understand how teachers make sense of their roles. As reported in Chapter 3 (theoretical framework) PCK is a situated model of learning. It is the knowledge accumulated over time from experience of practice that shapes individual teachers actions and behaviours in everyday situations. It is a type of knowledge rarely articulated by teachers, although when uncovered discloses a rich stream of pedagogic thinking and reasons behind decision-making in interactions with learners. As reported in the previous section, this study suggests that experienced teachers bring this added dimension, Professional Craft Knowledge, with them to their work in SSLPs.

In the following section, the acquisition of PCK is reported within the specific context of a small parent and child outreach group in programme A. It unpicks and illustrates aspects of craft knowledge deployed by one teacher in their every day work within a SSLP. Whilst PCK was revealed in the activity of all the teachers in the study, this particular example has been selected to exemplify a teachers thinking behind her actions in the Sure Start context. She is lucid and open and provides detailed insight into the reasoning behind her behaviour in specific situations.

The passage below provides the teacher's perspective of the project. She describes her short-term objective in terms of children's outcomes: '*we just want them to achieve*'. In the context of an individual session, achievement is seen in terms of children's engagement, however brief, within the small group, whilst the long-term aim is for the children to improve their communication skills. The teacher views her own role as one of modelling interactions with children, so that parents can observe first hand a range of strategies.

Chatterbox is a parent/child interactive group and apart from baby massage, is really about the only group where parents have to actually play a part in the group. It's for children who have a recognised speech and language difficulty and that could be concentration, because that's usually how they come to us. They flit or they are quite difficult to engage, so parents come and it looks a bit like a bun fight! What we have done now; we have now realised that children are ready for group work, so we do some group work and it's quite short, but we want them to just achieve and then the rest is more or less free play but we are modelling how to talk to children and how to engage.

We don't ask them (parents) to do anything and then we have a little bit when they go and have their own coffee and that's quite good as well, because we get the informal side of things. And also they have a chance to have a good chat and

if anything is on their mind we try to not let that intrude on the group, because what we try to say is don't talk about the children when they are there. That's not always possible in an ideal world as some people become very distressed. But we try to do that because actually it changes the nature of the group when parents are very distressed and the children are there. But we always give them time and say what we are going to do for them. So the children come and these parents are all parents that are quite difficult to engage. They are reluctant to engage and they are reluctant to say if there is anything wrong with the children's speech or anything like that. So, when they come, they are supposed to stay for just a term, but they stay for ages and you can't really say, 'You can't come any more.' I was going to say get rid of them, but that's really awful.

Parents' characteristics can be clearly identified as a factor in determining the actions taken by the teacher. The teacher has to consider the affective states of both children and parents. She is very aware of, and frequently refers to, the state of emotional receptivity within the parent group:

If anything is on their mind we try to not let that intrude on the group (and) some people become very distressed...it changes the nature of the group when parents are very distressed.

In another example, the literacy levels of parents were the reason for selecting a particular strategy to promote book sharing skills. This is explained by the teacher:

One of the things they (the parents) liked was when I took photographs and I made a book of a story with their child, it was on a bit string – so and so went in a car...they liked that 'cos they had this kind of laminated child and then they just put them in each of these things – but then it got too costly.

Interviewer: so that was for them to take home to share the story?

Yes, and we had no words on it so they could make it up 'cos some of those parents can't read and we didn't want to put anybody on the spot.

So not only children's characteristics, but also parents' characteristics are factors affecting teachers' actions on a day-to-day basis. This extends the role of the Sure Start teacher and represents a significant departure from the traditional role of the early years teacher. On the whole, teachers in the study lacked extensive experience of intergenerational teaching. Sure Start teachers work in an arena where there is no 'master craftsman' to learn from; they are pioneers, drawing on their Professional Craft Knowledge and applying it to new situations.

A short transcript from the teacher interview, illustrates a conflict of interest and a solution to a problem; parents don't like the sound of the parachute, but the teacher wanted the children to experience the activity. The teacher decides that the parents

should leave the room, in this instance putting children's learning before the sensitivities of the parents. Towards the end of the passage, the teacher reflects on pupil performance, articulating part of her repertoire of strategies to encourage children engagement and 'appropriateness' to a particular situation. Drawing on her experience as a teacher she knows that young children's affective states fluctuate, and teaching strategies have to be tailored according to the child's receptivity at any particular moment. The teacher in this context sees her role as getting the message across to parents that a flexible rather than dogmatic approach is necessary when interacting with young children.

In the one (Sure Start area) they don't like the parachute, but I said that you don't like that but the children like it. So they compromised and they all go out. They do not like the nylon, yes there's a few parents that can't stand the nylon.

Interviewer: That's really interesting.

Yes they don't like the nylon and they can't stand the shushing noise and because sometimes it gets quite noisy and boisterous. So we said alright you can go out but we still want to keep it in and we also have soft clay, which we stopped for a while because we couldn't calm them down. They were as high as kites, so we've taken that on board. We might introduce it, but we'll eliminate it for a little while. So we do listen to them but will also say that we would really like to continue with that and tell me why rather than just saying no that this not going to continue. I am really hot on action and what you should be doing. So if we put a comment – what are we going to do about this? If we notice something in a child what are we going to have a try at. Also showing parents that sometimes it does not always work. You know sometimes distractions work sometimes they don't. Sometimes negotiation works, sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes symbols work sometimes they don't. You know sometimes using some sort of language works, sometimes it doesn't. It worked today but it might not work tomorrow.

In this further example, a desirable state of activity was maintained by the removal of clay at a session, 'they (children) were high as kites, so we'll eliminate it for a while'.

The next excerpt illustrates the teacher's response to another aspect of group functioning. The usual practice within the group, and one that the teacher had trained support practitioners to follow, was to briefly record areas of learning children found difficult. The teacher in this instance recognised the significance of a particular episode; the increased use of language by a child in a group situation. The teacher's action was to record all the language heard, extending the reach of a planned procedure. She went on to analyse the language used by the child, make connections with information given by the child's mother at a previous session and deepen her

knowledge of the child's level of functioning. The teacher articulates her thinking below:

What I want them (support practitioners) to do now, and think about, is to do a snap shot of the child when they join the group and start to just take notes in certain areas that they seem to have difficulty in. The only reason why we recorded all of Holly's language was because we have never heard her speak so much.

Interviewer: So you managed to catch everything she was saying?

Well a lot of it... so that we had an idea of what she was capable of. She was asking questions and commenting. She was using not two words but three words together and she had descriptive words like sticky, yucky and things like that. So that is what I wrote in her bit because she has never used anything like that before and her mum said that she talks like that at home but has never spoken in a group, or anything

Interviewer: This afternoon you were recording one of the children during parachute time; Holly wasn't holding onto her side of the parachute and so you stopped your recording and supported her. I was just wondering what your thinking was then.

Well demonstrating to the other members of staff that you could let go, that is about the children and actually I realised that she could not do it, which I brought to another colleagues attention, two things at once. She realised that if she was waiting for the ball to come that she could not possibly flap as well. But when she did flap she was then quite animated and quite giggly.

In another instance the teacher picked up on the lack of physical control in a young boy as a cause for his crashing into people, rather than a deliberate behaviour on his part. The mother had shouted across the room to her son to 'stop'. The teacher had intervened and approached the boy who had then put his arms around her. The teacher was able to draw on her experience of child development, knowledge of the child and understanding of the two-way interactions between mother and child. Being able to explain the observed behaviour of the young boy to his mother helped her to understand her son's behaviour, triggering a shift from a negative to more positive attitude, thereby supporting his emotional development. The presence of the mother in the group, to see first hand her son in a group situation and receive immediate feedback from an experienced practitioner, highlights the value of family approaches.

Interviewer: And if you hadn't of taken the lead at that point...

That's quite nice that interaction really. But he does like that close physicalness and I think that he wasn't judging the distance but crashing into you rather than

stopping. Getting his mum to see that he was not being disruptive it was just a difficulty that he had which lots of people had but because we were there we were able to notice it.

The teacher reflected on the strategies she used during group sessions. The use of modelling, joining in activities and interacting with children to keep group momentum alive all featured. The teacher's intention to maintain a Normal Desirable State of Activity and the exposure of her professional craft knowledge, expressed as the skills she's been learning for years and years, is illustrated in the quotation below:

I do demonstrate a lot. I often get down on the floor even if there is a meeting and a child comes in. I always make the children my priority and not the recording. Some people can't get past that and priority is the recording and not the hands on. But sometimes it's all hands on deck as we have had occasions where a child has thrown a wobbly, but the best thing is keep the rest of the group engaged. Now if that means that two people have to support the child having a wobbly, who is there to do the recording – well it doesn't matter, keep the group flowing and then I'd quietly say to the children don't let's worry about that, that's fine we're having a good time and just keep demonstrating, but that's because we have skills don't we that we've been learning for years and years and years and years.

The teacher is complicit in upholding rules designed to keep group dynamics child focussed. She justifies such action through her knowledge and understanding of the effects of negativity on children's emotional development. Implicit in the action again is maintaining the flow of the activity. This is in line with Brown and McIntyre's (1993) notion of Normal Desirable States of Activity, but extended beyond the classroom to a parent and child group in the community:

They (practitioners) came up with rules and we had quite a challenging group at one time of parents. Go and talk out those kind of things in another room. I wasn't devaluing what they had to say but the children were constantly having to hear their misdemeanours in public so we came up with that.

The teacher voices long-term aims for the group as increasing parental involvement in children's learning. She felt it was appropriate for short-term cognitive objectives to be decided by parents and expressed confidence in their decisions *...as I knew my parents so well*. The teacher's role has been extended; not only tuning into children, but also tuning into parents. In the example below, the teacher encourages parents to set goals for their own children. This puts into practice the Sure Start principle of parents being their children's foremost educator:

Usually for the parents, we just scribe to them what they say; they do not have any evaluation form. As I knew my parents so well, I got them to set their own

goals so one of them was to choose a song from the singing time. They will name two pieces of food when they're at snack table, this is for a child that will would not talk at all and actually she got there really quickly when we had those tiny goals – but her mum we got her mum to think it out - Those are the things that I wanted to incorporate in each of the groups.

The teacher trains ECEC practitioners in the skills they need for the job. 'Hands on' modelling by the teacher is a favoured approach. In the example given, report writing, the teacher turns around negatives to positives and breaks down targets into smaller steps. Her strategy is to use the situated perspective, rather than organise formal training or refer to protocols and guidelines:

They (practitioners) have had to write a report as they have never had to write one before, so what I have done is kept their main report and then done another report as they were quite negative like can't, can't. So I put that they can and how they do it if we use something simple. So I will put that they have achieved this with adult help and put exactly what it was. Then they realise that they do not have to write negatively at all you can say that we have all achieved in our way but some of us have needed this extra support and the parents then think oh yes they can do that and what I need to do it such and such.

Sensing the need to support activities within the group to promote turn taking, the teacher offered practical ideas that she felt would match the needs of families:

'everybody's got a ball, bubbles are cheap'. Again parent's characteristics come to the fore in the teacher's decision making:

And they (practitioners) kept saying, we can't do that, and they can't do that, do that, so I said right, just have core activities which are just 4 or 5, and you know rolling the ball, everybody's got a ball and you can see how you do that, bubbles are cheap and you can see how you can engage, you know it's just like waiting for your turn, we'd whisper a child's name and then they can come and had a go, at that stage they couldn't chose a child so you would chose a child, so even within that activity you were differentiating all the time – to show staff how to do it.

The teacher in this project is not only facilitating the learning of parents and their children, but also, concurrently, actively supporting the professional development of practitioners. This concurs with findings from the REPEY study (Siraj-Blatchford et al 2002) and Hutt et al (1989), which both reporting the practice of less qualified staff becoming more effective when working alongside qualified teachers.

As already noted, induction and training of support practitioners were part of the teacher's role in this project. The limitations of a formal approach to training soon became evident, triggering the teacher to use a range of situated actions to extend the

skills of the practitioners including, in the words of the teacher to: 'show staff how to do it; show them an extension activity; leaving strategies; providing practical ideas; keep giving them notes and things'.

The affective state of the ECEC practitioners were cited as reasons for putting them on the spot, rather than allowing time to prepare for taking the lead during sessions. In this respect the teachers approach is in marked contrast to that of the health lead:

Today I never told them when they left, 'cos they've seen us do it – 'cos sometimes they just die, but if they prepare they get worse and worse and worse I've noticed that. (name of OT) says it's unfair and she gives her staff loads and loads of warning. I put them on the spot usually. I go out and say do you realise I feel exhausted and then there's all the recording and I wasn't enjoying it in the end, so I said come like, none of you do it, three of you, only me, so it didn't give the impression that you're doing the leading and the recording.

Aspects of the teacher's image are revealed in the passage below. The teacher speaks about being a perfectionist. She wants the project, one that colleagues refer to as '*her baby*', to be recognised and acknowledged as a significant and robust piece of work. The teacher was unhappy with the SSLP evaluation, feeling it was superficial, failing to capture the true value of the group. The teacher appears to be striving for professional affirmation and has chosen the project as a key vehicle for this:

I'm a little bit of a perfectionist and I want to keep refining it until it's something that you can be really proud of and entrenched in word levels and understandings. It's much more a whole thing about group work and dynamics.

This section of the findings, has then, illuminated the activity of an experienced teacher. It has shown her highly skilled behaviour within the context of a parent-child group. The expertise of the teacher has been revealed through uncovering her thinking in her day-to-day work. This has parallels with the model (strand B), elaborated by Stephen et al. (1998).

In summary, findings suggest the professional craft knowledge teachers bring to SSLPs is their ability to:

- Ensure the smooth running of sizeable groups of children with their parents/carers, including the use of appropriate strategies to manage behaviour, in order to maintain normal and desirable activity.

- Sustain group momentum through maintaining the flow of activities, whilst placing children's outcomes at the heart of family learning sessions.
- Make judgements in relation to the characteristics and dynamics of families, particularly their emotional states and receptivity to cognitive demands, and modify the learning environment accordingly to create a positive emotional and enabling cognitive, climate.
- Enable families to engage in appropriate tasks and meaningful interactions, recognising the holistic nature of young children's learning

5.4 Teachers' involvement in everyday activities.

In this section, findings will focus on activities teachers in SSLPs were actually engaged in, providing a context specific perspective (Brown and McIntyre 1993; Cooper and McIntyre 1996; Stephen et al 1998). It will investigate and report on the breadth and diversity of roles that teachers undertook in their daily work. As noted in Part 5.2.2 five vignettes of teacher's practice have been included in the appendices (K, L, M, N and O) to bring to life episodes of their working day. They are intended to provide a snapshot of the teacher at work and to create a feel for individual teacher activity. It is hoped they will illustrate the interwoven nature of themes analysed in the main text.

Findings are reported within the following headings:

Teachers exchanging knowledge

- Teachers as trainers
- Modelling practice
- Using reflective dialogue

Teachers as facilitators of intergenerational learning

- Family learning projects
- Work with babies

Teachers as pedagogic leaders

- Managers
- Educational experts
- Specialists

5.4.1 Teachers exchanging knowledge

Within SSLPs, knowledge sharing and generosity of knowledge exchange take place in a variety of ways. Teachers participate in planned, as well as incidental and spontaneous exchanges arising from social interactions within the Sure Start community. In the following excerpt a SSLP community worker discusses being open to information sharing. She frames protection of professional knowledge within notions of status and power:

Instead of hanging onto your knowledge, which is powerful, it's about sharing it. And sharing it in a way that everybody can benefit, 'cause we all know that we all hold an awful lot of information between us as a team, and it'd be very powerful of us just to be condescending to somebody and saying well, we'll give you a little bit of this but not all of it, or we'll give you a bit and say oh well it's a shame you didn't understand it.

(programme F)

Knowledge exchange takes place within communities of practice, when social relations are conducive to such relations. A teacher must be a legitimate member of the community; that is be accepted as having a right to membership of the group. As participation increases opportunities for meaningful contact with other members increase.

Teachers as trainers

Respondents spoke about teachers '*training up practitioners*'. This training role was not just restricted to ECEC workers but extended in a horizontal dimension, within the multi-agency context, to include, health professionals. Part of the community teacher's role (A), was, for example, to:

Train up some of the practitioners that are working with Sure Start... she has done regular training with the occupational therapist and the speech and language therapist and that has been ongoing.

Teachers in a different programme, the consultant role (D), established an early years network training scheme for pre-school practitioners working in the private, voluntary and independent sector:

The last one I did we got everybody coming and the pre-schools did close. It was on outdoor learning, it was just wonderful.

(teacher)

Whilst crossing into the workspace of other training providers, this networking and training role extends Sure Start teachers reach and influence across programme areas,

as well as raising the profile of marginalised practitioners. The manager from the programme (D) shared the same positive outlook of the training scheme as the teachers, as demonstrated in the comment below:

They have done this wonderful thing of getting all of the pre-schools once a term to have an in-service day.... traditionally they've (the practitioners) been quite competitive but now they are working more as a team and they give them training opportunities.

However, teachers organising professional development opportunities for practitioners holding lower qualifications, mainly NVQ 2 and 3, reinforces hierarchical relationships, implicit in the phrase: 'they (teachers) give them (pre-school practitioners) training opportunities'. No examples of joint training delivered by teachers and childcare workers together, surfaced in this research.

The teacher in the co-ordinator role (F) took an education lead on training colleagues working with children under three: 'like Birth to Three, we have actual training sessions, so the team know the way we're working; the whole team'. It is interesting to note both examples of training quoted above, namely outdoor learning and work with under threes, are not areas of expertise traditionally associated with teachers with school backgrounds. These Sure Start teachers have not only embraced new knowledge themselves, but also feel competent and confident to offer training to other practitioners.

Some teachers used training opportunities to promote a holistic approach to children's learning. One teacher, commenting on the inter-relatedness of children's involvement in learning and well-being, reflected in training she had delivered:

The one that we have got planned for in about a fortnights time we are doing on observation of children, but we want to be looking at it within a holistic approach, children's levels of involvement in their play, their self esteem and getting to know the child as a whole and then being able to take the planning from there.

(teacher, programme D)

Some training undertaken by teachers was delivered jointly with other professionals.

The most common pairing was with speech and language therapists, stressing the plurality of services focussing on developing communication skills in young children. This coupling was regarded positively by a childcare practitioner in one programme, who felt it was not only relevant and pertinent to her job but enabled her to change her own practice:

(The teacher) does communication training with the speech and language therapist. Quite often they will do it together and I found that really positive. You kinda sit back and think yeah, I could do that. Then you start doing it on a home visit without even realising that you are doing it, rather than like, keep on at the child...do this do this...etc. You sit back now and let the child, rather than keep, you know interfering all the time. I do find that I do that a lot now.

(childcare worker, programme A)

Modelling practice

Teacher's involvement in episodes of learning and teaching alongside other practitioners, particularly less qualified childcare staff, was thrown up in this research as occurring in both planned and spontaneous ways. Teachers modelling practice was confirmed by EPPE findings as effective in raising the standards of differentially trained practitioners (Sylva et al, 2004). Observing one teacher working in a child's home, a childcare practitioner consciously acknowledged taking a subsidiary role in order to study teacher/ child interactions:

I tend to take a back seat when she comes in on a joint visit. I would like to be able to just watch her on a home visit and see what she does....it's nice to just sit and watch everybody really, as everyone does different things in different ways, but it's nice to get that feeling.

(programme A)

This aspect can be understood within the framework of Wenger's Communities of Practice when practitioners learn craft skills from close and regular contact with a 'master craftsman', in this context an experienced and skilful early years teacher. Child-care staff notice and respond to the practice of the teacher, in turn shaping their own development as practitioners. Opportunities for teachers to model practice to ECEC practitioners (holding NVQ level 3 or 4) offers a valuable mechanism for knowledge and skill acquisition and workforce development.

In every programme, teachers spent varying amounts of time working with practitioners from different agency backgrounds, and in a range of settings. This did not necessarily form a substantial part of a teacher's working week, but nevertheless contributed to a significant aspect of their work. This is shown in Table 5. 7. The easiest venues for Sure Start teachers to access are educational settings, where their presence is generally accepted and often welcomed. In all the programmes, teachers had roles within early years settings, and with the exception of one programme where input was within a mainstream setting, all the teachers worked in community based pre-school settings on a regular weekly basis, where they, 'work alongside children providing examples of good practice of working, playing with children'. Sure Start teacher's involvement in parent groups led by health visitors in one programme

indicated modelling of practice was directed not only to parents, the intended audience, but also health visitors. Since health visitors represent a universal service and would expect to see families of young children several times before they reach school age, their influence is extensive. Teachers' modelling practice to parents in the presence of health visitors is therefore an oblique and possibly non-threatening route to sharing knowledge and skills.

Table 5.7 Opportunities for teachers to model practice to other practitioners

Programme	Practitioner background	Agency	Contact with teacher on SSLP
Community Role	Other teachers	Education	Occasional
	Educational Psychologists	Education	Occasional
	Childcare workers	Sure Start staff	Regular, weekly
	Occupational Therapists	Health	Regular, weekly
	Speech and Language Therapists	Health	Regular, weekly
	Health visitors	Health	Rare
	Midwives	Health	Extremely rare
	Play workers	Social services	Occasional
Area SENCO Role	Other teachers	Education	Rare
	Library worker	Education	Occasional
	Childcare workers and manager of nursery	Community organisation	Regular, weekly
	Speech and language therapists	Health	Occasional
	Health visitors	Health	Extremely rare
	Midwives	Health	N/a
	Social worker	Social services	Occasional
Extended Nursery Role	Other teachers	Education	Occasional
	Childcare workers and managers	Education	Regular, weekly
	Speech and language therapists	Health	Occasional
	Health visitors	Health	Rare
	Midwives	Health	Extremely rare

Consultant Role	Other teachers	Education	Regular, daily
	Educational Psychologists	Education	N/a
	Childcare workers and setting managers	Education	Regular, weekly
	Speech and Language therapists	Health	Regularly
	Health visitor	Health	Regular, weekly
	Midwives	Health	N/a
School Role	Other teachers	Education	Regular, daily.
	Educational Psychologists	Education	N/a
	Childcare workers	Education	Regular, daily
	Speech and Language therapists	Health	Regularly
	Health visitor	Health	Occasional
	Midwives	Health	Never
Co-ordinator Role	Other teachers	Education	Occasional.
	Educational Psychologists	Education	N/a
	Childcare workers	Education	Regular, weekly
	Speech and Language therapists	Health	Regularly
	Health visitor	Health	Occasional
	Midwives	Health	Occasional

Reflective dialogue

Reflective dialogue is defined in the SPEEL project (see literature review) as:

A two way discussion between research partners, intended to uncover significant thinking about day to day practice through the process of scaffolded discussion about images of that practice.

(Moyles et al 2002:160)

This is a useful description. It implies personal practitioner thinking as tacit, but accessible through structured dialogue. This fits with the notion of Professional Craft Knowledge, a key theory employed in this study to analyse findings. Cooper and MacIntyre (1996) use as a tool for reflective dialogue lesson observations of pupils, followed by semi-structured interviews of teachers and pupils framed around the

lesson. Whilst Moyles et al. (2002) use video footage of practitioners at work as a tool to trigger reflective dialogue. Variations of both these themes were in evidence surrounding the practices of teachers in SSLPs.

In this study, teachers created conditions for reflective dialogue (see literature review part 2.3) between themselves and parents as well as themselves and other practitioners. The degree of scaffolding and formality of interactions varied from programme to programme. Reflective dialogue was built into targeted groups within the community role programme (A) in informal, and sometimes spontaneous, ways (see vignettes appendices). The teacher and parents observed children interacting with practitioners in an adjoining space. The teacher then engaged parents in dialogue concerning children's play and communication strategies. The parents in turn, reflected on connections between observed behaviour in the session and their child at home. The teacher and parent together then suggested ways to help the child move forward. The extent and depth of dialogue with parents was to some extent governed by parents' affective states; for example, if parents were preoccupied with other events happening in their lives, the nature of the discussion would be curtailed.

In another SSLP, teachers used video footage as a tool to engage parents. In parent groups known as 'stay and plays', teachers in the consultant role programme (D), used reflective dialogue to access parents' thinking surrounding their child's play. Teachers recorded sequences of children involved in play on video film (Ford 2004) (Appendix M). In this project the research partners were parents of young children, adapting the model used by Moyles (2002) designed to stimulate practitioner thinking. Whalley (2001) suggests this approach has the ability to strengthen parental involvement in young children's learning so that they in turn become more knowledgeable and skilled as educators of their own children.

5.4.2 Teachers as facilitators of intergenerational learning

Findings confirmed a distinctive feature of Sure Start teachers' roles, involved work with parents and other significant adults, as well as babies, toddlers and young children. All the teachers in the study were engaged in intergenerational learning initiatives of one kind or another.

Family learning projects

Family learning projects involving teachers were distinctive and tailored to the history of each programme. No single family learning model was common to all programmes; some involved separate adult and child times as in PEEP (Evangelou 2003) and Early Start (Brooks et al. 2004), whilst others focussed on families being together throughout sessions. Some family learning operated through groups targeting parents with children

Table 5.8 Teacher involvement in family learning projects

Programme	Target group	Origin	Venue	Teacher role	Teacher time
Community Role	Families of children with delayed communication skills.	Alternative to clinical model of service delivery. Multi-disciplinary project.	Programme linked site	Project management. Front-line practice. Staff training	Substantial
Area SENCO Role	Families with children transferring to mainstream school.	Suggested by programme manager.	Programme centre	Support role Front-line practice, particularly behaviour support.	Minimal
Extended Nursery Role	Open to all families.	Established by previous teacher.	Sure Start Nursery	Project management. Front-line practice to promote language through music and singing.	Minimal
Consultant Role	Open to all families.	Set up by health workers as outreach to families.	Church halls (drop-in centres)	Project management. Front-line practice including	Substantial

		Teachers introduced 'more structure'		reflective dialogue with parents.	
School Role	Families of children attending school.	Extension of existing project to promote book sharing.	School	Project management. Preparing resources. Front-line practice.	Minimal
Co-ordinator Role	Families of children transferring to mainstream school.	Triggered by programme manager following presentation at national conference.	Schools	Project management. Front-line practice. Multi-agency involvement.	Substantial

within a particular age band for a specific focus, for example, transition to school. Whilst more informal settings, drop in sessions, known as 'stay and play' provided an environment for teacher interventions.

For some teachers family learning projects formed a large part of their work. For others this role was given less prominence. Interestingly, all the teachers when initially invited to participate in this research, suggested times when family learning projects were running. This connects with the desire of most teachers to work with parents and the motivation some teachers expressed for changing from school to community-based work (as reported later in part 5.5.1). Whilst most family learning projects involved practitioners from multi-agency backgrounds working together to a greater or lesser extent, some teachers were rooted largely within an integrated education and care structure. These teachers were from the school role programme (E) and, to a lesser extent, extended nursery role programme (C), where both teachers voiced ambitions to eventually return to mainstream teaching. This finding reinforces the notion that the above teachers had not achieved full participation within their community of practice and were working predominantly within comfortable territories. Table 5.8 summarises the range of family learning projects involving teachers in SSLPs.

Work with Babies

Evidence from this research showed that teacher involvement in work with children from birth to three, but particularly with babies, was inconsistent across programmes, as detailed in Table 5.9. While the teacher in the consultant role (D) worked with ‘parents-to-be’, the teacher in the extended nursery role (C) decided this fell beyond her remit and declined to participate in workshops aimed at expectant mothers. This suggests differences in levels of participation within the community of practice and teacher’s identity transformation and is discussed in greater depth in part 5.5.4.

Table 5.9 Teacher involvement with children under three

Programme teacher	Involvement with babies	Involvement with toddlers	Involvement with Birth to 3 Framework
Community Role	Minimal	Minimal	Not known
SENCO Role	None	Minimal	Practitioner training
Extended Nursery Role	Workshops on learning resources (treasure baskets)	Parent workshops	Practitioner training
Consultant Role	Parents-to-be groups. Parent and baby groups. Family ‘drop-in’ sessions	High level of involvement	Proactive in taking messages forward across programme. Received national training
School Role	None	None	Co-ordinator of multi-agency task group
Co-ordinator Role	Workshops on learning resources (treasure baskets)	Promotes heuristic play within centre	Practitioner training Received national training

The national framework Birth to 3 Matters (DfES 2002), has opened wide the debate surrounding professional attributes that early years teachers bring to the very earliest stage of learning and development. It has polarised the attitudes and views of practitioners in the field, bringing to the fore discussion on the relevance of a teaching qualification to a unique and distinct phase of development. A contradiction was

exposed in the views of the manager of the school role programme (E) who spoke of a teacher's lack of expertise with children under the age of three, but nevertheless suggested they have a role in planning the learning and teaching for children of this age:

I think it will be (the teacher) working very much with the early year providers, because there will be things there the early years providers are obviously going to be experts in which the teachers aren't, and I see the involvement being more in planning activities and influencing how the early years deliver the services.

Whilst the perception of the manager of the co-ordinator role programme (F) was that teachers were apprehensive about working with children under three:

It caused some anxiety at the beginning...there's all these people in the programme who kind of have had in depth training around nought to threes....I think initially when (teacher's name) came to post, it was something that she had thought quite a lot about, so I think what (teacher's name) did is in terms of her own development and learning, was went away and read stuff and thought about things.

The teacher in the school role programme (E) spoke about moves to work with younger children, transferring strategies used with older children, rather than reflecting on the specific needs of two year olds. This top down approach is inherent in the quotation below:

I think that one of the things that might be developed, that I might be going into the pre-school, where children are two and a half and possibly sharing some ideas and ways of, you know, approaching maybe even taking in the idea of talking partners.

The teacher in the extended nursery role (C) who had not taken on board the learning of ones and two year olds, talked about '*blagging*' with reference to babies and stated she had '*no idea what to do!*' Several teachers thought that they could research areas of work they were unfamiliar with. For example, one teacher said:

I knew nothing about treasure baskets, nothing at all about it, I've looked at the penguin stuff and I really began to think about what I knew about how two year olds play.

(programme F)

Teachers mentioned learning from courses and private study, but interestingly no teacher suggested learning about working with children under 3 from other practitioners, observing young children, or talking to parents. An adult tutor, from a

background of training childcare workers, stressed the danger of teachers assuming an adequate knowledge base:

Unless you understand what you're doing, you can be a complete disaster area. I think if a teacher came in and thought how you work with babies is how you work with seven year olds it would be a complete and utter disaster.

(programme F)

Interestingly, in the consultant project (D), the health visitor acknowledges increased learning of child development from working with the teacher:

They (the teachers) work with babies as well. It's showing that learning starts at a very early age....and actually they've made me much more aware of lots of development I wasn't aware of before.

5.4.3 Teachers as Pedagogic Leaders

In this study the term 'pedagogy' refers to the craft (or practice) of teaching. In the early years context this will include the provision of instructive learning environments (Moyle et al. 2002 and Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002), which call for skilled practitioners to make decisions on appropriate techniques to facilitate learning.

Leadership roles emerged in varying capacities for all teachers. Teachers led family learning projects within their programmes. For example, the community role teacher (A) led a communication project (Appendix N); the co-ordinator role teacher (F) led a transition to school programme (Appendix L). The teacher in the school role programme (E) was nominated to lead the work of a small multi-agency group. Although the programme manager had questioned a role for teachers with children under three, she nevertheless accredited the teacher with leadership skills in work around the Birth to Three Matters framework, thereby conferring legitimacy to the teacher. This manager was trying to alter the trajectory of the teacher from outbound to inbound by facilitating multi-agency interaction at a strategic rather than front-line operational level: 'I see the teacher input via the strategy group... where they'll influence what they're (health visitors, midwives) doing'.

Teachers as managers

Management roles emerged in this study for the majority of Sure Start teachers. A programme manager describes this role, involving a Sure Start teacher at one nursery:

She manages the nursery manager and also plays a key role in the pre-school (private provider) she has played a huge part in developing, she did the business plan, she actually, she prepared all the papers, she helped recruit, we went

through Ofsted registration together, she interviewed and she's on the management board.

(programme B)

Findings suggest pressures and expectations exist for Sure Start teachers to take on management roles in relation to childcare practitioners. This reinforces a hierarchical management structure; with teachers managing less qualified staff, even though they have no training or experience of children under 3 unless they hold a dual teaching and NNEB qualification. It assumes therefore that teachers have, or are able, to acquire '*on the job*', knowledge and understanding, in relation to day care practice.

The teacher in the community role programme (A), line managed less qualified staff. She voiced concern that Sure Start experience would not necessarily compensate for the lack of qualifications if and when practitioners compete for jobs on the open market. The teacher was, in this case, uneasy with the responsibility of the long term employment prospects of staff she managed:

Through this service (practitioners) have been able to get to do a job that they might need more qualifications for, now whether that will just be enough experience to prove to people that I've done this and not be disappointed when they leave here, I just don't know. When we go into the big world we've got to be able to sell ourselves, but maybe we'll have the confidence to do that.

This research revealed a division between teachers moving to management roles and those retaining front-line practices. In the school role programme (E) job restructuring implied a change from being predominantly a teacher of children to a manager of support staff:

We're putting more responsibility on the teaching assistants, but under the supervision of the qualified teacher.

(programme manager)

Many of the teachers' jobs evolved to include managerial elements; whether this is because they were teachers or because they were more highly educated, was not explored. Wary of lack of training and experience in management, a teacher in one SSLP insisted on going on a management course (offered through the NHS). The same teacher faced a dilemma in deciding which appraisal system would be most appropriate to use within a multi-agency context; one owned by the education sector, or one belonging to the lead agency of the programme.

Teachers as specialists in education

Teachers hold many different forms of knowledge. As elaborated in part 5.3.5 Professional Craft Knowledge was shown in this research to be one form of knowledge influencing a teacher's everyday thinking and decision-making. Knowledge gained from professional training, represents another form. Team members regarded Sure Start teachers as experts in education; in the same way, for example, midwives were regarded as experts in their field.

During a discussion between the teacher in the consultant role programme (D) and a playgroup practitioner the remark, 'I don't know what I'd do without him... you know it's the words and everything' was volunteered. The teacher had the ability to weave educational language into dialogue and place knowledge within a pedagogical framework. The relationship may be characterised as that of master craftsman and apprentice.

This study found teachers in SSLPs were sometimes called upon to support ECEC practitioners studying for NVQ qualifications. Interestingly, in terms of content, these qualifications call on knowledge and understanding of children's development from 0 – 8 as well as a strong focus on the care of young children; neither element covered in depth in teacher training schedules:

They will ask us for all kinds of other things, lots of staff are studying their NVQs still and I keep getting asked for help for essays and have I got any books or resources I can lend them.

(teacher, programme D)

Specialist teachers

Clarity is needed here on the distinction between specialist teachers and teachers as specialists. The term 'specialist teacher' is used to describe teachers with a targeted, rather than universal focus; in the main teachers of children with additional needs (including SEN). These teachers usually have additional experience and qualifications relating to SEN and are regarded as having a specific expertise in relation to aspects of teaching children with learning difficulties.

Two teachers in the study held contracts specifying work with children with additional needs. Both teachers were employed in trailblazer programmes in the same part of the country, although they were not in contact with each other. Their roles evolved quite differently. One of the teachers characterised as the community role (A)

focused on work with families, whilst the teacher characterised as the Area SENCO role (B) concentrated on supporting practitioners working in pre-school settings. The teachers in the consultant role (D), also working with children with SEN, held more generic job descriptions. They spoke about: ‘helping with the early identification of children with any special needs and then referring them onto other services’. A blurring of boundaries arose between teachers with a brief to work with targeted children, and those with all children under the age of 4. The term ‘additional needs’ confers a much broader remit than ‘special educational needs’. It could be argued that for SSLPs, located within areas of deprivation, all children would fall under the umbrella of additional needs.

Teachers nominally holding specialist remits broadened their roles in response to opportunities to influence and develop inclusive services. Once in post the specialist distinction became less significant. Since most of the programmes in the study employed a single teacher, the education role fell to that teacher irrespective of educational specialism. In the consultant programme employing two teachers, no immediate distinction was observed between the SEN specialist and the non-specialist. So evidence from this study revealed a definite pattern of some teachers’ roles beginning with an SEN focus, but then broadening to a wider generic teacher role.

5.4.4 Perceptions of SSLP managers on teachers’ roles

Interviews with programme managers indicated that they were informed and conversant with the work of teachers and able to identify core aspects of teacher activity. The manager of the school role programme reflected on role change for her teacher. In the ethos led programme (F) a generic role was noted, but work with parents was not mentioned. In the SENCO role programme the manager spoke about the teacher’s work in settings, whilst the community role manager spoke about the teacher’s work with families. As already noted, both the above teachers were employed as specialist teachers (Additional Needs, SEN), indicating role differences. The extended nursery role programme manager specifically mentioned links with schools and local authority structures. Most of the programme managers identified a training role for teachers and also a role in family learning projects. The consultant role manager (D) identified improving children’s learning and the promotion of play between parent and child as critical. The extended nursery programme manager (C) discussed a future enhanced

development role for her teacher with regard to the Children’s Centre agenda. These views are presented in Table 5.10.

Parallel to perceptions gathered above from programme managers, those from team members, grounded in the experiences and encounters they experienced by working alongside a teacher, are recorded (Table 5.11). Only in one programme, the school role programme (E), did respondents reflect critically on the role of the teacher, and this was echoed by the programme manager (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10 Programme manager views on teacher roles

Programme teacher	Perceptions of programme managers
Community Role	To work closely with all families of children with additional needs. Skill-up other team members. Plan and deliver the curriculum in the community.
SENCO Role	To improve quality in settings, through talking to staff, modelling good practice, training staff on curriculum frameworks.
Extended Nursery Role	Provide quality check for Foundation Stage children in nursery Input into family learning activities Provide training for parents and practitioners Link to schools, private nurseries and EYDCP Information and input into Children’s Centres strategic development Break down barriers with parents
Consultant Role	Specifically to improve learning opportunities for children. Networking with pre-school practitioners. Training and support including role modelling for staff within settings. Support family learning projects. Promote play between parent and child. General consultative role within the programme.
School Role	Should be more about focus on families, rather than just children.
Co-ordinator Role	Generic Sure Start team member role. Overseeing quality in settings.

Responses of programme managers and team members broadly overlap without conflicting perceptions. Team members referred to teachers' roles in networking practitioners, training, supporting practice in settings and providing expertise in the area of children's learning.

Table 5.11 Team member views on teacher roles

Programme teacher	Perceptions of team members
Community Role	Provides good training (play worker). Assess children's development and suggest strategies to extend learning (community worker).
SENCO Role	Helps with nurseries and pre-schools, does a lot of training, gives advice to crèches. Helped set up new SS nursery, including ordering resources (play worker).
Extended Nursery Role	Networks practitioners (nursery practitioner). Introduces new ideas and evaluates practice (nursery practitioner). Identifies and organises training for EY practitioners (nursery leader). Supports practice in EY settings (nursery leader).
Consultant Role	Comprehensive account of the main areas of work including 'teach the rest of the staff about communication and the way children learn'. Teacher's role valuable and extensive (SALT)
School Role	Negative comments concerning practice restricted to school; proposed community based model (community worker). Questioned difference between schoolteacher and Sure Start funded post (community worker).
Co-ordinators Role	Lead role on child development and how children learn (community worker) Promotes user-friendly approach; that learning is enjoyable and resources don't need to be expensive. (community worker) Networks to roll out Sure Start message (Adult Tutor)

Summary of findings on teacher role

A critical and differentiating feature of teachers' roles, arising from this research, is the dynamic balance of practitioner, parent, and child focus. This study identified the emergence of three distinct strands within teacher roles in SSLPs:

Strand A – Role primarily child centred involving direct engagement with young children (usually of Foundation Stage age) in teaching situations. Outcomes for children are immediate and measurable.

Strand B - Role predominantly skill sharing with other practitioners, particularly those with lower qualifications in ECEC. The majority, but not all, work in pre-school settings as agents of quality assurance. Child progress is measured against specific curriculum targets whilst the setting, including competencies of practitioners, is measured through Ofsted judgements.

Strand C – Role chiefly aimed at supporting parents so that they enjoy being with their children, through understanding and knowing how their children learn. Access to parents may be through joint work with practitioners from health or social services. No immediate quantifiable outcomes, rather gains are viewed over a longer time span.

Whilst one particular strand will dominate, elements from all strands may surface in degrees. In this research strands B and C were most commonly represented. This study argues that as teachers participate more fully within their community of practice and resolve tensions created through activity systems colliding, strand C becomes the governing model for teachers employed in SSLP. This is the case in those teacher roles characterised as the community role (A), consultant role (D) and co-ordinator role (F). Interestingly, the teacher in the area SENCO programme interpreted her role within the parameters of strand B, even though the original job description gave scope for a much broader role. It is suggested that this could be due to a lack of teacher confidence and experience. Neither structural nor procedural conditions were apparent to hinder participation within the community of practice, but this teacher had taught for the shortest period of time, resulting in more limited Professional Craft Knowledge. Teachers in the school role (E) and extended nursery role (C), as already

reported, experienced structural and ideological barriers to full participation; they occupied marginal positions within their community of practice.

The question posed is; is it desirable and would teachers have the capacity to be effective, if they worked across several strands, or would they be spread too thinly? Should the roles be distinct and separate, rather than interwoven? The EPPE study (Sammons 2004) reports that teachers raise standards when working alongside other practitioners in ECEC settings. This challenges the drop-in advisory style or peripatetic model (Stephens and Sime 1998). It is suggested input from a teacher within an ECEC setting must be regular, consistent and sustained in order for that teacher to become part of that settings community of practice.

The sole programme with a teacher delivering an entirely child centred focus was the school programme (E). As previously reported this role was little different to that of a teacher on a school staff. This teacher taught groups of targeted pupils identified as experiencing language delays. Such a role is undertaken in many schools through the deployment of specialist staff. The use of the Sure Start teacher in this way was criticised by other team members and at the time of this research, changes in the role of the teacher were under discussion. Teaching discrete groups of children, as part of regular, planned, continuous programmes, with the exception of one school based Sure Start teacher, was not a role Sure Start teachers undertook. Interactions between children and teachers were on the whole inclusive of parents and /or other practitioners. A practitioner focus (strand B) dominated the teacher's work in the area SENCO role and extended nursery role Within the SSLP employing a teacher in the co-ordinator role, a combined practitioner and parental focus was evident. Finally, movement towards a growing parental focus was apparent in the community and consultant role programmes. This is presented in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12 Teacher roles and client focus

SSLP teacher	Main tasks involving teachers	Dominant focus
Community Role	Support parents with learning needs Lead family learning project Train practitioners and parents SEN case work Support transition to school	Parents and practitioners (Strands B and C)

	Manage multi-disciplinary team	
SENCO Role	<p>Management of nurseries</p> <p>Model learning and teaching</p> <p>Advise on setting resources</p> <p>Support transition to school</p> <p>Train practitioners</p>	<p>Practitioners</p> <p>(Strand B)</p>
Extended Nursery Role	<p>Promote 'quality' practice to pre-school settings</p> <p>Support transition to school</p> <p>Provide parent workshops</p> <p>Manage family learning project</p>	<p>Practitioners</p> <p>(Strand B)</p>
Consultant Role	<p>Project manage new nursery build</p> <p>Lead on Family Learning groups</p> <p>Network pre-school practitioners</p> <p>Initiate reflective dialogue project with parents in outreach capacity.</p> <p>Disseminate good practice to ECEC practitioners</p> <p>Support practice in pre-school settings, including advice on SEN issues</p> <p>Participate in parent and baby groups</p>	<p>Parents and practitioners</p> <p>(Strand B and C)</p>
School Role	<p>Teach groups of 3-4 year old children targeting language extension</p> <p>Manage a school based resource to promote language (story sacks)</p> <p>Support transition to school</p>	<p>Foundation Stage children</p> <p>(Strand A)</p>
Co-ordinator Role	<p>Lead multi-agency family learning project on transition to school.</p> <p>Manage Sure Start crèche</p> <p>Support practice in pre-school settings</p> <p>Lead on parent workshops</p> <p>Manage family learning projects on promoting play</p> <p>Train practitioners</p>	<p>Practitioners and parents</p> <p>(Strand B and C)</p>

5.5 Teachers as members of multi-agency teams

The excerpt below forms the introduction to this section. It originates from a health professional, capturing key nodes of activity within an expansive learning cycle (Engestrom 2001; Robinson 2004). The activity of parallel systems, education and health, have come together in the space of a SSLP. Differences in professional thinking have been recognised, but through working together over a period of time, conditions for knowledge exchange have been created, paving the way for identity transformation and knowledge creation.

I think traditionally, speech therapists and teachers, years ago, didn't particularly gel together, because they do come at things from a different angle and look at children slightly differently. And I feel we've worked at it and things are going well, but it isn't, in some ways been an easy relationship or it wasn't, but because we've worked together for some time now I feel that we do know what the boundaries are and that they would come to me to ask about speech and language and I would ask them about educational things and I think that we do work well together.

(Speech and Language therapist, programme D)

The multi-agency dimension of teachers working within SSLPs is analysed within a framework based on the Theory of Communities Practice and Activity theory (see chapter 3). In this section findings will be reported and discussed under the following headings:

- Participation and reification.
- Activity systems colliding.
- Resolution of conflict.
- Identity transformation.
- Learning communities.

5.5.1 Participation and Reification

The dual processes of participation and reification are central to understanding teacher performance in Sure Start communities of practice and these aspects are introduced in Chapter 3. Participation is about being an active participant in the practices of social communities; it affects what members of communities do, who they are and how they interpret what they do. Reification, on the other hand, is the process of giving form to

our experiences by making objects that turn such experiences into a 'thing,' for example, a timetable, a job description or a project name (Wenger 1998). These key concepts help explain findings and are used in the analysis reported in this section.

Motivation for career change

Disillusioned with senior management, one teacher, having already made the decision to leave her school teaching job, was drawn to the Sure Start post by the attraction of working with families in tandem with joining a project at an embryonic stage: 'It just really appealed 'cause the job description talked about working with families and being in at the start of something' (co-ordinator role). This desire to work with children and their families was echoed by a further teacher who felt that working with parents was the precursor to young children's learning. The prospect of working with parents and their children together was voiced as the rationale for some teachers to seek a change in career direction, as illustrated in the passage below:

Well, I felt I was able to perceive a great need for working alongside families and that is why I moved from working in a mainstream class to Sure Start... I felt that this was such a fantastic opportunity because it was working with the parents and children together and giving the parents the skills and confidence to be able to support children's learning.

(teacher, programme D)

A feeling of disempowerment within mainstream schools was identified as a factor in leaving school based work. Feeling unable to change practices and policies in schools, were cited as reasons for teachers to seek alternative careers. Associated with a perceived loss of professional autonomy, discontent with professional relationships was given as a motive for changing professional direction. This sentiment is illustrated in the words of a teacher below:

Being in school is very pigeon holed, no room for growth, stuffy. Do miss the children though. Not listened to – difficult to change things – relationship with the head / other staffthat's why I left.

(programme B)

Interestingly, none of the teachers explicitly mentioned working together with other professionals or learning new skills as drivers for a career change to SSLPs. No direct references were made either, to notions of social justice.

Legitimate peripheral participation

Legitimate peripheral participation is described by Wenger (1998) as a concept to characterise the learning of new members in groups (newcomers). Newcomers are viewed as potential members and are accepted into a group in accordance with their reason for belonging. Issues surrounding the legitimacy of teachers within SSLPs were raised in this study.

Findings from a preliminary investigation (Hastings, 2004) revealed many SSLPs were unsure of the authenticity of teachers working with children in a community context and particularly with children under the age of three years old. This concern was highlighted again in the main study. Comments gathered from a community practitioner and health practitioner respectively, highlights this point:

(The teacher could be) supporting things with children's learning, not that we don't know it, I worked in a nursery for fifteen years.

(programme E)

Some of the work that the teacher is doing could be done by someone without a teaching qualification and a lot of it overlaps with what we do ourselves.

(programme A)

Both practitioners appear defensive of their own territories and resentful of the intrusion of a teacher, questioning the added value of a teaching qualification. Attitudes of team members towards the inclusion of teachers on SSLPs will influence the climate affecting participation within a community of practice. In the consultant programme (D) the teacher was accepted by the team and valued for the contribution she was able to make:

I think people did respect me for what I was doing and as an educationalist I was seen as being key in the development of a new provision, which was great and I think that has been what made a huge difference

The study found that it was those team members who had no engagement with teachers who questioned the process of teachers becoming newcomers within the Sure Start community of practice.

Non-participation and marginality

Teachers, like all practitioners, will come into contact with a number of communities of practice at any one time with varying degrees of engagement. In some groups they will participate and others they will not. Both participation and non-participation will interact to shape the identity of a teacher, or the health visitor or the midwife. Non-

participation for a newcomer can be regarded as enabling if the potential for membership is present. However marginality may occur if participation is restricted rather than enabled by non-participation and this may lead to non-membership or a marginal position (Wenger 1998). These two concepts help explain and understand the situation of the two teachers in the school role (E) and the teacher in the extended nursery role (C).

The teacher in the school programme (E) expressed concern over the loss of informal classroom conversations with other teachers. She felt isolated from both the SSLP and school community. Her responses suggest she had not been able to significantly transform her identity within the Sure Start community of practice and identified more closely to a schoolteacher, than a Sure Start practitioner. As she remarked:

It's not as though, you know, you've got a reception class and you can have a chat to the teacher next door, who's also got a reception class.

The teacher in the extended nursery project (C) perceived herself to be on the edge of groups. She tried to engage with the Sure Start community of practice through 'contributing to cards and going out do's'. She wanted to negotiate meaning by alignment to social niceties, rather than through authentic mutual engagement in joint enterprises. This same teacher is not familiar with the names of the health visitors on her programme. She feels more comfortable in a nursery environment, choosing to base herself in the nursery rather than her office in the Sure Start central building. Her self-perception within the programme was of being '*fairly quiet*'. She views multi-agency work in a negative light, '*I like joint working, you don't have to take responsibility*' and her own skills and understanding within a narrow dimension. For example, she referred to her limited work with babies and their parents as '*blagging*'. This teacher had not been able to fully participate within her community of practice and her identity appears to be one of a (school) nursery teacher. This was recognised by the programme manager who felt one of the challenges for the teacher was to find ways to fit into the team.

Located in schools with limited opportunities for mutual engagement, both teachers in the school programme were experiencing aspects of non-participation leading to marginality. One teacher was highly critical of Sure Start, saying she lacked role clarity and had no communication with the SSLP as she was located entirely in a

primary school. At the time of fieldwork this teacher had been offered a school post and had accepted it. Strategic and operational procedures had created barriers to negotiation of meaning within a multi-agency team. The second teacher was hoping to participate more fully in the Sure Start team and moves were being made to bring about negotiation of meaning through alignment. This teacher had been nominated by the programme manager to co-ordinate a small focus group of practitioners from health and community backgrounds.

Levels of participation

As an indicator of levels of participation, research revealed a spectrum of views on teacher job satisfaction, ranging from complete satisfaction to disappointment. Two teachers spoke about '*missing the children,*' and in time wishing to return to mainstream teaching. These were the teachers from the school programme (E) and extended nursery programme (C), who both occupied peripheral positions. As one of the teachers said:

I do want to go back to teaching eventually...I miss not having my own class...my own group....that's what we all go into teaching for isn't it....to have our own children.

(programme E)

The pathway towards full participation is obstructed by both structural and ideological conditions for this teacher who remains on the periphery, experiencing an outbound trajectory. Disillusioned with the Sure Start job in its present form, the teacher states an intention to change practice in the future. Her voice conveys a sense of failure: 'don't feel I'm making enough difference really...hope to do things differently from September'. In contrast, the excerpts below, originate from a teacher moving from legitimate peripheral participation on an inbound trajectory towards full participation. This teacher openly acknowledges delight and fulfilment with her job:

That has been a wonderful project. I absolutely adore doing that (and) I feel far more fulfilled working here rather than in the classroom, very fulfilled, and have learnt so much by working alongside people from other agencies. It is a learning process for me. I feel a lot more relaxed...I just love the multi-disciplinary approach to the work and the opportunity to spend quality time working with children individually here as opposed to in a classroom where you are dealing with a lot of children. It's quite a privilege really.

(programme D)

Indicators of the level of teacher participation within SSLPs are recorded in Table 5.13. Differing levels of participation have resulted in dissimilar activity between the

teachers in the consultant role and the teacher in the school role. One is a broad, far reaching role, bearing no resemblance to the role of a schoolteacher whilst the school role is barely different from an additional language support teacher many primary schools employ.

Table 5.13 Levels of teacher participation in SSLPs

SSLP teacher	Indications of participation
Community Role	Inbound trajectory, moving towards full participation Allegiance with SSLP rather than LEA Identity transformation evident Joint work with health practitioners Daily opportunities for dialogue with workers from other agencies
Area SENCO Role	Inbound trajectory as teacher reflects on role and engages in joint work with wider range of multi-agency practitioners Allegiance with SSLP rather than EY team Personal friendships within team extend beyond workplace No tensions with health visitor co-ordinating work Daily opportunities for dialogue with workers from other agencies
Extended Nursery Role	Legitimate peripheral participation Relative newcomer Identity transformation constrained by holding dual post (retains ½ time LEA job) Chooses to mix with ECEC practitioners, rather than wider team
Consultant Role	Inbound trajectory, moving towards full participation Education team includes speech and language therapist Daily opportunities for dialogue with workers from other agencies Involvement in multi-agency family learning in outreach capacity Joint work with health visitors and work with babies
School Role	Elements of non-participation; marginalised, with outbound trajectory Legitimacy questioned by team members Located on school site Limited engagement with Sure Start practitioners

	Minimal identity transformation Job to be remodelled in response to change of programme manager
Co-ordinator Role	Inbound trajectory, moving towards full participation Daily opportunities for dialogue with workers from other agencies Joint work with multi-agency practitioners Identity transformation evident Shared office with community practitioners

In the consultant role the teacher responded to multi-agency work in a positive, creative way. By grasping and exploiting new spheres of activity, he forged new partnerships and became a trailblazer himself, for example, taking on the role of project management, ‘has changed the whole nature of what I have been doing. It has been much less direct work with children and families, much more work at the desk on the phone, in meetings’. Having the courage and confidence to enter new territory this teacher was able to become a voice in new forums, interacting in diverse work cultures. In doing so he was able to shape the attitudes of a wider audience on the role teachers can play. He demonstrates teachers do have a place in making decisions about learning spaces for young children. In the excerpt below the teacher reflects on the variety and pace of change in his work:

My kind of working day or working week has been really quite extraordinarily varied and different over the two years, there’s been lots of changes.

(programme D)

Conversely, the teacher in the school role retains a work pattern more akin to a school teacher: ‘at the moment, in my current role, I’m very school based and children I work with directly are children who are on the register of the school’.

As already reported in this study (5.4.3), specialist teachers in SSLPs were found to broaden their roles, rather than to narrow and enhance their specialism (as in SEN). The concept of teachers as specialists within a multi-agency team however (in the same way that health visitors, social workers or community workers, for example would be specialists) raised the question of whether these practitioners, through participating fully within a Sure Start community moved too far away from their distinct professional skills, when taking on the identity of Sure Start members. This is touched on by one SSLP member:

like everybody else on the team (the teacher) will do lots of things that aren't probably their role, because we work together and so when there's things that need the whole team to be involved in, could even be cleaning the toilet, we all do it

(community worker F)

The programme manager interpreted such activity differently. She felt a teacher cleaning, for example, was not cost effective. This should be viewed as belonging to the debate on appropriateness, rather than erosion of specialist skills. As Atkinson et al. (2002) point out making appropriate decisions are more likely to come from 'strong professionals' (see discussion in the literature review, Chapter 2).

This thesis argues teachers are not moving to become generalists. They retain and develop a specialist role in education, learning new knowledge as they participate in their communities. Their changed identities reflect a new multi-agency teacher practitioner. Continuing professional development is vital though, to keep teachers abreast of professional developments, so that they retain their educational specialism:

You need to have different people within your team who will specialise in particular things. So they're the tops in one thing and you can be the tops in something else and then share that information, so that's where I see the role. For the teacher I couldn't imagine anyone else.

(community worker A)

Structures and systems influencing participation

School holiday patterns

There was general consensus in this study that long summer holidays could be problematic whilst shorter holidays were not perceived as a difficulty. Teachers' holiday patterns are not restricted to education since several other agencies employ staff on term time only contracts. In one programme an adult tutor revealed a holiday entitlement far more generous than that of a teacher. Findings from this study reveal that programme managers were fairly divided in their responses to teachers' holiday patterns (Table 5.14). Managers acknowledged the flexibility and goodwill on the part of teachers who worked in holiday times and some explored ways to formalise such arrangements. One teacher highlighted differences in work cultures concerning holiday patterns and spoke about continuity and discontinuity of services within SSLPs:

My director found it quite hard about school holidays, yeah I think that they have just got used to me not being here on holidays. In school you have half term, it stops, and then you come back. Here it just continues so I mean you can be away from a meeting, so you can get out of touch.

Table 5.14 Programme managers' views on holiday entitlement

SSLP teacher	Views of programme managers
Community Role	<p>'big discussion that took place about 18 months ago when we originally set up the service but lots of people that worked with Sure Start are on term time only contracts'</p> <p>'I think it's quite important that we carry on with some things during the summer holidays. The shorter holidays don't seem to have been too much of an issue. I know that the teacher does come in during the holiday, but she does tend to focus on the administrative side'</p>
Area SENCO Role	<p>'There have been tensions. There were comments (about the teacher) being able to take things on when she couldn't take them forward through the holidays and half terms.... well maybe this programme is going to facilitate that.....perhaps we could ask her if she would like to come in'</p>
Extended nursery Role	<p>'school holidays are not a problem, (the teacher) does come in during the holidays'</p>
Consultant Role	<p>'The term time only thing is a huge one. A lot of our activities, we've got play schemes running, you know. That is a bone of contention really – the fact they go off for six weeks and we have to do all this work. They set it all up, they disappear'</p>
School Role	<p>Doesn't see schoolteachers' holiday patterns as a problem</p>
Co-ordinator Role	<p>Not applicable</p>

For the teacher in the school role (E), the long holiday was seen as a period of loss of contact with the SSLP affecting an already fragile relationship:

Obviously things are going on, in the holiday time, so for example, you know in the summer holiday they have fun week, you know, I put down that, I'll you know, come and work a day and if there's a meeting going on and it's half term, if I'm around I would attend it, so I try and be flexible, because , in a sense I suppose, I appreciate that I'm quite lucky to get school holidays.....I think the biggest problem in a sense is the long summer holiday, and if you miss out on forum meetings and early years meetings you can actually come back and feel that you know, you're not aware of what's going on quite as much....so if I'm attending meetings in the summer holidays, I just see it as that balance, you know with we, as teachers we always work more than our normal time and so you know

teachers work into the evenings, they do parent's evenings and they, you know, if you've got a fair on a Saturday you'd be at that, so I try and do a little bit extra and see it as that additional role.

The flexibility implied in the teacher's response is in contradiction to the perceptions of the speech and language therapist below who asserts rigidity on the part of the teacher. The programme manager however, viewed school holidays as 'no problem'. Perhaps this is a case of professional jealousy, rather than an authentic grievance:

The holiday play scheme, I think it's a shame that the teaching staff just don't ever get involved with that because they're sort of obeying the usual sort of rules about when teachers are available....if you're providing a service you can't decide when somebody wants or needs that service, can you.

Within programme D, views were divided between two health professionals. A speech and language therapist based in the education team accepted the teacher's holiday plan:

Teachers have a different holiday pattern to other staff, I work term time as well, so within our office, we talk terms and work terms.

Whilst the health visitor felt their presence was missed:

I think we probably do miss their presence in the holidays, I mean it's difficult in a way to say because even some of our groups don't go on over the summer for various reasons, because I guess most people and even if you're a teacher will take holidays in that period.... I think where it will be missed this year is that we're going to run some play schemes and it would probably be really beneficial to have teachers involved.

So opinion was divided between those who felt Sure Start could accommodate different professionals' conditions of service, and those that felt it was a disadvantage.

Part-time work

This study found that both full and part-time teachers were able to reach full participation within their Sure Start programme. However those teachers that were on the periphery of groups were part-time teachers. This finding would suggest general agreement with the MATCh study (Robinson 2004) that part-time workers find it more difficult to participate fully within multi-agency teams.

Salary levels

No explicit comments were recorded in relation to teachers' salary levels. Teachers generally felt they were expensive commodities. As already noted, the majority of the teachers were highly experienced, and would therefore be at the top end of the

incremental salary scale. No suggestions were voiced about reducing teachers' salary levels to become equitable with other early years professionals, but rather finding ways of providing professional development opportunities for early years practitioners to increase their earnings.

Physical location

Co-location of practitioners was revealed in this research as a factor influencing levels of participation within a SSLP. Data on the location of teachers was reported in a previous section (5.3.2) Table 5.3. Being based in a school contributed to teacher marginalisation and movement in an outbound trajectory. When health visitors were located in buildings separate from the main Sure Start centre, work with teachers as front-line practitioners did not materialise. Working from offices separated by a short car journey, a health visitor commented on barriers created by physical distancing:

It's been very difficult (knowing what's happening in the programme with the teacher) as we don't work in the same building... our working relationship probably isn't as close as it would have been when the health visitors were on the same site as Sure Start.

(programme A)

Structural barriers to social interactions were highlighted when a social worker and health workers operated from buildings separate from the teacher. After acknowledging minimal social contact with these staff, the teacher disclosed, 'I don't even know their names' and then went on to admit 'loads of people don't understand what I do here'.

Co-location of practitioners' communal workspaces affected opportunities for knowledge sharing. Several examples of incidental and unplanned conversations were recorded. This concurs with the findings of Robinson et al. (2004), who refer to the impact of corridor and coffee chats in multi-agency teams. Informal exchanges were nurtured by one programme manager who implemented a policy of mixing practitioners from all agencies within one large open office. She gave an example of the knock-on effect of integrating staff in this way:

A person was actually talking about some kind of feeding problem. I think it was actually (teacher's name). The speech and language therapist heard the conversation and she was the expert, in speech and language therapy for feeding problems and they were actually able to share their expertise then and discuss issues

(programme B)

The change from working in a multi-agency office to one dominated by education, had, in the eyes of one teacher, reduced communication across the wider team. This is expressed in the passage below:

I think that we're a well integrated programme really in that across the whole team people from the different disciplines and different agencies do work quite closely together, and although we are now divided up into an education team, a health team and a community team there is still an awful a lot of crossover and cross fertilisation. We didn't used to be like that, originally it was just one Sure Start and we all worked in the same office and there was a lot more interconnections a lot more spontaneous networking going on. This programme has grown enormously in the four years that we have been here as a trailblazer, and so office space has been restructured and that's had an impact on communication.

(programme D)

Reification

New learning arises through the convergence of participation and reification (Wenger 1998). Evidence of reification in SSLPs was evident in many forms, but principally in

Table 5.15 Reification of teacher activity within SSLPs

Written	Dialogue	Artefacts	New language
Work flow protocols Training schedules Evaluation reports Performance reports Minutes of team meetings Job descriptions Service Level Agreements. Diary sheets Promotional flyers to parents	Informal and spontaneous chats between team members. Daily talk around work activity. Discussion at whole team meetings Discussion at meetings with set agendas Supervision meetings Conversations with outside researchers Conversations with parents and visitors to SSLP. Anecdotal stories	Workspace in SSLP buildings Certificates Video film footage Photographs	'Sure Start way' New job titles e.g Communication Workers; Sure Start teacher. Project titles e.g 'welcome to nursery'

documents, articles, and dialogue. Examples of teacher's reified practice are recorded in Table 5. 15. The evolution and use of new language reifies practice, for example the term '*the Sure Start way*' has emerged to reify a complex web of conventions and expectations within SSLPs. The phrase was used in everyday situations several times by the teacher in the co-ordinator role programme during fieldwork.

Reifying practice through accurate job descriptions was inconsistent across programmes. When comparing them to the work teachers undertook, teachers were found to be more actively involved in family learning programmes than indicated in job descriptions. The exceptions to this were the teachers in the Area SENCO role (B) and school role (E). Nevertheless transformation in teachers' roles is revealed by the teacher that stated her 'job description would be completely different if it was written now; it was written three years ago' (programme B).

The job description of the teacher in the community role (A) revealed the greatest correlation to actual work activities. This was an updated job description, amended in response to a second SLA cycle. The teacher's original job description was unavailable for scrutiny, although the teacher herself spoke of it bearing no relationship to her everyday work: '*the job is now unrecognisable*'. The job description of the teacher in the co-ordinator role was markedly different from the role the teacher created. However, the heavy focus on developing a local curriculum for 0-3's had been negated by the introduction of a national framework. Wide interpretation of teachers' roles was found in this study. Teachers in the consultant role (D) demonstrated the greatest degree of innovation. Conversely the teacher in the school role demonstrated the narrowest interpretation of her job description.

5.5.2 Activity Systems Colliding

An activity system is a unit of analysis that explains interactions and relationships within a framework of object, subject, mediating artefacts, rules, community and division of labour (Engestrom 1987). When two activity systems in a SSLP come together, for example that of a teacher and that of a health visitor, tension and anxiety are often experienced. It is though, an energising process and through resolution of dilemmas and conflict, new learning can arise. Links can be made to practitioner disposition at times of conflict. Resilience and tenacity could be regarded as an asset in such situations (see part 5.3.4).

The passage inserted below discusses discontinuity within a SSLP. A programme manager recognises role deconstruction as a prerequisite to identity transformation. She views tensions that emerge as activity systems collide, as inevitable and necessary forerunners to the eventual outcome; expansive learning. Without periods of turbulence, even conflict, activity theory argues new learning cannot emerge. Multi-agency practice brings together activity systems generating energies that could lead to a downward spiral of negativity and low morale. By understanding processes at work, as in the case of this enlightened programme manager, teams can move forward:

I wanted something new to come out of that feeling of a little bit uncomfortable, thinking what am I doing within Sure Start? To me that is quite healthy, because then you kind of shed you previous role and you were able to look at opportunities. There were tensions and I think that in every big multi-disciplinary team there are bound to be tensions.... You've got to understand the tensions and accept that they are there. Then look at a climate to develop, where people don't feel threatened.

(programme B)

Two teachers note a personal feeling of a '*little bit uncomfortable*' within their teams. Both of the following excerpts depict tensions between team members; the first implies friction bubbling below the surface between members despite a superficial workspace climate of acceptance and universal camaraderie:

Because we all juggle along and we get on very well, everyone is very committed to the Sure Start programme, but we do bristle against each other, but there is nobody there to say, "Oh come on!" and they want us to be tolerant and all loving, but it's not always easy.

(teacher, programme A)

This next passage highlights the realisation that a teacher's expectation of experiencing difficult parental relationships has been misdirected. Rather than parents presenting the greatest challenge, encounters with team members expose emotional trysts and battles for ideological positioning:

I always thought it would be the parents bit that would be hard, but actually it's not, it's professionals that go on the defensive and think they've got it right...they just put up barrier... and the strategies they use actually, it's hard to challenge that, but it has to be challenged.

(teacher, programme F)

Crossing Professional Boundaries

Boundary is an important feature of an activity system. It is where one system ends and other begins. Activity systems in a multi-agency landscape are demarcated by

boundaries that are penetrable. When practitioner actions result in reciprocated crossing of boundaries, learning by expansion can take place (see chapter 3; theoretical framework). Boundary-crossing expresses learning within a horizontal dimension, describing movement across the divides of practitioner expertise. It is central to the heterogeneous, constantly fluctuating and multi-voiced nature of multi-agency working.

This study examined whether teachers could, and did, cross from their own activity system into that of other agency practitioners, particularly health. The study also sought to explore whether it was possible to identify characteristics that might facilitate boundary crossing. In the illustration below, a programme manager describes the teacher as quite likely to cross into the activity system of a health professional, whereas the opposite is less likely. This teacher is characterised as being ‘strong professionally’ (Atkinson et al. 2002):

I think she (the teacher) probably crosses more boundaries than some of the rest of us might. I think that with some disciplines it is very structured and I know, for example, health workers are really hot on their boundaries – we don’t cross that boundary and people have to do some things for themselves and if they are not prepared to show that they are willing to do that part of the thinking then we can’t do our part.

(programme manager A)

This particular teacher is undeterred at stepping outside her territory into the workspace of health practitioners. She is passionate about supporting families and actively promotes holistic practices. She is not restrained by boundaries and with relative professional autonomy, is creative in her role. It is probable, but not certain, that the health visitor is unaware of this dimension to the teachers work. The health visitor made no reference to this aspect of the teacher’s role during interview. This apparent lack of information may be due to health and education being located in different buildings. The avoidance of any potential conflict through physical distancing may be regarded as useful in creating conditions whereby practitioners can explore unimpeded, territory formerly owned by another agency, but without two-way boundary crossing the potential for expansive learning is limited. In the excerpt below this same teacher (programme A) details a role into supporting the implementation of health programmes, a significant move into another agencies territory:

We were going to hospital appointments – I was taking notes when people went to hospital so that I could go and type it up in more friendly detail. And then they do a little programme about what they have asked you to do because parents were being given information and were expected to be able to do that daily. Because

they have so many other things going on in their lives, their priority for doing that became less and less. So we decided to go and do bits of work like that and show them how it changes things.

The teacher justifies her way of working and explains her thinking in the short passage below. She recognises crossing professional boundaries can feel threatening and uncomfortable, but argues practitioners that are able to, will be able to achieve greater success:

I'm the only teacher for special needs, that I have a little bit of knowledge about a lot of areas, and a lot of parents only need that little bit of knowledge at the beginning. Also so do speech and language therapists; they have a lot of knowledge. We all want to sit down and be comfortable, sort of step out of the comfort zone, and say we could reach far more people if we do a little bit of your work

The programme health visitor acknowledges the teachers' involvement with vulnerable children, traditionally one of the core roles for social care and health practitioners, without judgement:

She gets involved with families whose children are thought to be at risk- they may be on the child protection register or may just be thought to be families of concern.

Using the metaphor '*professional overcoat*', another teacher points out that moving into unknown territory may trigger personal feelings of inadequacy:

It's a simple thing to say, drop your professional overcoat, because actually what a professional will do is think they're being, inadequate, no worse than that... almost incompetent, if you're not putting it right for people.

(teacher, programme F)

So whilst the above examples record professional boundary crossing as originating intrinsically, extrinsic drivers may also feature. One teacher took on the work of a speech and language therapist by default; the teacher 'took forward the speech and language screening measures at the time because we didn't have a speech and language therapist'. In fact staff shortages featured as a trigger for boundary crossing in several programmes.

Boundary crossing operates in both directions, although this study found few instances of practitioners taking on activities traditionally regarded as belonging to teachers. This may be explained by the lack of established teacher activity in community-based work with children under 4. One example that did emerge was a speech and language therapist selecting children's books for a Sure Start funded library,

a task she thought would have benefited from the skills of a teacher and would have preferred to have undertaken jointly with the teacher. Perhaps this represents an emerging space, or boundary zone (Warmington et al. 2004) where practices can be re-negotiated and reorganised. In this respect, activity theory views boundary crossing as a positive dimension, rather than a barrier, in the process of stimulating expansive learning.

Tensions between health and education

Issues surrounding confidentiality were flagged up as barriers to joined-up work in this study. Respondents referred to client based information sharing rather than skill sharing. It is the latter that is critical to mutual participation; nevertheless there are issues between health and education pertaining to individual client information. Teachers are perceived as being less guarded in their information sharing than health practitioners, as highlighted in the comments below, the first from a community worker and the subsequent ones from speech and language therapists:

I think that they are still quite separate in many ways. I think that it has got better but they (health) are very careful about sharing information

(programme A)

(there are).issues for us about confidentiality, because certainly teacher confidentiality and health confidentiality are slightly different, that has been an issue for working together on a day-to-day basis...I think that the teachers felt happy to share whatever we knew about a child, whereas we would think, no, we would only give them copies of reports if we've actually asked the parents whether that's ok to do that

(programme D)

I benefit from being an NHS professional in that parents are quite happy that I'll only share the necessary information. I record far more written down than (the teachers) do.

(programme E)

Differences in protocols and procedures relating to confidentiality across agencies exposed in this study, concurs with research reported by Robinson et al. (2004).

The positional status of practitioners within hierarchical structures caused conflict between health and education. Agency ownership of speech and language therapists (SALT) poses interesting questions. Belonging to health, but often with a work brief more akin to an education role, SALT are often grouped together in SSLPs

within education subgroups. In one programme where this occurred the manager recognised friction had been generated:

I think we made a bit of a blip really in getting (teachers name) to co-ordinate the education teamdid cause quite a lot of resentment. There are other professionals in that team.....I put him in a positionthe perception is a hierarchical one.....it wasn't about line-managing anybody, but just about ensuring a smooth delivery. It did cause problems though.

(programme D)

The SALT was clearly aggrieved, regarding the hierarchical structure as placing her subordinate to the teacher:

A teacher is the education team co-ordinator and reports to the project manager. So anything I want to say I have to go through somebody else. I've been told it isn't a management thing, but I don't think it's necessarily the best way of running it, to have equal working and respect...cause it seems to me as if the speech therapy team are under the teaching staff..... I think occasionally it's been a little bit, hey, I'm equal to you.....I have felt that sometimes there's a little bit of a hierarchy, but not huge.

Interestingly, this was not the situation in a programme where the teacher was in a group led by a health visitor. This particular teacher (programme B) had been teaching for the shortest period of time; so was less steeped in the culture and beliefs of schoolteachers. Whilst in another programme (A) where the teacher led a 'multi-disciplinary' team, no tensions were exposed, despite a hierarchical model of leadership. Here the teacher was the lead project practitioner offering training opportunities and thereby enhancing practitioners' career prospects.

One speech and language therapist (SALT) was keen to point out that an initiative generally accredited to the teacher, did in fact originate from collective team discussion. It seems the teacher had merely grasped the opportunity to become involved in a new venture:

we all could have started it and it could have been done by anybody in Sure Start; she just happened to have the time...we were all just saying gosh who could fit this into their timetable, to give up X amount of time and (teachers name) said she felt she could....so it wasn't a teacher initiative at all

(programme D)

The SALT appears defensive, jealous of the teachers' roles in the project and the status it confers to them. She goes on to justify her position: 'because I don't want it to be seen that it needs to be a teacher led session, because the idea is that in the end the

parent runs it'. The same SALT criticises the teachers for what she perceives as lack of contact with parents, 'I imagine that most parents, wouldn't know them (the teachers), and wouldn't know them as the teacher on the Sure Start team'. In fact the teachers in this SSLP worked extensively with parents, but in an outreach capacity rather than linked to settings.

In the same programme tensions arose between teachers and the SALT over opportunities to access training, representing perhaps, professional jealousy, 'they (the teachers) always seem to be going off (to conferences), which seems quite a lot to me'. Despite sparks of professional jealousy and critical comments, the practitioner nevertheless acknowledged the contribution a teacher makes to Sure Start: 'they can provide that which nobody else can here... teachers here are specialists in early years and I think they can come in and develop the settings'.

Conflict over knowledge bases also arose between speech and language therapists and teachers. As already reported one SALT questioned teachers legitimacy in language focussed work:

A speech therapist is trained to work with nought onwards and holds all the language development knowledge and has already built those skills of working in that way, I suppose, as well.

(programme D)

Whilst it is evident that speech and language therapists are specialists in language development, promoting communication skills is also regarded as a key teaching skill. A blurring of boundaries between these two agencies emerged from the findings. Issues surrounding such blurring of roles, associated with professional culture and identity, is difficult to be explained by Activity Theory and may represent a limitation of the framework.

The comment below stemmed from the SALT in the school role programme (E). The activity systems of speech and language therapists and teachers have come together and generated unease:

I think they have struggled with the language aspect and I don't think they've had an awful lot of solid view about how language develops – and how to create opportunities to develop language

A health visitor displaying limited interactions with teachers (I don't really get into many conversations with the teacher) questioned their legitimacy regarding work with

babies, providing another example of activity systems coming together with a degree of disagreement:

I'm not entirely sure about the nature of the teaching qualification with a pre-one year old, that's better, perhaps, left to people with more specialist qualifications and I certainly think health has more to offer in that 0-1 year old stage.

(programme A)

Findings in this section have focussed on the health – education divide, and within health, the disciplines of speech and language therapy and health visiting; no midwives were interviewed. In two SSLPs social workers were employed, but again teachers were not jointly working as front-line practitioners with them at the time of fieldwork.

Local authority managers

Management of teachers from LEA personnel was identified in this research as helpful for some teachers and unhelpful for others; no consistent view emerged. The speech and language therapist in the school programme (E) felt barriers to teacher participation stemmed from a head teacher, who is criticised for not giving more autonomy to the Sure Start teacher, although partial blame is attributed to the teacher for not tackling the issue:

I think there's an awful lot of feeling from the school that somehow they (head teachers) have control of that member of staff and they have jurisdiction over what that person does. There's not a lot of perception I don't think so far they've (the teachers) been fighting for the perception that they do work within a sure start team.

Activities are timetabled and the same things happening every week and that's been a difficulty for me because I've not wanted them to work like that. I've not wanted them to do the same thing every term every half term. When I've gone in with sort of innovative ideas as to what I would like to do as joint working and to discuss with them and they've really been very, the individual teaching staff have been very um receptive but when it come to actually putting it to the management in the schools um there's been quite a lot of resistance to the idea of change.

This study suggests the head teacher, as line manager, contributed to the marginalised position of the teacher in the school role. Unclear issues of governance and accountability may present difficulties for teachers in SSLPs. This is not unique to teachers but part of the wider landscape of children's service management. The example below demonstrates the web of agency relationships within a small nursery:

.....there are issues surrounding governance and accountability regarding (teacher's name) role. The manager within the nursery is employed by a community organisation....and (teacher's name) is employed by education and she's managing her. The manager is accountable to a management board. There are a lot of areas that are not clear.

(programme manager B)

Legal considerations in relation to accountability, in situations when practitioners could be managed by different agencies, were pointed up in the Nfer study (Atkinson et al. 2002).

5.5.3 Resolution of conflict

Personal level

Developing and implementing strategies to resolve tensions within programmes sets the climate for expansive learning. As already reported, teachers long summer holidays proved contentious. This single issue provides a window on how different teachers, at an individual level, endeavoured to resolve conflict.

Some teachers sought to avoid conflict, either by steering clear of conversations about holidays or keeping a low profile; as one teacher said, she would, 'keep quiet about holidays,' adding that 'you've got to be sensitive about your holidays with your colleagues...not ram it in their faces'(programme C). Another teacher developed resilience to cutting remarks about long holidays, taking a more up-beat approach, 'When other staff make comments I just say OK train to be a teacher then'(programme B). Her increased resilience over time is inherent in a further comment 'at first it used to upset me, but now I go yeah, it's nice'. For other teachers flexibility was employed to overcome difficulties with long absences. This strategy was welcomed by programme managers, but recognised as hinging on good will:

(Teacher's name), is going to come in (during the summer holidays), and work some of her time on some days, thankfully....again it depends on the person, you might have work to rule teachers or you might have teachers that are really happy to bend ... it suits us great and it suits her fine. But that's about individuals. I could be challenged on it.

(programme manager D)

The teacher in the community role programme (A) recognised the importance of continuity and was considering negotiating a flexible arrangement whereby she worked during the summer holidays and had a shorter week during term times. In the case of

the teacher in the school role programme (E), flexibility extended to working without remuneration. This teacher takes the path of least resistance, justifying it in terms of her own emotional gain:

I suppose quite a bit of the training I've done since I've been in post I've done in my own time. I've done things in my own time because I feel it's going to benefit me and, it's hassle free.

So strategies teachers employed to resolve differences at a personal level in this research fell into three principal areas; avoidance of conflict; resilience and flexibility. This falls in line with those documented in the MATCh project (Robinson et al 2004).

Team Level

Sharing a common vision was found to unify practitioners. Respondents referred to the '*Sure Start way*' in conversation or made other remarks implying commitment to programme vision. Reflecting on a solution focussed approach, strongly guiding the work of one programme (F), the teacher spoke about the positive impact this had had on her thinking:

It has really made me realise why, when you reflect on families you'd know, why something worked with one family and it didn't work with another family...if half those people take anything in from today, that doesn't end up with the child feeling pressured to perform, then I'll feel as if I've done my job.... you know it really works if you've got an anxious parent, they could just do a simple thing like sending a reading book home. What I can't bear the thought of is pressured children 'cause actually it's not going to support them to learn.

This programme was unique in the study for the importance it placed on creating a strong ethos around a defined local approach.

Cultivating a culture of openness, so that practitioners feel comfortable to expose gaps in their knowledge or experience, has already been discussed in relation to knowledge sharing (Part 5.4.1). Practitioners working within an organisation fostering attitudes of enquiry, openness and readiness to learn, are more likely to let go of professional barriers (Robinson et al. 2004). An illustration of openness and subsequent erosion of professional snobbery is illustrated in comments gathered from two SSLPs:

You're (the teacher) not in a place where you have to prove yourself, you're in a place where you can actually say I've never worked with babies before and I don't know the first thing about it...and other people will go well actually I know a lot about it.

(community worker, programme F)

(The teacher has) got such an open attitude, there is a very equal relationship between the playlink visitor and the teacher.....the teacher has managed to break down some of those barriers (differences in qualifications and salary), so that the playlink visitor would not feel intimidated by wandering into the teachers office.

(programme manager A)

One programme manager (E) thought the reason a practitioner may not want to freely share information with others lie in feelings of insecurity and under confidence. She suggested team understanding of the skills each member brings could overcome these difficulties: 'that somebody else might take my job or they might be doing it better than me so I'm going to keep in my corner, it's about sharing and recognising each others skills'.

Another theme that emerged was the view that starting at the same point in the life of a programme influenced team cohesion. In the study only one teacher (programme C) had joined a SSLP at a significantly later stage in the life of the programme, when she had replaced a founding teacher. This teacher occupies a peripheral position within her SSLP and it may be that her late joining is a contributory factor to the difficulties she experienced in achieving full participation. This was certainly the perception of team members:

I think it's hard for the professionals coming in now, when people say, we want you to be part of the team, who haven't been through the process.

(teacher, programme F)

Get everybody involved from day one, because the biggest mistake is if somebody's left out and you can't get them on board.

(programme manager E)

A speech and language in another programme reflected on undercurrents of authority created by the earlier start of the teachers:

They(the teachers) were already established when I started, so they had probably been used to interacting with somebody who did look to them to be in charge kind of thing, whereas when I came in, I would see myself as very much their equal.

(programme D)

The findings from this study support conclusions from studies of multi-agency working (Atkinson et al. 2002, Robinson et al. 2004 and Bagley et al. 2004) suggesting founding members are able to participate more easily than members joining teams at a later stage.

Time is fundamental to the establishment of communities of practice (Wenger 1998). Findings from this study support the concept of social participation developing over time; frequently expressed in years rather than weeks or months, eliciting comments such as ‘I think we are quite good at sharing information at Sure Start. It’s taken us four years to get to this point and I think that we are going quite well’ (community worker, programme A). As the manager in the community role programme (A) noted, practitioners had been together in the same SSLP for several years before conditions supported the development of a new structure; a small multi-disciplinary team:

That was based on work that grew from the way that they were working over the last three years. Fortunately for us (the teacher, speech and language therapist and occupational therapist) have all been here since the outset. They have had a long time to work closely together. They found that a lot of the work that they were doing was overlapping naturally anyway, so in this last year we have tried to formalise some of the work that they have been doing.

The programme manager emphasised the importance of time in building personal relationships: ‘breaking down barriers, I think that does take time and I think personalities need time to get to know each other really, before they feel able to do that sort of thing’. In a different programme (F) a teacher recalls feelings she experienced in the early days of her membership to the SSLP, identifying time in the journey to mutual understanding with team members:

Well I remember seeing your face that night and thinking we’re going to have fireworks here.....I mean I do believe it’s taken a long time for us to reach a point where we’re all talking about the same things.

The teacher involved in home visiting (A), highlighted the centrality of time in establishing relationships with parents: ‘It’s quite challenging because parents take quite a long time to be trusting’. Working in the homes of families leading complex and fragile lives, calls on empathy, sensitivity and perseverance (West, 2003). It takes time to establish trusting relationships with parents who often have memories and experiences of their own education when teachers in authority roles clashed with personal struggles to survive adverse social situations. The length of time families need before feeling comfortable in accepting teacher input will vary from family to family; it may take months or even years before trust develops. The teacher in the consultant role programme (D) referred to the slow and gradual pace of change within early years settings, echoing the significance of trusting relationships:

I really feel that in the two years that I have been here, that I can see a change in the pre-school settings, in the attitudes of the staff, the approach, the innovative work that is going on. One of the big pushes was to get staff to use the outdoors more and they are doing it bit by bit. It's really a drip, drip, drip, and I do think that's the approach that has to be within Sure Start, you have to gain the confidence of the people, for them to feel comfortable with you and you just gradually feed things in – you can't just go in like a bull in a china shop.

Holding a part-time contract means potentially less availability for face-to-face contact with Sure Start members than full time employees. In this study, the teacher in the ethos led programme (F) was fully participating in her community of practice. She was contracted to work full time, with holiday entitlement commensurate with the majority of practitioners. Conversely, the teacher in the extended nursery programme (C) was part-time, took time off in lieu of out of hours work and had school holidays. This teacher was on the periphery of her community of practice and occupied a marginal position. One team member indicated that, in her opinion, part-time members needed to be conscious of their potentially reduced contact time, but that it was not an insurmountable problem:

If you're full time you're much quicker part of the team and much quicker accepted as part of the team, if you're part-time, you must work harder at it...(I don't see job share would be a problem at all.

(community worker, programme F)

Working across non-hierarchical structures was put forward as a strategy to reduce conflict in SSLPs. In the extract below one programme manager describes her approach in the context of team meetings:

I'm trying to bring about a less hierarchical system. I don't want to see education as being chair, or health. Everybody has the opportunity to chair or everybody has the opportunity to take minutes. This was not easy to establish.....I'm trying to establish a non-blaming culture, so if people don't get it right it's alrightthat's the whole ethos here.

(programme B)

The perception of hierarchical relationships by childcare workers surfaced in one programme even though the teacher said she had worked hard to break down such barriers. The teacher was the line-manager of childcare staff, reinforcing the positional status of the teacher, 'within our project, our childcare workers defer to (teacher's name) and I think it's created because they see her as a teacher...you know teachers are seen to be important and in control and able to do stuff'(community worker, programme F).

Opportunities for social interaction between group members are central to the concept of Communities of Practice (Wenger 1998). Teachers in SSLPs were invited to participate in team building activities, for example, away days or shared lunches, although their actual attendance at such events were not monitored in this study. It was found that expectations for teachers to regularly attend team meetings varied across programmes; in one programme weekly attendance was compulsory, whilst in another the teacher attended extended multi-agency team meetings only once a term (programme C).

One teacher led a strategy group comprising a midwife, speech and language therapy assistant and community worker. The perceived intentions of this arrangement are voiced by the teacher in the excerpt below:

There's a hidden agenda I think, in that you know, (name of programme manager) wants us to work in groups in teams and work together more....so we've been put into three groups and from each group there needs to be a representative who takes the responses of the meeting to a main strategy group.

(programme E)

The teacher in the consultant role programme (D) highlighted the need for dialogue with colleagues to facilitate shared understanding before launching new initiatives. In this programme the teachers have established full participation and work together with health practitioners:

I have liaised with everybody within Sure Start rather than thinking, oh I'm education I'm going to go and do this, it's very much that I will work with everybody and see whether it's....and to get the support of everybody else here, we mustn't compartmentalise ourselves, that's not what Sure Start's about.

Issues surrounding teachers receiving joint training within multi-agency teams did not feature highly in this study. Joint training referred to by respondents centred on the national framework, Birth to 3 Matters and in this respect, differences between programmes in the role of the teacher were found. The school role teacher (E) was a recipient of training from an outside provider together with Sure Start colleagues, possibly reinforcing the perception that the teacher lacked skills with children under three. In other programmes it was the teachers themselves that were responsible for team training on Birth to 3 Matters (see Table 5.9).

Teachers' working jointly as front-line practitioners with colleagues from other agencies is a key concept throughout this thesis. The amount and depth of joint work

practiced by teachers in this study varied. Vignettes describing the work of teachers in a transition to school project (Appendix L); multi-disciplinary project (Appendix N) and reflective dialogue project (Appendix M), all detail joint work with health practitioners. These teachers correlate to high levels of participation within their communities of practice. Joint work at the interface of front-line practice was reported through multi-agency case meetings in several programmes, a forum bringing together practitioner skills and frequently involving specialist teachers. This was the case for the teacher in the SENCO role programme (B):

We have family progress meetings.... initiated by the social worker....(teacher's name) will feed into that and share her expertise with the community workers, and other staff like the core health visitor and social worker from social services. The parents are now going to be included.....so that's where she (the teacher) can share her expertise.

(programme manager)

The manager of the school role programme (E) explains her understanding of partnership working in terms of parents receiving consistent messages, but possibly through her choice of the term partnership, she exposes limited understanding of the concept of joint work:

(I) think the biggest benefit has been the partnership working, the good things that have happened in schools haven't happened in isolation. It's been the impact of the speech and language therapist, health team, access centre; all the workers, the teacher coming into the pre-school; it's partnership working, so that the message is coming from all these different angles to the families; the same message.

The difference between joint working as opposed to liaison is touched on in the remarks of a health visitor who initially speaks about joint work, but then corrects herself and redefines her work as close liaison:

There are specific pieces of joint work with specific families, but we're not working together with the family, but liaising closely and doing separate pieces of work for the family.

(programme A)

This thesis argues that it is through joint working at an operational level, when activity systems from practitioners of different backgrounds come together in real situations, that new learning will arise.

5.5.4 Identity transformation

Being an active participant in a social community constructs one's identity. Identity can be thought of as a way of talking about how learning changes who we are (Wenger 1998). Participation in a SSLP will therefore alter the identities of its members. Most teachers join SSLPs with schoolteacher identities, but as they participate in joint enterprises with shared repertoires and mutual engagement their identity changes. The transformation of teachers' identities constitutes a key construct in this study and the extent of identity transformation constitutes an indication of their level of participation achieved within a multi-agency team.

This study found evidence of new practitioner knowledge gained from involvement in joint work. For example, a teacher learnt about sensory processes from an occupational therapist, who in turn gained knowledge from working with a teacher:

I've learned so much about sensory difficulties with her (the OT), sensory processes which I didn't know so much....yeah, every one that comes in brings something different and (name of practitioner) she's skilled herself up

(teacher, programme A)

It is proposed that practitioner confidence in the context of SSLPs is synonymous with participation. One team member identified increased participation of the teacher within her programme as an evolving entity, 'I think as her confidence grew, so her knowledge was transmitted in a better way' (community worker, programme F). This observed change in behaviour is recognised by the teacher too, who reflects on the extent of transformation. She speculates on dimensions of changed thinking that have occurred on the team, almost unconsciously and certainly unmeasured, 'I think we're almost reaching a point where we don't realise how far we've come as a team and just how skilled as a team'. In this context it is suggested the phrase '*skilled as a team*' could be substituted for '*joined as a community*'. The same teacher goes on to reflect on change within her own thinking. Feeling she had previously demonstrated good practice regarding parental partnership work in school, the SSLP had been a wake up call for her in relation to some team member's negativity surrounding mainstream education:

What is fascinating about it is how it's changed my thinking. I thought I'd really got home school partnership tamed, working on a project like this and work with other agencies, I was quite shocked at first as to how anti education some people were.

(teacher, programme F)

Rather than defining moments in attitude change, small imperceptible changes in thinking were inferred:

It's really quite hard, once you've done it, you can't remember how it was...that, that change of attitude. Because you know I used to say, as a teacher, parents expected me to tell them what to do, they expected me to have the answers, but then, it's like the challenge is, you then just become the person that follows round with the alphabet and you're not giving parents the skills or the information to actually make a choice.

(teacher, programme F)

One programme manager articulates the change she perceives in the teacher through the expression *blossomed* – a change, a *metamorphosis*, and the catalyst for such change, this thesis argues, is the increasing level of participation resulting in identity transformation. The programme manager observes differences in teacher's practice through increased confidence to be creative and innovative:

I think (teacher's name) has absolutely blossomed. I think she has become much more creative and innovative. She is getting more confident in saying I've had an idea, can we try this. My feeling is that she just really enjoys her work and that it is varied and it's stimulating. Everyday is different and she loves that.

(Teacher's name) has grown in other ways....he's doing things that he never believed that in a million years he would be doing.

(programme D)

The term 'confident' frequently arose from teachers' responses in connection with identity transformation. This research suggests teachers' new knowledge was gained from joint front-line practice, rather than through formal joint training opportunities:

I work quite closely with the speech and language therapist. I am more confident now to go in and advise nurseries on what I have a good common sense about things, I'm more confident now to say things to do with speech, whereas in school I don't think I was aware of that sort of information, I didn't feel it was important.

(teacher, programme B)

The notion of increased confidence surfaces again in a further example, this time in relation to the teacher in the community role programme (A) developing relationships with parents:

Believe it or not I came here extremely shy, but I'm not here, and in four years I have overcome all that and I feel that now that I am much more comfortable with talking to parents and with listening to what they have to say

A salient change in attitude from school teacher to Sure Start teacher was revealed by the teacher in the SENCO role (B). She talks critically about her former work culture:

Feel detached from mainstream now, apart. I'm embarrassed how teachers (in schools) talk about the families. Schools all negative about families. We need to have more empathy and consider the well-being of the child.

The same teacher felt she had learned a lot from working with speech and language therapists. She talked about bringing *language down* and acknowledged she hadn't realised the importance of this as a school teacher.

Negotiating formal identity – the issue of job titles

Within multi-agency teams, job titles confer professional identity. Sure Start teachers in this study held a range of titles (see part 5.1). One teacher's job title had been changed to confer greater authority; the original title was Community Teacher, which was then changed by the LEA to Early Years Advisory Teacher as it was felt '*people would take more notice....have more clout*' (teacher, programme C). Questioning the use of the traditional title 'teacher' triggered debate in some SSLPs: 'I do think we need another name, I would use educator or something, something that crosses between teacher and the early years worker' (programme manager E). The literature points to similar debates surrounding teacher titles; Pedagogue, Educarer, Pedagogical Advisor, and Teacher Mentor have all been put forward as possibilities (see Literature Review). The teacher in the co-ordinator role programme (F) initially used the title Sure Start Worker, she then changed this to Early Years Co-ordinator, but found it lacked meaning within the community, 'it is kind of non-descript, nobody really knows what it means, and even within the team I don't know that everybody knew what my experience was'. The teacher finally decided to introduce herself as a teacher. In another programme the teacher said she generally introduced herself by her first name followed by a statement that she is part of the Early Years Service.

The consensus amongst teachers interviewed in the study, was that parents wanted to know who teachers were and what their experience was. Being called a teacher carried greater meaning, despite cultural association, than denial through a change of label. In fact not only parents, but practitioners too, wanted to know the professional backgrounds of colleagues. This falls into debates around transparency and honesty. Some Sure Start teachers incorporated the term teacher, others avoided it. This may be tied up with teachers own wishes to distance themselves from schools, feeling

the teacher tag would form barriers to forming relationships with parents and colleagues. In one instance a parent came to a SSLP group and did not return, the teacher reflected and concluded it was the references she had made to her experience as a teacher that had contributed to parental discomfort and subsequent drop out. The teacher implied her didactic approach had alienated that parent:

It was her first meeting with me, and I made a joke about it saying, well I'm going to be standing here, 'cause it's such a big group. I'm going to be standing here like a teacher, which is exactly the opposite way to how we have done other groups when we sit round in a small circle.

(programme F)

One programme manager argued the case for incorporating 'teacher', holding the view that it is dishonest to wrap up a teacher's identity in a title concealing meaning. By challenging assumptions programmes make on behalf of parents, for example, parents sensitivities to professional labels; the introduction of hybrid job titles, must be questioned. The programme manager in the next excerpt recognised that to operate an open and transparent service, parents must be the holders of knowledge and one small step towards this is by informing parents of the background of the practitioner through their affiliation with their professional group. Whilst in no way denying the stereotypes and baggage that teachers bring with them, changing people's perceptions through everyday practice is arguably a more powerful means to influence change than by the mere cosmetics of a title. The case for retaining the term 'teacher' is encapsulated in the quote below:

Initially when we all came there was anxiety about the stereotypes attached to roles and how parents might perceive that....but parents want to know what skills you bring...so actually what we've learnt is parents find it really helpful to know.

(programme manager F)

However the community worker within the same programme puts forward an opposing view; she stresses the difficulties inherent in challenging stereotypical views of teachers:

(Teacher's name), doesn't broadcast the fact all the time she's a teacher, she plays it down an awful lot, and I think that helps..... (she), has great difficulty even calling herself a teacher...she will avoid that word ... I suppose she may say she's a teacher but she'll wrap it up sometimes....I think it's the teaching bit that's the hard bit 'cause I think for (teacher's name) it's more the learning process..... think if she introduced herself as a teacher, I think they'd back right off, even though she's a friendly person, I think it would be a barrier.

This worker goes on to explore the contradictions within her stance as she regards the community as actually respectful of schools and teachers. Teachers themselves felt parents were suspicious of them until a relationship of trust had been established. Some teachers thought parents responses following introduction as a 'teacher' would have a: 'negative impact, (parents are) very sceptical at first until they get to know you'. The study therefore found differences of opinion existed amongst Sure Start members, over the use of 'teacher' in job titles.

5.5.5 Learning communities

Learning communities provide the conditions for newcomers to acquire knowledge and members fully participating to learn by creating new knowledge (Wenger 1998). This study proposes new knowledge comes about in Sure Start multi-agency teams through learning by expanding (Engestrom 1999), a concept presented in chapter 3 (theoretical framework). SSLPs can then be regarded as fertile learning contexts for teachers, as it is too for practitioners from other disciplines.

Tensions between education and health practitioners have been reported (part 5.5.2) as activity systems come together, nevertheless the positive impact of teachers and health visitors working together in a Sure Start learning community was acknowledged in the study:

I think we work really well together actually. Of course I suppose for anybody in Sure Start it's a completely new way of working, but I think it's been very beneficial.

(health visitor, programme D)

Teachers in SSLPs were found to influence the observed practice of other practitioners. One example supplied by a programme manager (A) was the increased application of small incremental steps by ECEC workers in their interactions with families:

I think that probably support workers have shifted their method of work more towards the style (teacher's name) introduced.

Whilst in another programme (F), a community worker articulates a more reflective approach as a consequence of working with a teacher:

I think it's made me look at different things, it's made me look at what I would introduce, how you would put things out, how you may take more time to do something explaining while you do it, you know why you put some of the, the apparatus out that you put out and why you have the mirror, for instance.

Even the teacher in the school role programme (E), demonstrating limited participation within her community, had enhanced the knowledge base and understanding of a speech and language therapist, who was then able to utilise this new knowledge within a child development framework:

I've been able to expand my knowledge about what the curriculum is and I think I've been able to understand much more about early learning goals and then relate them to children's development....and also to understand the demands that are placed on teachers.

(SALT)

New learning by the teacher feeds into a cycle of new learning for other Sure Start practitioners. Multi-sensory resources called treasure baskets, aimed at stimulating babies learning, were unknown to one teacher when she first started work at her SSLP. Through self-motivated personal learning, the teacher introduced a practice that she was able to share with other colleagues, eliciting the comment:

When I've gone into the crèche, it's sort of made me realise that some of the work I used to do, I thought gosh, I wish I'd have known that and how to use it with other children.

(Community worker F)

A further trigger for reflection by the same practitioner, stemmed from specific language use by the teacher. The term '*effective*' is discussed in the passage below and how it changed a community workers thinking:

She (the teacher) works on effective, is this effective, or perhaps not effective, which is so different especially when you're working in the settings she works in, in the community. If you go into the community and say actually this is lovely but is it effective, is it meeting what you want it to meet, rather than saying is it good... because if it isn't then by virtue of what you said, it becomes a bad setting ... and I'll even say to my colleagues... why don't you say, is it effective...you know my friend was saying, I never thought of it like that...it really changes the emphasis on what you're doing.

(programme F)

A speech and language therapist commented on increased confidence as a result of working with teachers: 'it's been good for me; it's probably increased my confidence working with teachers', whilst a health visitor working in the same programme pinpointed increased knowledge of child development and play as stemming from the influence of the education team:

I feel I've learned a huge amount from the education team actually about child development.....I think I've learned a huge amount about playing, as well actually.

(programme D)

Realising the potential disharmony between the activity of a teacher and the activity of an adult tutor within a SSLP, the tutor acknowledges the two practitioners have instead, been able to learn from each other; 'you know I was able to be a resource to her whereas in other contexts I might have seemed like a real threat to her (the teacher)' (programme F). It was also the perception of the adult tutor that teachers hold up to date educational knowledge, extending the notion of them as information resources. A central message lies in the final sentence of the extract included below; learning arises from social interactions with members of the Sure Start community of practice:

You do get out of touch with what's happening.; in legislation; how people are thinking about things; so it's very useful to have a teacher here so you can check things out....rather than trawling round the internet...you're learning from colleagues all the time.

(community worker F)

Facilitating innovative practice

As reported earlier, learning by expansion is an underpinning theoretical concept used in this study to explain the creation of new knowledge, which in turn may lead to innovation. Learning by expansion occurs when two or more activity systems come together with a shared object (see Chapter 3 Figure 3.3). This study suggests particular conditions may assist this process and these are analysed in this section.

Relative autonomy has facilitated creative work practices in SSLPs. There was no expectation that teachers' job descriptions would be rigidly adhered to; they merely provided a jumping off point, as illustrated in the excerpt below:

I think the other thing about this job, to be honest, is from the outset it's really been presented to me as a job that I could carve out and make my own.... I mean okay, we had a job description, but nobody pays an awful lot of attention to be honest, and we're just left to get on with it....we're given a lot of leeway, a lot of flexibility I think, and that's great and that's working really well.

(teacher, programme D)

This teacher in the consultant role programme was certainly was able to plough his own furrow when he became project manager of a new environmentally alert nursery build. Similarly, in the community role programme (A), the teacher was the force behind the creation of four new core posts. This teacher, passionate about her work, was the only

teacher in the research that had actively worked to bring about new career grade posts within a SSLP. The programme manager (A) explains the rationale behind one of these innovative jobs; the inclusion workers post:

(Teacher's name) came to the realisation that many of the parents of children that she was seeing had needs of their own that had never been diagnosed... without tracking some of the issues that parents have got, you are never going to manage to tackle the issues that the children have got.

This teacher, characterised as being able to '*think outside the box*,' had been able to influence management decisions. The activity system of the teacher and the manager had come together and resulted in expansive learning. By identifying gaps in service provision, the teacher had invested energy into creating solutions to tackle the challenges. Opening people's minds to different ideas to move away from conventional practice may require concrete rather than abstract examples in order to comprehend new concepts. The teacher in the passage below tries to explain that not everyone can think outside the box, some people need support to generate new ideas; it is not intrinsically spontaneous:

You have to demonstrate things to people, to generate ideas, because if they have never had it before, then they want more of the same, that's one thing that we always do, is that we always say what do you like about it and what you don't like.

(programme A)

A work culture, in which people are encouraged to try different ways of working, supported and encouraged, but not constrained by management, enables practitioners to feel more confident in crossing professional boundaries. Positive aspects of experimenting with sometimes unsuccessful approaches are noted by a programme manager:

The whole point of Sure Start is to try (different ways of working). If we fail, we fail, you know not overall, but I mean if you try something that doesn't work, you've just proved another way of doing it. So that's great, the next person won't do it that way.

(programme E)

Teachers working jointly with horticulturalists present an unusual partnership within the sphere of early years practice. One programme had been creative in tapping into a local resource, the expertise within a horticultural college. A horticulturalist had

become a member of the Sure Start community and part of their practice had become reified within a green curriculum. The initiative is described by the SSLP manager:

(Practitioners) need help with getting children into free play in the outdoor spaces, that's been a huge one for us.....and again the beauty of this is, that our horticultural worker, who works alongside the teacher, together, have written a green curriculum....and have taken this to the pre-schools and saying that when it comes to tick your box about language, or sorting, or whatever, get them outside and use words like sap, or propagation and develop the language that way, and sort seeds and plants.....it's very innovative work and something we would really like to roll out.

(programme D)

Changing existing educational practices to become inclusive to toddlers and very young children was also instigated by the teachers from the consultant programme (D).

Exploring and exploiting new contexts for learning has featured highly in teachers' practices within SSLPs as illustrated in the example below:

Traditionally forest school was for school age (children), but we have actually brought it right down. Pre-school children go out to forest school. There are sessions for parents with little ones that can walk.....they need to be on their feet, it doesn't matter if they are staggering, they have got to be on their feet really....and now our teacher, we have her qualified as a forest school leader.

(programme manager)

Employment of teachers on SSLPs, as it is for all staff, is dependent on government funding. The small numbers of programmes that decided to employ teachers (Hastings, 2004), had to balance employing one teacher against, for example, three childcare workers in terms of salaries. It brings to the fore the quality versus quantity debate. Interestingly, though, two of the programmes employed two teachers, representing a large investment in education. The reasons for this employment pattern have already been explored (Part 5.3.1). One of these programmes is currently halving its teacher allocation. The SSLP referred to below, made a decision to employ specialists at the start of programme implementation and although only employing a single teacher, it also employs for example a psychotherapist. As the programme manager acknowledged, 'we have a lot of financial funding so we have had the luxury of being able to be creative and try new practice'.

So, Sure Start teachers have participated in learning communities to a greater or lesser degree. They have worked through the turbulence of activity systems coming together to enjoy new learning through the expansive cycle. Teachers have become

involved in innovative practices in diverse ways, but in projects underpinned by their professional craft knowledge, as one team member concedes:

We've done things and I'm sure (teacher's name) has thought, oh my goodness, I'm not sure, this is a new way of doing it, but all the time she's got the basis of a real concrete understanding of working with children.

(community worker, programme F)

Implementing change beyond programme boundaries

Mainstreaming is understood to denote the roll out of new learning from SSLP to local authority service providers. In the case of teachers, mainstreaming would infer schools learning from practices pioneered within SSLPs. The movement towards viewing children holistically was picked up by one programme manager. The evidence in this particular case was a local authority early years team introducing specialist responsibilities for teachers working with parents or small groups of parents and children:

There have been changes within the service.....they have got teacher specialities and one of them is working with parents and group work.....and this is probably from the stuff that (the teacher) has done. Whether or not she will get the recognition for that I don't know.

(programme manager A)

Channels of communication between SSLP teachers and local education authorities must be maintained and valued to keep knowledge freely flowing in both directions. Schools need to be part of the Sure Start network, receptive and alert to new ideas, as do the SSLPs themselves. This point is made in the quotation provided by a programme manager:

They (local authority) weren't quite sure who she was.....what has happened is that it has forced all of us, including (teacher's name), to go back to the agencies and influence practice....and actually I think we're at a point where we're saying we want you to know about this.

(programme manager A)

The difficulty of influencing mainstream practice is recognised by SSLP managers. The introduction of Children's Trusts, charged with bringing together young children's services, sets an agenda for an expansive learning cycle within middle management. It could be argued that the experiences of front-line practitioners within SSLPs can provide valuable insight and understanding into the process of deconstruction and disharmony prior to the creation of new knowledge. The activity systems of service

providers colliding will undoubtedly bring potentially greater variance and disagreement, before the emergence of new learning. A programme manager acknowledges the challenges ahead:

I have to go in to try and influence the managers to reinforce what (teacher's name) has said. To bring about change in providers is really, really challenging and (teacher's name) will tell you that.

(programme B)

Relationship with schools

Some teachers suggested Sure Start's groundbreaking work was ahead of school thinking. They thought schools were lagging behind in terms of embracing a holistic approach; empowering parents and multi-agency work:

That was the thing that used to frustrate me so much was when we could put services in place through Sure Start, additional services, and the child would go to school and the whole thing would just stop because mainstream services weren't geared up to take them on.

(teacher, programme D)

Another teacher felt children's improved emotional literacy as a result of participation in SSLPs could be misconstrued by schools. Empowering children to articulate their thoughts could be perceived as threatening to some schoolteachers. As one Sure Start teacher pointed out, young children may say:

I'm feeling really cross and when I'm feeling better I'm coming back to play....and all this, they've actually got it, and they're going to go in (to school), and they could be seen as, you know, stroppy, assertive, whereas we prefer to think of them as active, autonomous, they've had choices.

(programme F)

The same teacher commented on influencing the direction of schools through leverage with funding; buying influence in schools:

There's loads of work (to be done in schools). I think we're just about at the stage where we can say, you know because the way schools have been brought in is by giving them things...you know giving them playgrounds...you know Sure Start put a playground in every nursery, when they got here it was the first thing they did.

Whilst in a further programme, funding issues were cited by a manager as a barrier in embedding and sustaining new practice:

We're trying to set up the principal that pre-school settings should be able to take closure days in just the same way as schools do, to raise their profile again and

that their staff can attend in-service training in the same way as schools do. It's been a bit of a struggle because there are implications with funding.

(programme D)

The study found schools appeared to be only marginally interested in Sure Start in the early days of getting started. However, over time, a shift in attitude was noted, as schools began to question the possible benefits for them. This is expressed by a teacher in the consultant role programme (D):

To start off with I don't think (colleagues in school) had the foggiest idea about what it was all about.....now I think that they have started to think –is there anything in it for us? How can they help us?

Nevertheless, in only one programme was the Sure Start teacher on first name terms with the head teacher of the local school, indicating perhaps, distance between them.

Local authority support

Streamlining educational messages to parents of young children was noted by Sure Start teachers as problematic. The question arose as to whether Sure Start information (letters/handouts/flyers) should be sent with local authority information to homes. Schools argued it would be confusing for parents, Sure Start argued for integration; saying: 'no, it needs to go out because it gives it value and it makes it sound part of it and it should go out with that'.

It is a new experience for many local authorities to have early years teachers working outside maintained settings or central teams. Established channels of communication within authorities need reassessing and amending to be inclusive of Sure Start teachers. One teacher felt isolated in terms of accessing information regarding continuing professional development:

One of the interesting things is that a lot of things at county still do not seem to be able to cope with us being teachers here. So it's like getting this information through about courses that we are sort of in this black hole

(programme D)

The importance of Sure Start teachers being kept in the loop was further reinforced by the teacher on the consultant role programme (D):

Staff get together once every half term and it's taken me ages again to get myself in onto those, be on the list to get invited....our information tends to come more through early years and childcare. We get sent those types of courses – the ones

that are mailed out to staff at pre-school settings as opposed to getting the sort of courses sent that if you were in a school you would get.

Challenging Sure Start guidelines

A SSLP education team justified involvement with a family even though the target child was over the SSLP age, by rationalising that an eight year old with learning needs would affect the life of younger children in the family. This brings an example of moving beyond the remit of working directly with children under the age of four and highlights contentious decisions that are taken by some teachers:

I know that that's quite controversial, and (I'm not sure) whether or not we should be registering the work we're doing with the LEA.

(teacher, programme D)

Another instance of a teacher feeling confident to challenge conventional practice was in relation to initiating statements of special educational needs:

We've started two statements, which we're not supposed to start any statements, but they (the children) have hardly any functional language and they have other difficulties so we have been heavily involved.

(teacher, programme A)

Both the teachers quoted above, could be described as movers and shakers; strong professionally, confident to challenge rules and regulations, but able to defend and justify their actions.

Commenting on innovative designs for a new nursery, one teacher admitted the ideas put forward to a local authority extended too far from conventional practice. The climate for radical, cutting edge practice in children's learning spaces was not realistic at the time it was presented. The teacher had vision in an under explored area. Messages concerning energy sustainable buildings are high on the public agenda, but a proactive Sure Start teacher operating in circles unused to teacher input, proved too much. It is speculative that perhaps this teacher had stepped beyond the local authority's zone of proximal learning:

We had to meet quite a lot of challenges with County Hall because this was new to them too. And although it was something that they were officially signed up to in theory, when we started talking about rammed earth structures and so on, they just couldn't hack it at all.

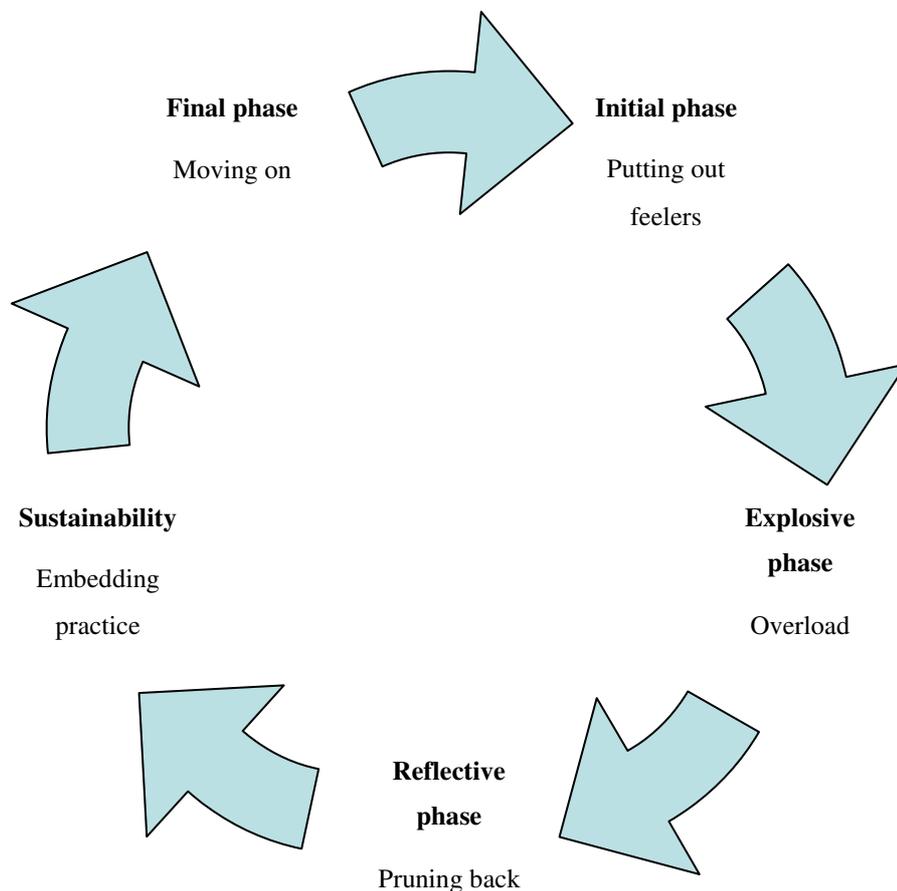
(teacher, programme D)

Not despondent over the compromised final design of the nursery, the teacher recognised the achievement of securing a project management role. This in itself is innovative; it represents the activity systems of teacher practitioners and architects and strategic planners coming together, and as the teacher acknowledged: ‘really it was a great boon that within my Sure Start role it was recognised that I could take that work on, ’cos it needed somebody to do it’.

Summary of findings relating to multi-agency work

The findings from this section are summarised in Figure 5.2, which represents the cyclic pattern of teacher activity within a SSLP.

Figure 5.2 Phases of activity in relation to teacher role development



Within this model, movement between phases will vary in time from teacher to teacher depending on conditions facilitating or obstructing participation. Some teachers will remain at the first stage in the development of their role, whilst others progress swiftly to full participation. As teachers on SSLPs move from legitimate peripheral

participation to full participation, activity changes. Such phases of activity can be linked to stages of development within a community of practice, as elaborated by Wenger (1998) and reported in the chapter on the theoretical framework (Figure 3.1).

The initial phase represents a period of uncertainty, when teachers search for meaningful involvement in the programme. This is followed by an intense period of activity largely within a teacher's comfort zone. A phase of new and innovative practice then emerges. The final stage in the development of a community of practice is dispersal, when the community disbands and moves on. This will be the case when the Children's Centre agenda replaces SSLPs.

Initial phase

Teachers join their Sure Start community of practice either as newcomer or founder member. At this time, team and community dynamics are explored. Teachers put names to faces, listen and watch movements and interactions, developing a growing awareness of boundary divisions amongst members. Connections are drawn between agency background and practitioner activity within the programme. A schoolteacher identity may be dominant. Role clarity is largely absent; a positive attribute and necessary feature in the deconstruction of the schoolteacher role, but giving rise to teachers' feelings of loss and dejection. When one teacher first started her job she thought '*why am I here?*' and hated the first year. She had thought to herself '*what on earth do I do?*' Her manager (programme B) justified this climate of uncertainty as follows:

People found this kind of early days very difficult. I wanted something new to come out of that feeling of a little bit uncomfortable, thinking what am I doing with Sure Start. To me that is quite healthy, because then you kind of shed your previous role and you were able to look at new opportunities.

Two further managers explained that the lack of clarity in teacher's roles was a necessary prerequisite of generic membership of the community of practice first and foremost, only moving to practitioner specialism at a later point in the life of the programme:

When we first started, people came in on their job descriptions....people's roles were much more blurred because it was about setting up the project.

Everybody had quite a broad base in terms of their role...I think that was good because it embeds in people the team stuff... and that actually it wasn't just coming along with your role as a teacherthere was an expectation that to some extent you laid down your professional status ...to become part of the whole project.

The first few months represented for many teachers a period of intense reflection and self-questioning and for some teachers guilt that they were not interacting with children all day long. For teachers moving from schools, there was a dramatic reduction of hands-on work. For many teachers this represented a huge culture shock, eliciting comments such as: ‘when I first started I didn’t know what I was supposed to be doing....I’m still feeling my head round the big picture’. Also for teachers moving directly from a school environment the culture shock from being one teacher amongst many, to a lone teacher, generated powerful feelings of isolation. As one teacher said: *‘I started here on my own and felt really isolated.’* This same teacher when first approached to participate in the study, expressed amazement at speaking to another Sure Start teacher, having assumed she was the only one in the country!

In only one programme in this study, a teacher had replaced an original teacher. In this case the new teacher took over from an already established work pattern. In her own words she had, *‘to get into her footsteps before I could think about changing things’* (programme C). She goes on to describe the post as *‘already in the mould of the previous teacher’* and *‘very timetabled’*. As a newcomer, replacing an existing teacher, she nevertheless faced uncertainty. As she said; *‘When I first started – for the first 6 months I thought what have I done’*. When she first started at Sure Start she was *‘lost for 6 months’* and *‘had to feel my way in’*.

This phase corresponds to Wenger’s stage of development categorised as potential, when members of the community start putting out feelers and striking a chord with each other through discovering commonalities.

Explosive phase

Prioritising work demands in the initial stages of job creation poses challenges. Some teachers reported they had said *‘yes to lots of things’* and then reflected on the implications at a later point. Once the precedent had been set for teacher involvement in particular activities, expectations arise and pathways can become entrenched. For many teachers the sudden freedom to engage in meaningful decision-making was daunting. Whilst longing for greater autonomy and creativity, the reality of moving from a mainstream environment to a Sure Start programme, threw many teacher practitioners into periods of uncertainty and doubt. One teacher perceived this autonomy to initiate and develop work activities, as arising because within the local authority *‘no one gives a damn’*.

Characterised as an explosive phase, teachers engage in a range of activities, but stay predominantly within a traditional educational base. Teachers operate largely within their comfort zone, for example; advisory work in nursery settings; working with childcare practitioners; modelling child-teacher interactions. Although activities are in the main confined to the ECEC domain, partnerships with speech and language therapists begin to be negotiated. This phase corresponds to Wenger's stage of coalescing, a time when members seek out the possibilities of work on joint enterprises with colleagues.

Reflective phase

As momentum gathers and projects take-off, many teachers realise they have taken on board too much, they are over stretched and as they reflect they prioritise and prune back on their input. Training other practitioners is cited as one strategy to overcome work demands. This is indicated in the passage below:

I think (teacher's name) has realised that actually she can't provide the intense service that she was providing initially to all the families that she needs to provide to and I think that's the way the team has developed now. She is kind of skilling up other members of the team to take in some of the family support that initially she was doing, but she has come to a recognition that actually she's the only teacher.

(programme manager A)

Work load capacity was an issue highlighted by a part-time teacher. She stressed that realistic expectations of work load had to be generated from reflection and informed decision making on the relative value of teacher input to differing aspects of programme activity:

I know I have to be careful of not taking on too many things and that you have to say right, this is what I am doing and what to value what I am doing in the time that I have got because I am part time as well so I can't keep putting more and more into it...so I think that we have to be very rational about what is important and the things that are hopefully going to make a difference and that will have a benefit across all areas, not just education.

(programme D)

Conflict and tensions begin to surface as practitioner activity systems collide and inbound or outbound trajectories start to take form. This represents an active phase of joined up thinking. Joint work across the education – health divide is initiated, as well as work with babies and toddlers. New and innovative work emerges as teachers fully participate in the Sure Start community of practice. Identity transformation occurs as

schoolteacher identity is deconstructed, paving the way for the construction of the new Sure Start teacher. This period is characterised by a progression of activity in the form of outreach projects. Work with parents dominates teacher activity through multi-agency family learning projects. The extent of the change in teachers' roles is illustrated by the pathway the programme manager describes for her teacher, moving from work in pre-schools, the comfort zone, to work with parents in outreach projects. The manager assigns this change to meeting the needs of the community:

I don't think it (the growing project) was in the original delivery plan. I think the teacher's role was more about working in all the pre-schools as opposed to going into babes R us, Bumps and Babes and working with parents in that way, an unofficial way, if you like, really. So it has evolved and like all Sure Start services, it has changed to meet the needs of the community

(programme D)

This thesis argues that role change occurs in response to teachers growing participation within a Sure Start community of practice. Community needs have not significantly changed in the relatively short time programmes have been running. The teacher has undergone identity transformation through participating in a learning community and this is reflected in the activities she is involved in. The teacher becomes an old timer within the community of practice. Conflict and tensions diminish between teacher and other practitioners, as difficulties are resolved. Full participation within the Sure Start community of practice is then achieved. Clarity of role is established and teacher thinking has changed. The role of the new Sure Start teacher starts to influence mainstream services.

Sustainable phase

This phase is characterised as a period of sustainability, when the challenge lies in embedding successful projects. One team member's perception was that the teacher's job had changed because: '*at the start she was setting things up, but now she was keeping them going*'. Another teacher who said she makes changes by starting on something and then it becomes embedded reinforces this sentiment.

At this point of development, forums for sharing good practice are sought within programmes. Teachers in one programme had developed channels of communication to network both within the team as well as to a wider audience within the authority. This role in disseminating new ideas and ways of working enhances the

role of the teacher as educator in a wider sense, as acknowledged by their programme manager:

They are spreading good practice now, and giving talks on evaluation of the PEEP project, the Growing Together Project, what it's like to work with pre-school groups.

(programme D)

Final phase

When teachers leave a SSLP, or a programme is remodelled, either from internal or external pressures, the activity of that teacher may be retained through reification of the practice. This phase corresponds to the dispersal and memorable stage of development as described by Wenger.

The life cycle of Sure Start Local Programmes has been less than a decade. Government planners initially expected the Sure Start experiment would last for seven years. This has already been surpassed although the programme of transformation into Children's Centres is now in full swing.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 A model of teacher involvement in Sure Start Local Programmes.

This study found that teachers joining SSLPs undergo identity transformation as participation within their community of practice increases. The perception of a new and different type of teacher is captured in the comment made by a SSLP (A) play worker:

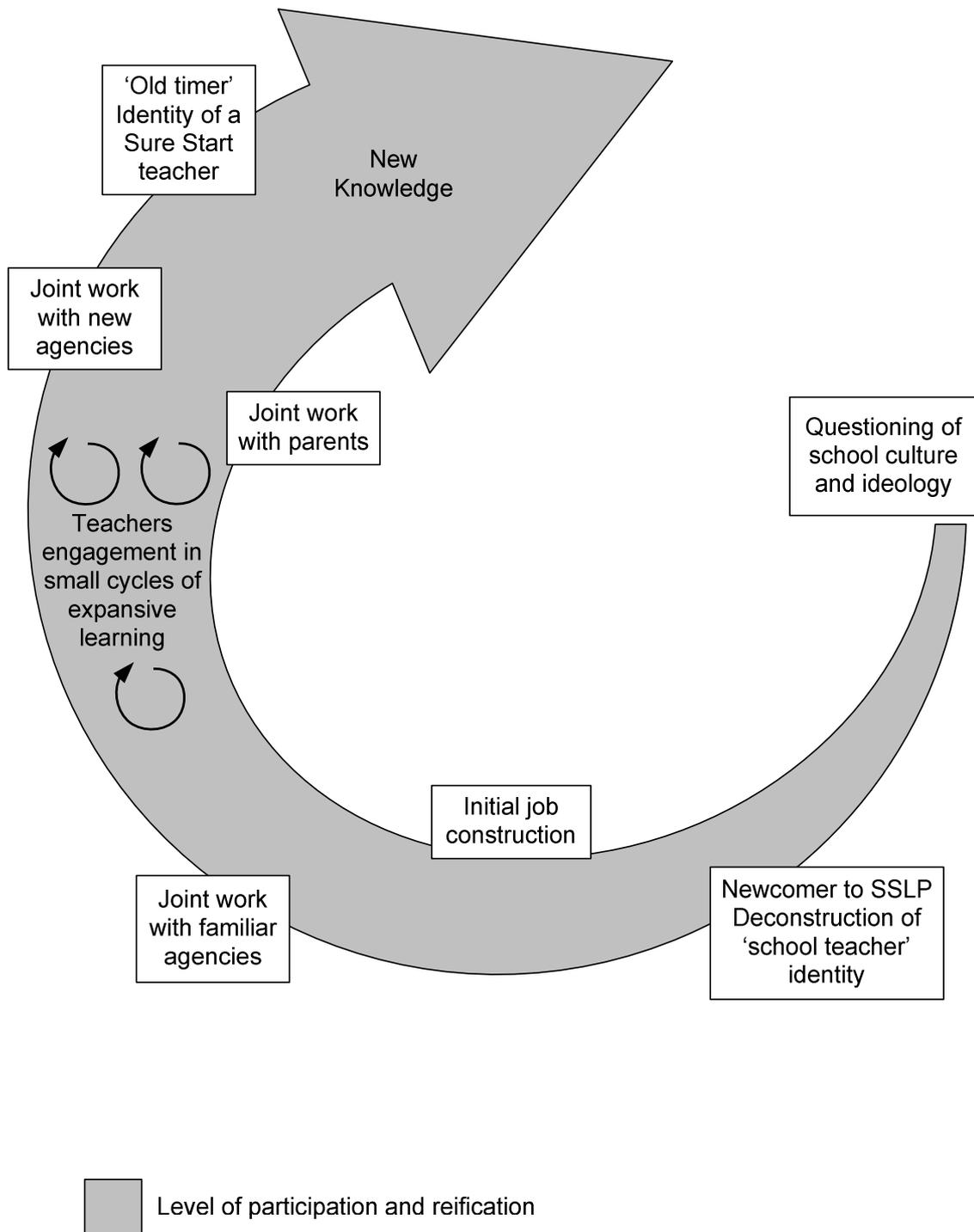
The teachers that I have associated with (in the past) are like teachers in school, so I have only seen teachers in that role, so as to actually work alongside a teacher (in a SSLP) is quite new to me.

Phases that teachers undergo in this transformation have emerged from themes revealed in the study and are represented in Figure 6.1. Teachers begin the process of transformation prior to appointment by questioning school culture and ideology. This could be questioning a child led focus or the attitudes of teachers towards parents. On joining a SSLP the teacher becomes the 'newcomer'. They are on the periphery of the group; beginning to get to know other members from diverse backgrounds and making connections to the types of activity these members are involved in. At this time erosion of their identity as a schoolteacher begins to occur. They have no class to teach; they are in less structured environments; they have considerable autonomy and they are on their own. The loss of their former identity is threatening and uncomfortable. As participation grows, new job construction begins to develop.

In these early days of programme involvement a multiplicity of factors interplays to shape the construction of teachers' jobs. Front-line joint work across agency divides are sparked as participation within the SSLP increases. Small cycles of expansive learning occur as activity systems come together. Initially these joint enterprises would typically involve practitioners close to teachers (for example, ECEC practitioners or speech and language therapists). A teacher's Professional Craft Knowledge acts to moderate activity within these cycles. By articulating their craft knowledge, in the context of joint work, and engaging in dialogue within a situated perspective, teachers resolve conflicts and new knowledge and practices emerge. As participation deepens, partnerships between members become more adventurous, triggering joint work between agencies with histories of challenge (for example teachers/health visitors or teachers/social workers). Cycles of expansive learning continue to generate new ways

of working and joint work calls on practitioners to explain, justify and reflect on their actual or proposed practice. Reification in the form of reports, protocols, evaluations and language, together with participation, gives meaning to these new practices and ways of working.

Figure 6.1 Cycle of transformation for teachers in Sure Start Local Programmes



Thus a pattern of continuing cycles of expansive learning is established, whereby teachers, through their growing participation, negotiate joint work not only with members previously thought to be on the fringe of teachers' spheres of activity (midwives, community workers) but also beyond SSLP boundaries to pioneer virgin partnerships (architects, horticulturalists, dentists). At the same time and in tandem with joint work with practitioners, another strand of teacher activity emerges, reflecting their changing identity. Teachers move from a focus of joint work with practitioners to a focus of joint work with parents. It is parents who are the main educators of babies and toddlers and so the work of teachers to directly influence interactions between parents and children is pivotal to breaking the cycle of deprivation and increasing young children's life chances. However, working alongside parents has to be viewed as a two way process. Teachers have to negotiate access, develop a shared language and engage with parents as partners in learning. Modelling interactions from either party followed by reflective dialogue can act as a tool for knowledge exchange.

The pace of the evolving identity transformation of the teacher is linked to the rate at which participation moves from the periphery to the core, which itself influences the nature and extent of expansive learning cycles within the Sure Start community of practice. For teachers who experience marginality (not accepted as legitimate members of the group or for structural or operational reasons are obstructed), the identity of the new practitioner, the Sure Start teacher, fails to become complete. For other teachers, who fully participate, the identity of the Sure Start Teacher is born. At this point teachers can be regarded as 'old timers' in their community and through activities centered on episodes of joint work, new knowledge and innovative practices arise and develop. This thesis argues that it is the action of joint work at an operational level, i.e. working together as front-line practitioners, that is the key to learning by expansion.

The cycle of transformation for teachers in SSLPs (Figure 6.1) can therefore be visualised as operating across both horizontal and vertical dimensions, spiralling like a corkscrew, incorporating small sideways expansive learning cycles within a larger framework of movement and change.

As presented in chapter 3 (Theoretical Framework) and reported in chapter 5 (Findings and Discussion), the activity of a teacher within a multi-agency terrain triggers tensions and conflict as activity systems collide. This begins the process of learning by expansion as practitioners cross each others boundaries.

6.2 A new practitioner: The Sure Start Teacher

The term 'Sure Start Teacher' encompasses a new concept, one uniquely arising from the Sure Start experience, an identity grounded in the practice of early years multi-agency work. This study found including the word 'teacher' in the job title useful. Challenges remain in changing parents' perceptions of teachers. The Sure Start teacher strives to create images of teachers that nurture relationships, are open and accessible, engage in dialogue and are able to co-construct knowledge and skills with parents and their young children. Sure Start teachers need to possess high-level interpersonal skills. It is vital that teachers are good communicators, open and able to talk easily to parents to help them understand their children. They also need to be diplomatic, tread carefully and win people over, smooth feathers when difficulties arise, thereby gaining the confidence and respect of parents and practitioners. A belief that teachers can, and do, make a difference to the lives of young children is necessary to survive and sustain periods of challenge and adversity. Finally, teachers need to be receptive to opportunities other than a traditional role and hold skills to implement new ways of working. Teachers need to have their antennae waving all the time, to be able to read between the lines, to be able to overcome and find ways round difficulties; Sure Start teachers need to be innovative, ideas types. Sure Start Teacher dispositions found to be desirable are included in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Dispositions of the Sure Start Teacher

Desirable dispositions
Reflective
Empathetic
Resilient
Tenacious
Open and honest
Creative
Good at communicating
Diplomatic
Curious, inquisitive
Entrepreneurial
Pragmatic
Generous with skills and knowledge

Positive in outlook Self motivated Confident and self-assured with professional skills
--

Sure Start Teachers need to be skilled and experienced; holders of Professional Craft Knowledge, able to sustain the flow of activity amongst inter generational groups. In their everyday work, within their community of practice, the Sure Start teacher draws on this knowledge base. Through the development of tools (for example the use of cameras) teachers may articulate their craft knowledge and in doing so partake in knowledge exchange with parents and practitioners and provide a pedagogic leadership role within their Sure Start programme.

6.3 Potential implications surrounding the emergence of the Sure Start Teacher

This study suggests that the most appropriate job descriptions for teachers are those tailored specifically to the Sure Start context. LEA involvement in shaping job descriptions is not only important in contributing educational knowledge and understanding, but it also increases LEA awareness of the Sure Start teacher role.

Some teachers were prepared to transfer from permanent to temporary contracts in order to join SSLPs, placing job security and possible career progression at risk. The quality of planned induction programmes was variable for teachers joining SSLPs and this suggests missed opportunities in helping them make sense of their evolving role as part of multi-agency teams from the onset. Feelings of bewilderment at the loss of schoolteacher identity before Sure Start job clarity emerged became a time of questioning for many teachers. Reflective time and space, in the initial stages of job construction would be valuable, in tandem with structured induction processes.

Teachers working in multi-agency environments need to be confident and sure-footed; holders of professional knowledge; able to make decisions about appropriateness of involvement in tasks. Consequently this study suggests this role would be unsuitable for newly qualified teachers unless appointed as apprentice teachers closely mentored by experienced Sure Start teachers. The Sure Start teacher is one who endeavours to fully participate within a multi-agency team and in doing so change their thinking and ways of working. A short-term secondment from a school or

a part-time contract, may deny complete identity transformation; and as developed throughout this study, such a transformation is a necessary condition for the creation of new knowledge. Closeness of work and relaxation spaces within SSLPs affects teachers' opportunities for social interactions since tight nodes of interpersonal relationships develop when members of the programme are in regular, planned and spontaneous, engagement. Offices with workspaces accommodating practitioners from health as well as education may be more conducive to multi-agency working, rather than single agency offices within a central Sure Start site. Teachers based in schools and line-managed by head teachers face structural and ideological barriers to full participation in Sure Start communities with ensuing minimal identity transformation. This finding has potential implications for future strategic planning for the employment of teachers within Children's Centres.

Teachers appointed as specialist teachers for children with SEN tended to move towards a more generic teacher role over time. This may have implications for centrally based LEA services that deploy teachers to work in SSLPs. The dynamics of being a team player and appropriateness of involvement in tasks as an educator, also surfaced. Issues surrounding cost effectiveness was aired if teachers were perceived to move too far from teacher to generic Sure Start roles within programmes. A pressure for Sure Start teachers to become managers of staff with lower qualifications in ECEC arose in several programmes. Several teachers however, felt ill equipped to take on this role without additional training.

There is no single factor affecting teacher participation within a SSLP, rather an interplay of factors lead to teachers occupying either a peripheral or core position within their SSLP (see Table 6.2).

Table 6. 2 Factors affecting teacher participation within SSLPs

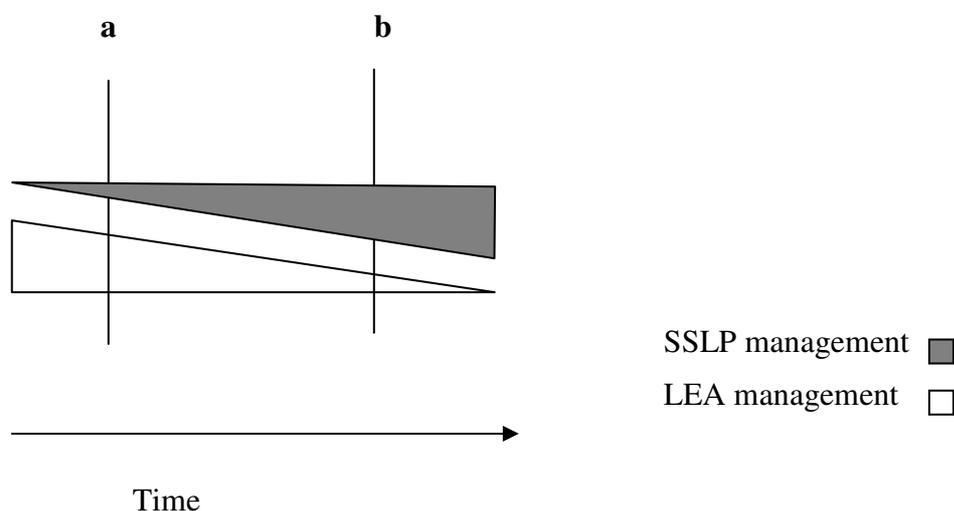
Low level of participation	High level of participation
Part-time status	Full-time status
Management weighted towards LEA structures and systems	Management weighted towards SSLP structures and systems
Late joiner	Founder member
School holiday pattern	Relatively shorter holiday periods

No management expectations of regular teacher attendance at team meetings	Strong management with clear vision and expectations of teacher integration.
Physically distanced from other agencies	Co-located with shared office space
Joint work mainly limited to ECEC practitioners	Joint work includes health visitor partnerships
Work with children of FS age	Work with babies and toddlers

Although relative autonomy, resulting from loose management structures, contributed to innovative practice, for some teachers, the sudden transition from tight management systems to greater independence, whilst perceived as a motivator for career change, actually caused teachers to feel isolated and disorientated. This reinforces the call for a planned and supported induction period.

Management of teachers presents challenges for LEAs and SSLPs. This research proposes a possible management model (Figure 6. 4). Starting with dual management weighted towards LEA managers (point a), transition to SSLP managers begins as their own expansive learning occurs. As SSLP managers become more confident and skilled in understanding multi-agency environments, the balance changes in their favour (point b). This model can be conceptualised as oppositional wedges, sliding across a plane in response to teachers and SSLP managers increasing levels of participation. The pace of the teacher's own identity transformation will constrain or accelerate the time taken for the move from LEA to SSLP management.

Figure 6. 2 Proposed management model for Sure Start teachers



Issues surrounding teachers co-ordinating multi-agency subgroups, was perceived by some team members as hierarchical and exacerbated turbulence within programmes. Situations such as these require resolution through dialogue.

This research suggests practice needs to be continually reified, for example through reports of projects, published articles, evaluations, descriptions of new practices as well as regular conversations and dialogue between group members. Teachers in this study recognised they were on the whole, light on paper work. It could be postulated that in those SSLP where reification was not explicit, incomplete negotiation of meaning within the group was achieved.

Structure versus informality concerning front-line practice, emerged as a theme in the study. It begs the question: does too much structure introduced by teachers, lead to less take up by ‘hard to reach’ families and greater take up by middle class families, even though the structure itself may lend itself to higher quality learning? In this regard joint work with community development workers may be helpful for teachers; a partnership currently not given a high profile.

Table 6. 3 Comparative features of an E Y teacher and a Sure Start teacher

School based Early Years Teacher	The Sure Start Teacher
Homogenous client group (Foundation Stage children)	Intergenerational client group (parents and young children)
Predominantly interacting with children Child centred approach	Predominantly interacting with adults. Family centred approach
Ready made audience	Self selecting audience
Structured timetable	Timetable emerges in response to programme and community needs.
Structured work environment	Less structured work environment
Everyday contact with differentially trained practitioners in ECEC	Everyday contact with differentially trained practitioners from a wide range of agencies.
Hierarchical model of teacher management	Dual management system.
Curriculum driven practice	Practice driven by community needs

Extensive paperwork	Minimal recording and reporting
Fixed holiday pattern.	Reduced, but flexible holiday entitlement.
Single agency location	Multi-agency location
Clear career progression	Unclear career progression

Communities of practice can be cultivated, supported and nurtured by managers. Without disturbing the self- organisation, leadership can support collaboration within SSLPs, through time and resources. Communication networks are vital to cascade information, provide ideas, stimulate thinking and reflect on practice. National conferences have a part to play too in the emerging roles of teachers within SSLPs. Networks provide teachers with the means to avoid and reduce the psychological effects of isolation. They allow them to share a vision of quality, common goals and challenges, often on a non-hierarchical and peer-group basis. In this respect the encouragement and promotion of teachers using social networking (for example blogging), could offer an effective tool to strengthen the growing community of Sure Start Teachers throughout the UK. Such mechanisms offer a practical way of sharing practice, possibly replacing the Sure Start Unit and LEA role.

So, a Sure Start Teacher represents a radical departure from that of a school based early years teacher with some of the key differences charted in Table 6.3. The characteristics of the Sure Start Teacher include dimensions of flexibility and responsiveness, for a role that is fluid and dynamic, exploiting opportunities to work jointly with practitioners from other agencies and disciplines. It is an evolving role; marking teacher transition from a single agency to a multi-agency, work culture. It is also a community-based role with a degree of risk and uncertainty attached. No career pathway is available for scrutiny. Relative autonomy, together with strong programme leadership enables teachers to shape and mould their future roles.

6.4 Revisiting the initial research questions

Finally, therefore, the conclusion returns to the original research questions.

How, and in what ways, are the roles of teachers in Sure Start teams constructed?

Local authorities influence partnership boards to appoint teachers and in doing so expose agency motives. Employing teachers has the advantage of increasing the stock of qualified teachers within the early years sector funded from central government sources. It also provides the opportunity for LEAs to be informed from an insider perspective of the Sure Start initiative. For other strategic decision makers, a view emerges that teachers constitute a valuable part of the agenda to raise child outcomes. Appointing teachers to Sure Start programmes was not tried and tested, no models or examples of evidence based practice existed; it represented a radical departure from conventional practice.

School teachers' pay and conditions dominated employment contracts. Contact with the LEA was maintained through management structures, though when these failed to materialise, SSLP managers were able to fulfil this role. All the job descriptions provided scope for broader teacher roles and all included expectations of teachers' involvement in family learning initiatives of one kind or another. Job descriptions represented starting points for teachers, they were not closely adhered to and no apparent expectations from managers that they would be rigidly applied. For teachers newly in post, job descriptions provided a provisional remit for job direction. Planned induction programmes varied in quality across SSLPs. Teachers felt isolated as their schoolteacher identity began to erode shortly after appointment.

Factors that were identified as affecting initial teacher job construction included programme leadership and vision; quality of induction; opportunities to network; PSA targets; teacher availability (emotional and physical); team composition and availability to engage in social interactions.

What do teachers bring to SSLP?

Teachers in SSLPs are faced with team members' perceptions of 'what a teacher is' and 'what they should do'. Respondents found it difficult to define precisely what teachers brought to Sure Start teams in relation to their knowledge base, but their perceptions fell broadly into two categories; people skills and knowledge of school culture.

Although roles developed primarily from the skills and expertise of the teachers rather than the personal qualities of the individuals, a common set of dispositions surfaced focussing on interpersonal skills. This study suggests teacher dispositions at entry point to the post will change with increasing participation within the Sure Start community. Measuring teachers' dispositions prior to appointment is unlikely to be feasible; self-evaluation may be a preferred route. Teachers' motivations for seeking a career change appear altruistic rather than driven by financial gain or job progression. Several teachers spoke about the desire to implement change by working with families, alongside their discontent with the lack of autonomy in schools.

This study shows that teachers bring with them to the Sure Start teams in which they work, Professional Craft Knowledge (PCK). This tacit knowledge was revealed in the study as a powerful tool enabling teachers to make decisions about their daily practice. The study argues that teacher's PCK, gained largely in schools, can be transferred to the Sure Start context and that it is the ability to articulate this knowledge that has a controlling influence on teacher activity.

Managers of SSLPs face a dilemma. They want to employ teachers with experience of teaching and knowledge of how schools work, but without the consequent cultural attitudes. This research indicates that knowledge of how schools work was perceived to be a positive feature of the teacher's portfolio at the point of entry to Sure Start programmes. It also indicates that teachers were able to participate within multi-agency teams and in doing so underwent identity transformation, shedding their schoolteacher identity and taking on the identity of a Sure Start Teacher.

What triggers change in teachers' roles?

This study argues participation within the Sure Start team, which leads to joint work, is the dominant force for change. Opportunities for social interaction within the team are fundamental to the process of job evolution. Multi-agency partnerships are dependant on practitioner availability and accessibility. Joint work between a horticulturalist and a teacher in one programme was possible due to a horticultural college based in the locality; partnership with occupational therapists in another programme was possible due to the commitment of their manager to make staff available.

Programme vision and leadership can extend and nurture social interaction through systems and procedures at a team level, in which the teacher is viewed as an inclusive member. The length of time a teacher may have interacting with other

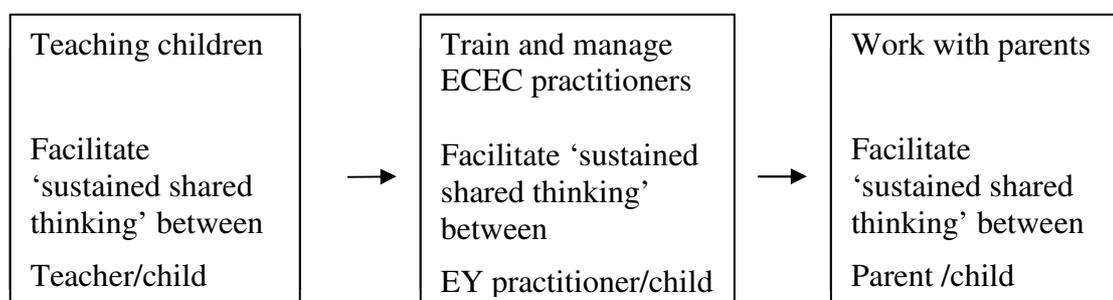
practitioners will be influenced by their employment structures and flexibility (full time or part time, school holiday pattern, contract length). How long teachers have been in post influences their potential for forming meaningful relationships with other team members. The location of a teacher's work base (whether in close proximity to the majority of team members) and the composition of smaller office communities, together with availability of relaxation spaces, all impact on possibilities for social interaction. Working with children under three, can bring teachers into contact with practitioners formerly distanced; particularly midwives and health visitors. All the above factors increase teachers' accessibility and opportunities for social contact and the increased likelihood of sharing information and initiation of joint work projects with practitioners from other agencies.

This thesis suggests joint work between teachers and health practitioners, especially health visitors, and work with babies and their families at an operational level (front line practice), is a strong indicator of a teacher's full participation within a Sure Start team.

What activities are teachers involved in?

On the whole teachers have moved away from direct responsibility of children's learning, to support parents as children's first educators, and practitioners as secondary educators. The client focus progressed from children to parents as teachers moved towards increasing participation within their community. A corresponding potential for influencing possible episodes of 'sustained shared thinking', a suggested indicator of effective learning (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2002) can then be linked to the teacher, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) practitioners and finally parents (Figure 6.5).

Figure 6. 3 Continuum of Sure Start Teacher activity



Teacher's work with parents was mostly carried out in groups (both self-selecting and targeted) either in outreach venues or the Sure Start centre. Teachers took a lead role in facilitating intergenerational learning through modelling practice and engaging in reflective dialogue with parents. Some parent groups were based on family learning models, others were more informal. Only one teacher worked in family homes (with children identified as having SEN).

Programme managers views were inconsistent on the direction the teacher focus should take. Some regarded training and management within settings as paramount, whilst others viewed promoting positive relationships between children and their parents, as the single most important contribution a teacher could make, thereby creating conditions for learning to flourish.

This research revealed the construction of broad and diverse teacher roles. Teacher dispositions, teacher experience and knowledge, are intricately interwoven within the specific context of each Sure Start community of practice, to create a uniqueness of role for every teacher. But within this distinctiveness, a commonality of three core roles emerged; exchanging knowledge and skills; facilitating intergenerational learning and providing pedagogic leadership.

How do teachers fit within multi-agency teams?

This thesis puts forward the case that teachers provide a valuable and unique role within SSLPs. Teachers have demonstrated that they are able to contribute to multi-agency teams, bringing with them and utilising their distinct craft skills. By participating within their communities of practice, teachers have engaged in knowledge exchange, not only with other practitioners, but also parents of young children. They have been able to discard their schoolteacher identity and construct the identity of a new early years multi-agency practitioner: The Sure Start Teacher.

Teachers' changed thinking was illustrated in the study; in particular their attitudes towards parents, schools, and the interconnectedness of learning. Teachers spoke about increased knowledge and understanding of aspects of child development, particularly speech development. As the activity system of the teacher collided with the activity systems of health practitioners, professional tensions and turbulence surfaced. Differences in issues surrounding confidentiality, professional jealousy relating to positional status and professional development opportunities, conflict over knowledge bases and the degree of structure in client-based groups, all came to the fore. Individual

teachers employed a range of strategies to overcome conflict generated from activity systems clashing. These strategies included developing resilience, avoidance of confrontation and working flexibly to accommodate programme work patterns.

As well as participating within community based multi-agency teams, teachers have taken on board the added dimension of new and different client groups. In this regard it could be argued that the challenge for Sure Start teachers is greater than for most Sure Start practitioners, as teachers are working with both younger and older people than in schools. Health practitioners and social care and health practitioners continue to work with client groups that they are trained to work with in mainstream services.

How is innovative working facilitated?

Strong programme management with vision, commitment, and knowledge and understanding of multi-agency work, enabled positive work cultures to thrive. Within an optimistic work environment, the relative autonomy of teachers to explore new partnerships and forms of service delivery supports risk taking, entering of new territories and experimentation. This research found loose management, within a framework of reviewing and refining practice facilitates innovation. The study highlighted the need for teachers to be reflective practitioners, considering team and community dynamics and fine-tuning practices as they develop. Teachers need to self evaluate, to be critical of one's own work, with courage to acknowledge and amend ineffective practices.

Strong management will ensure conditions are in place for teachers to move towards full participation within the Sure Start community of practice. By participating within a multi-agency group, practitioners learn from each other and in doing so are able to develop styles of work. Teachers have demonstrated they are able to challenge conventional practice and gain confidence to cross agency boundaries within their communities.

6.5 Evaluation of the methodology used

The study was designed around a theoretical framework incorporating aspects of Professional Craft Knowledge (Cooper and McIntyre 1996), Communities of Practice (Wenger 1998) and Activity Theory (Engestrom 1999) in an attempt to make sense of the work of teachers in Sure Start Local Programmes. A multi-method approach was

employed, which included interviews, observation of activity, questionnaires and scrutiny of documentation. Distinctive features of the teacher interview were the inclusion of a pre and post activity element, the latter to trigger reflection on a shared experience and gain access to teacher thinking behind observed actions. This strategy secured the release of a rich stream of pedagogical thinking in relation to the craft knowledge teachers' hold. The methodology enabled investigation of issues surrounding the acceptance of teachers in multi-agency work teams in unexplored territory i.e. working with babies and toddlers and their parents. It also facilitated examination of levels of teacher participation in SSLPs and their changing identities. Methods incorporated opportunities for individuals to voice tensions in the team, but no capacity for identifying 'critical incidents', or group dialogue was available. Limitations in aspects of activity theory, specifically accommodating the notion of blurring of boundaries, were flagged up in the study. The study design enabled emergent findings to become more grounded as analysis developed

6.6 Final Summary

The Sure Start teacher can offer a positive contribution to the life of SSLPs. They occupy a role that is differentiated from other team members, stemming from their history and culture as qualified and experienced teachers.

The study found teachers delivered training to other practitioners in both vertical and horizontal directions e.g. disseminating information on 'good practice' or aspects of standards in education. They modelled practice alongside team members and/or parents, followed by collaborative reflective dialogue, enabling knowledge sharing and enhanced understanding of young children's learning. They facilitated family learning with large groups utilising pedagogic structures and framing to create enabling environments, establish positive relationships and provide appropriate interventions and tasks. They exercised skills to model and engage in 'sustained shared thinking'. When conditions are conducive to full participation teachers were able to demonstrate pedagogic expertise through questioning, discussion and decision-making within the team and beyond. They have taken on the role of pedagogic mentor (including management responsibilities) within Sure Start teams and demonstrated an

ability to network educators. These distinctive features; mark the Sure Start teacher out from other practitioners.

The Sure Start teacher demonstrates flexibility and versatility in relation to accommodating cognitive and affective characteristics of diverse groups of learners. In doing so they ensure the smooth running of groups of children, together with their parents/carers, through maintaining the flow of activities. They do this by utilising their considerable repertoire of professional craft skills.

The teacher provides appropriate tasks and interventions to develop the interwoven aspects of social, emotional, language and cognitive learning of babies, toddlers and young children, through supporting appropriate parental/carer actions. They can be regarded as specialists within the Sure Start team in relation to pedagogy (specialist teachers in the wider sense in nurturing and promoting learning with families 'at risk' of social exclusion). Boundary conflict between teachers and speech and language therapists and to lesser extent health visitors, surfaced in the study. Sure Start teachers are generalists in terms of developing the whole child, whilst speech and language therapists can be viewed as specialists in language development.

Sure Start members found it hard to define what teachers brought to their programmes. They perceived 'soft' skills (interpersonal skills) and knowledge of school culture as dominant features. Whilst a commonality of desired dispositions (table 6.1) may be shared across all front-line workers in SSLPs, they certainly reflect new dimensions for teachers used to working in schools.

The issue of management of teacher's professional development, the degree of autonomy conferred and opportunities for Sure Start teachers to network, also arose in this study.

The role of teachers in SSLPs can then, be described as being able to exchange knowledge and skills within a multi-agency team, facilitate intergenerational learning in the locality, and provide a pedagogic lead within a framework of joint work with members of the community of practice. In pioneering this new role, Sure Start teachers can be thought of, as agents of change.

Recommendations

This study suggests further qualitative, in-depth research would help define and understand the work of the Sure Start teacher. As a consequence of this study, these areas could include:

1. Further investigation of boundary crossing between education, health and social service agencies and the impact on practitioner identity.
2. Role clarity in relation to the Sure Start Teacher, a Sure Start Speech and Language Therapist and the new Early Years Professional.
3. Researching effective pedagogy for working with children under three.
4. Professional development of teachers within multi-agency teams.

Appendix A: Ethical Code

1. Informed consent sought from all programme managers, teachers and team members invited to participate in the study.
2. Complete confidentiality given and adhered to for all interviewees.
3. Non-traceability of individual SSLP members in the written report.
4. Respectful of individuals wishes concerning participation and their contributions.
5. Open and transparent purpose to the research.
6. Researcher identity and background supplied.
7. Warm responses given during participant observation.
8. Sensitivity to the needs of families in the wider Sure Start community.
9. Verbal thanks given to all participants and written thanks to teacher participants after fieldwork.
10. To complete study and send summary of findings to participating programmes.

Appendix B: Information sheet

The central question being asked in this research is:

What is the role of teachers in Sure Start Local Programmes?

The roles of teachers currently employed in local programmes are varied. Some teachers are engaged primarily in advising parents on ways to help their children learn, some are predominantly involved in home teaching programmes; some work almost exclusively with the Foundation Stage and children's transition to school, whilst others are putting their energies into creating learning opportunities in the community for babies and toddlers. With a requirement for teachers to be part of the core staff of Children's Centres, this research will help inform managers and planners on the contribution teachers can make to multi disciplinary teams. It is hoped that this study will provide a valuable contribution to the increasing employment of teachers within Sure Start programmes.

On completion, this study will be submitted for a higher degree at Leicester University. The planned date for this is September 2005. It is hoped findings will be published along the way in journals.

What it will mean for you.

I will arrange to visit your programme for two consecutive days.

On the first day I would like to meet and have semi structured interviews (each one lasting no more than 45 minutes) with the programme manager, teacher and two further staff on the team. These interviews will enable me to explore the part teacher's play in Sure Start Local Programmes.

I would also like to ask if you could let me have copies of some documentation relating to teachers work. These could include job descriptions, service level agreements, milestones, reports to partnership boards and weekly diary sheets. I will also ask the teacher if they could fill in a short questionnaire about themselves.

On the second day I would like to accompany the teacher on his/her working day. This will provide information on the type of activities carried out and give a 'snapshot' of one day in the life of a Sure Start teacher. I will make discrete notes throughout the day. At the end of the day I would like a further short interview with the teacher to talk about observations.

Confidentiality.

All information collected will be completely confidential. Involvement will of course be voluntary. I will ask if I may use a tape recorder during the interviews. No programme or person will be identified in the written report.

Questions

If you have any questions about this study, please contact me on 0116 242 6370

(mon, tues, wed) or by e-mail su_hastings@hotmail.com (note underscore _ after su!).

Thank you for your support,

Sue Hastings

Researcher

Appendix C: Interview schedule

Semi-structured interview with programme managers

Purpose: To explore the perceptions of managers on the roles teachers play within their programmes.

Could you tell me what your teacher does?

Do you feel their job has changed since it was first created? - in what ways and why.

Do you think it works having a teacher on the team?

What, in your opinion, has been the most valuable contribution the teacher has made to this programme?

What do you think are the challenges of employing teachers?

How do teachers get on with other team members?

Have there been any difficulties? – could you give me some examples.

What kind of skills/attributes do you think a teacher in a SSLP needs?

Semi-structured interview with two other team members

Purpose: To explore the perceptions of two other team members, selected by the programme, on the roles teachers play within their programmes.

What do you think the teacher on the team does?

Do you think they work differently now to when you first knew them?

Do you think they have changed as a result of working for Sure Start?

Do they work closely with any other team members?

What do you think they should do? – do you think they make a difference?

What do you think a teacher can bring to a sure start team?

What kind of skills do you think a teacher in the Sure Start programme needs?

Semi-structured interview with teachers - part one.

Purpose: To explore teachers' perceptions on the role they play within Sure Start programmes. This will follow four broad themes;

- 1 What the teacher does.
- 2 How the teacher views their job.
- 3 How their role has developed
- 4 The nature of interactions with other team members.

Could you tell me what you do?

Do you have any contact with local schools?

How much work is involved with children under 3?

Does the job meet your expectations? is it what you thought it would be ?

Where would you want this job to lead?

Have there ever been situations when you've thought – I don't know how to go about this.

What parts of the job do you think you are most successful at?

What do you find the most exciting part of your job?

What is the hardest part of the job?

Are there any parts of your job you dislike?

Do you feel you're listened to/valued?

Do you get a chance to talk to anyone about how the job is going?

Is there anything that would improve the job for you?

Do you feel the job has changed since you started working for Sure Start?

Have you been able to question the way things were first set up and change practice?

Do you know the names of everyone on the team?

Do you have opportunities to meet with the whole team?

What other members of the team do you work with on a day-to-day basis?

Do you feel there are any tensions created by employing a teacher on the team?

What do you feel other people think about having a teacher on the team?

Do you think other team members know what you do?

What kind of personality do you think is needed for being part of a Sure Start team?

How different is your work now from working in schools?

Semi-structured interview schedule with teachers - part two.

Purpose: To access teachers thinking behind their actions.

The main focus of this interview will be to encourage the teacher to reflect and articulate his/her practice following a period of researcher work shadowing.

Explore the nature of the interactions with children/ other adults using concrete examples from the observation. E.g. I noticed you approached the little boy with the blue jumper - what were you thinking at the time?

Can you remember what you said to that mum to make her help with the ... ?

The action song went down very well...

Have you always done this (activity)?

How did this activity/session come about - who was involved in the planning?

Were there any hitches in getting it off the ground?

Have you got any plans for extending it?

What sort of feedback do you get from this?

Appendix D: Teacher questionnaire

Please complete this short form about yourself. Thanks.

Circle the correct category.

		Male	Female		
Age	20 – 30	31-40	41 – 50	51 – 60	over 61

Please record your qualifications

For how many years have you been a teacher in a teaching post?

please circle.

0-5	6-10	11-15	16 – 20	21-25	over 25
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What was the job you were doing before you joined Sure Start?

Please circle the appropriate category to describe terms of employment.

Full time part-time

Permanent contract temporary contract

Teachers pay and conditions Soulbury scale Local agreement

Who funds your post?

What is the job title of your line-manager?

Appendix E: Findings from the teacher questionnaire.

Total number of respondents 7 (6 female, 1 male)

Age profile

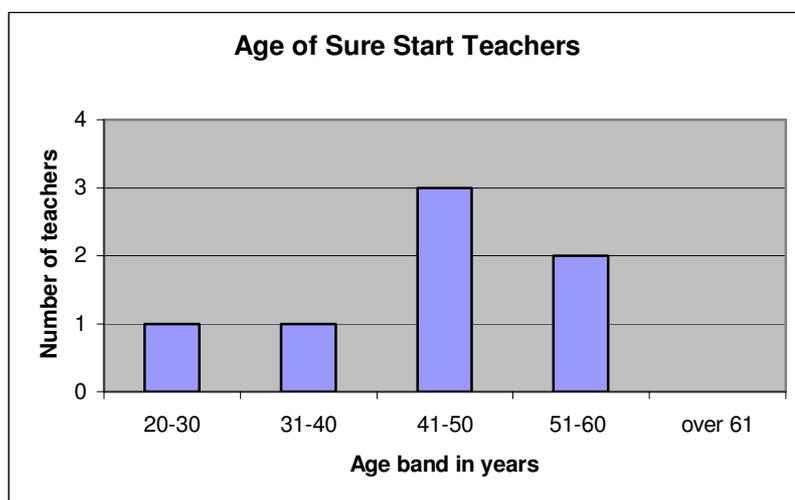
20-30 years 1 teacher

31-40 years 1 teacher

41-50 years 3 teachers

51-60 years 2 teachers

Over 61 years 0 teachers



Professional Qualifications

All teachers held qualified teacher status.

Three teachers held graduate level qualifications; one teacher a Bachelor of Education degree, and two teachers Bachelor of Arts degrees.

One teacher held a postgraduate qualification; Postgraduate Certificate of Education (early years specialism).

In addition to a teaching qualification, one teacher held an NNEB qualification.

Number of years in a teaching post

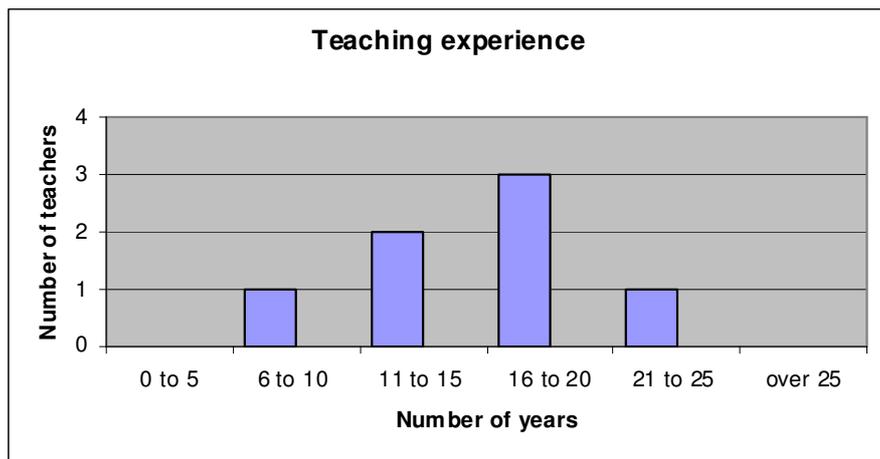
0-5 years 0 teachers

6-10 years 1 teacher

11-15 years 2 teachers

16-20 years 3 teachers

21-25 years 1 teacher



Teacher posts prior to joining SSLPs

Early Years Co-ordinator / teacher in charge of nursery.

Teacher in Learning Support Service

Foundation Stage Advisor

Reception class teacher

Reception class teacher

Teacher in Early Years Teaching and Support Service

Reception class teacher / Foundation Stage co-ordinator

4 teachers were formerly Foundation Stage classroom teachers

2 teachers were from LEA Central Learning Support Services.

1 teacher was from an LEA Advisory Service.

Conditions of employment

2 teachers held full time permanent contracts

1 teacher held a full time temporary contract

1 teacher held a part-time permanent contract

3 teachers held part-time temporary contracts

6 teachers held contracts with teachers pay and conditions

1 teacher held a contract with locally agreed conditions of service

Funding

Sure Start funded six teacher posts.

An LEA funded one teacher post.

Management arrangements

1 teacher part of a dual line-management system (LEA/SSLP)

1 teacher line-managed by the SSLP manager

1 teacher line-managed by a head teacher

3 teachers line-managed by the LEA

1 teacher uncertain over line-management responsibilities

Appendix F: Qualities teachers bring to Sure Start Local Programmes

	Knowledge and skills	Dispositions
Teachers' perceptions	<p>knowledge of styles of learning</p> <p>effective learning and teaching</p> <p>next steps in children's learning</p> <p>Foundation Stage curriculum and Birth to Three framework</p> <p>provide fresh ideas</p> <p>observe children</p> <p>follow children's cues</p> <p>make connections between learning</p> <p>simplify language</p> <p>support parents to understand the system (FS curriculum)</p>	<p>openness to new learning.</p> <p>self-motivated, work independently</p> <p>belief you can affect change and that families have capacity to change</p> <p>strong vision</p> <p>diplomatic and sensitive</p> <p>determined, persistent and committed</p> <p>team player</p> <p>research skills</p> <p>reflective thinker</p>
Programme managers' perceptions	<p>up to date knowledge around Ofsted</p> <p>knowledge of children's abilities</p> <p>every day practical knowledge of running a nursery</p> <p>the next steps for children</p> <p>knowledge of school expectations</p> <p>knowledge of working with children with special educational needs</p> <p>theoretical understanding of education</p> <p>knowledge of quality accreditation schemes</p> <p>skill in watching what children do</p> <p>good communicator across all ages</p> <p>great organisational skills, very structured</p> <p>raises all our expectations about what children can achieve</p> <p>advises on resources</p> <p>provide pedagogical leadership</p>	<p>open and transparent.</p> <p>enjoy children</p> <p>having a vision.</p> <p>engender trust</p> <p>Strong work ethic</p> <p>non-judgemental</p> <p>innovative</p> <p>creative, able to take risks</p> <p>people skills</p> <p>think outside the box</p> <p>ability to form effective relationships</p>

	<p>strong element of quality relating to learning</p> <p>managing the bigger picture</p> <p>provide information to parents</p> <p>quality</p>	
Other team members' perceptions	<p>child development.</p> <p>how children learn</p> <p>Foundation Stage curriculum</p> <p>greater understanding of parents' needs</p> <p>able to have dialogue with people</p> <p>ability to liaise with colleagues</p> <p>manage change</p> <p>skills of learning and teaching from teaching older age range.</p> <p>support children learning</p> <p>know how to communicate with head teachers</p> <p>listens to parents</p> <p>knows outcomes for children</p> <p>give feedback</p> <p>strong view of the development of the foundation stage curriculum</p>	<p>extrovert, bubbly, sense of humour</p> <p>approachable</p> <p>open and honest</p> <p>relaxed, non threatening</p> <p>non-judgemental, empathetic.</p> <p>friendly and warm</p> <p>creative</p> <p>able to share knowledge</p> <p>seeing the positive and being optimistic</p> <p>open to criticism</p> <p>not to be too precious</p> <p>foster trust within relationships</p> <p>get to know people</p>

Appendix G: Principles of E Y Education matched to attributes of SSLP teachers

Principles of Early Years Education *	Perceptions of SS team members on attributes of teachers
A relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements.	Strong view of the development of the Foundation Stage curriculum
Practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.	Knowledge of child development Knowledge of children’s abilities.
Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued	Knowledge of working with children with special educational needs.
Early years experience should build on what children already know and can do	Know the next steps
No child should be excluded or disadvantaged	
Parents and practitioners should work together	Ability to form effective relationships able to have dialogue with people’
To be effective, an early years curriculum should be carefully structured	Structure and organisation Practical day to day running of a nursery
There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves	Know how children learn
Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children	Watch children and follow their cues
Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process	Know how children learn Practical day to day running of a nursery
For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organised	Advise on resources
Effective learning and development for young children requires high quality care and education	Brings quality Understands Ofsted standards High expectations

* taken from Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage QCA 2000.

Appendix H: Characteristics of Sure Start Local Programmes

Programme	SSLP start	Programme manager background	Lead partner for SSLP
A	Trailblazer	Voluntary sector	Voluntary organisation
B	Trailblazer	Health	Local authority- social services
C	Trailblazer	Health	Voluntary organisation
D	Trailblazer	Voluntary sector	Local authority
E	Round 2	Health	Voluntary organisation
F	Trailblazer	Health	Voluntary organisation

Appendix I: Teachers' conditions of service

Programme	Type of contract			Salary level
A	Full time	Permanent	Teachers pay and conditions	N/a
B	Part-time	Temporary	Teachers pay and conditions	N/a
C	Part-time	Permanent	Teachers pay and conditions	N/a
D	Full-time	Temporary	Teachers pay and conditions	Threshold UPS
D	Part-time	Temporary	Teachers pay and conditions	Threshold UPS
E	Part-time	Temporary	Teachers pay and conditions	N/a
F	Full-time	Permanent	Local agreement	N/a

Appendix J: Line-management structures

Programme	Teacher's line-management
A	Head of Early Years Service and Sure Start programme Co-ordinator.
B	Pre-school Adviser (SEN) and Sure Start Director
C	Area Manager- Young Children's Services
D	Early Years Education Officer
E	Head Teacher
F	Sure Start Programme Director

Appendix K: Vignette of teacher training early years practitioners

Ellie arrives at the Sure Start Centre with her two year old just before nine o'clock. Laura, her daughter, has a part time place in the Sure Start nursery. The nursery is newly set up and is well equipped and the quality of provision is, in her opinion, good. Ellie is the nursery manager and she has been instrumental in appointing the staff. She is worried though, that the staffs spoil her daughter. Over the past few weeks Laura has been attention seeking and finding it hard to settle in the mornings. Ellie jokingly mentions again this morning that she wants Laura to be treated in the same way as other children, even if this means some screaming and she reassures Laura's key worker this is okay. Ellie still has an underlying suspicion that Laura has been labelled the teachers child and will not, in fact, be left to howl in her hearing. This is becoming one of the down sides of using the nursery and she must remember today not to walk in view of Laura otherwise there will be another commotion. Ellie thinks that having her own child has helped her understand issues parents face, and she hopes her own experience will help her when she runs a behaviour workshop for parents later in the month. She reflects that of the three staff running this course (together with health visitor and social worker), she is, in fact, the only mum.

Ellie wears a black suit, rather than the denim jacket and casual trousers she sometimes wears. She greets the receptionist with a smile and signs in, and then busies herself checking the computer and data projector are set up ready for her session in the training room. Ellie has prepared her presentation on power point and wants everything to go without technical hitches. The training this morning is for seventeen crèche staff working across the authority and was requested by their co-ordinator several months ago. Ellie knows lots of the crèche workers; some are old friends. As they arrive, Ellie cheerfully says hello to groups and individuals, using first name greetings to many of the participants. She doesn't get drawn into conversations as she moves around the room placing packs on the tables.

As the session begins, Ellie formally introduces herself as the Pre-School Advisory Teacher for Additional Needs. She tells the audience she is a qualified primary teacher and before that an NNEB. From time to time Ellie slips purposefully in and out of the persona of an early years teacher. The session is well paced and varied in style. During feedback given from small groups, Ellie prompts, re-phrases and reminds groups of the points they made and builds on information they volunteer. When asked a

question she doesn't have an answer to, Ellie promises to find out and then pass on the information. During the session she refers to recent courses she has attended, one on positive environments for learning and another on autism.

The morning finishes more or less on time and the project workers drift away chattering. Ellie wants to continue with a training role, but wonders how things will change with the forthcoming appointment of a further 12 Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators in the authority.

Appendix L: Vignette of teacher involvement in transition to school project

The doors swing open as Pam swipes her entry card through the electronic marker. As she passes through the play area she stoops to pick up one of the toys lying in her path and places it on the shelf with its other half. She climbs the stairs to her office space and breezes into a room shared with a community development worker and adult tutor. She's looking forward to gossiping with them after last Saturday's fun day when everyone was rushed off their feet all day with children's activities in the park.

Pam knows she has to be ready for the session she is running later on in the morning. It is the culmination of two years work and she's very proud of getting the whole team behind her. Pam rushes out to the local supermarket to buy refreshments. The boot of her car is already overflowing with boxes of equipment, but she manages to somehow squeeze in the carrier bags. Then Pam changes into her orange Sure Start T-shirt and whizzes off. As the group of Sure Start staff stagger into the school loaded with boxes, Pam glimpses the outdoor play area, set up with a grant from the Sure Start programme, but now without enough school staff to permit full use of the area.

The six sure start staff supporting the session at school busy themselves getting ready. The midwife is joining the staff working with the three year olds. She's enjoys meeting some of the mums she got to know when they were having their babies and see how they have grown into inquisitive young children.

The turnout is good. mums, dads, partners and grandparents arrive with their children and take them through to the classroom area and then filter back to the room where the session for them will be held. Danny won't stay without his mum, so comes back to the room with the adults. Everyone is used to him being here now and he seems happy lying on his tummy scribbling with the pens on the paper Pam puts out. He likes to scoop things up and move them to other places and Pam was able to use this as an example of a play pattern last week. She may point out his transportational schema again this week.

The session is led by the adult tutor and supported by the teacher; last week it was the community dentist and before that the child psychotherapist. The school sends the Foundation Stage NNEB to the group. Pam is still upset that last week the school had asked all the parents to fill out a form that was in her opinion unnecessarily complex.

Two of the parents had had to ask what gender meant and many were embarrassed that they couldn't read all the words.

The session is relaxed and parents share jokes with each other. They all try the hands on activity, and laugh at the outcomes. Everyone seems at ease and questions are asked. Pam makes a mental note that she must bring the disposable cameras next week to capture the parents receiving end of course certificates.

Pam calls in at the office and asks if Peter, the Head Teacher, could spare a moment. Peter and Pam chat briefly about the schools growing interest in community outreach work. Peter has noticed that since the project has been running parents of children in the nursery have become increasingly able to articulate their emotions. The Head teacher is keen for his staff to understand more of the Birth to 3 Framework and turns to Pam for advice. Pam feels a shift in attitude in the school from the early days and is optimistic that Family Learning programmes will be more highly valued in the future.

Appendix M: Vignette of teacher engagement in reflective dialogue project

Robert and Amy, both teachers, have been coming to the town centre drop-in session for families and their young children for over 12 months now. The three weeks between each visit always seem to flash by. The local Sure Start programme started funding the project two years ago largely as an outreach opportunity for health visitors to meet young families.

A childcare worker and health visitor have already arrived when Robert strides in balancing a portable printer, laptop and video camera in his arms. The hall is large and looks bleak and empty, but soon becomes transformed as the four workers bring out toys and equipment from the store leading off the hall. The childcare worker has planned some messy play activities and sets about putting everything in place. The health visitor looks hesitant and asks the teacher how she should arrange the large play equipment. Robert had to work hard to persuade health to agree to the introduction of the 'Growing Together' project.

Amy heads for the far corner of the room and pushes a small table close to the wall sockets. She needs two chairs behind the table, one for her and one for a parent. Amy connects the Apple Mac, and portable printer quickly and then moves her attention to setting up the video camera. She knows for the project to be successful the technology must work smoothly and although she still regards herself as not too good with computers she has mastered the art of video filming and editing and really enjoys working with this medium. In fact she freely admits she absolutely adores the entire project.

The hall begins to fill with children's and parents voices as families arrive and settle down on the big floor cushions scattered around the hall. Not complying with the layout, a couple of the mums move the cushions so that they can still huddle together and have a good chat. Robert's role this afternoon will be to talk to the mums and to play with the children when opportunities arise. Robert notices that Charlotte has come with her new baby and son Jason, a large 3 year old with ginger hair. He knows that Jason is having difficulty settling into morning playgroup and that Charlotte refers to him as a nightmare child. He makes a mental note that later on he will sit with Charlotte and try to talk about how things are going with the new baby and how she might be

able help Jason settle at playgroup. He will also try to set up situations this afternoon to encourage Jason to interact with some of the other children.

Amy gazes around the hall to see who has come. She spots Tracey and Jack and wanders over to greet them. Amy knows Jack is not very confident leaving his mum but that he likes playing with toys that move. She has a couple of cars in her hand and pushes one towards Jack who eagerly grasps it and pushes it back, enjoying the game. After a while Jack toddles off with both cars and pushes them along the line of the carpet. Amy asks Tracey if she would be happy for Jack to be the chosen child this afternoon. A smile creeps over Tracey's face and then falters, 'but you did him before Christmas, we've still got the photos on the mantle piece'. Amy explains that children's turns will come round again and that it will be so interesting to see how much they've changed over the time. Tracey knows the routine as she's been to the group for quite a while and the teachers explained the video filming project called 'Growing Together', at the start, so she knows the way it will work. She's keen to learn more about Jack's play and how she can help him at home, she wants him to get a better start than she did, she had always hated school and she's really surprised the teachers here are so different from the ones she remembers from her own school days.

Amy notices that Jack is now playing alongside another boy with a basket of cars. The two boys look at each other intensely and then start to push their cars in the same direction making loud brrrm sounds. Amy kneels down and starts to discreetly film Jack as he seems to be very involved in this episode of play. Amy spends the next 15 minutes observing Jack and trying to capture his play on video film. Jack has started to climb the steps to the top of the slide and peer down. He does this repeatedly. Amy decides to intervene and hands Jack a car at the top of the slide, she goes to the foot of the slide and with encouragement the car is released from his hand. Jack claps his hands and the cycle is set – rolling the car down the slide occupies Jack for the next 10 minutes and after every roll Jack looks across to his mum.

Amy has got enough film to share with Tracey and they both walk over to the table in the far corner of the room, away from earshot of the other parents. Jack is now absorbed in play in another part of the hall and Robert is watching ready to engage with him if necessary. Tracey and Amy watch the video snippets together and Tracey chooses a sequence that she thinks shows well how she gives Jack reassurance in his play. She now makes a point of catching his eye contact and smiling at him to show she

is still there and interested in him and if he is clapping she will also clap her hands to reinforce her pleasure in his success. Amy talks about Jack's interest in pushing and rolling cars down slopes and explains this is a pattern in his play. Amy used to be wary of using educational language, but finds that parents like it, so now tells Tracey, Jack has a trajectory schema. It all makes sense to Tracey who tells Amy how he always throws his shoes down the stairs at home before putting them on and loves to play football with her partner. Six images are downloaded and Tracey talks through the photo whilst Amy enters it as text. They chat and laugh and change the wording together to make it sound right and then it's dated and printed off ready for Tracey to take home at the end of the session. As Tracy leaves she mutters to her friend Carla 'I watch him play all the time, but I didn't know that's what he was doing'.

Appendix N: Vignette of teacher as pedagogic leader

Debbie arrives at the Sure Start main building at nine o'clock, looking no different from any of the other workers arriving, apart from the slender, well-worn brief case swinging from her hand. She is the only Early Years Teacher on the programme, in fact the only Sure Start teacher as far as she knows. She has certainly never met any other teachers working in Sure Start programmes. As Debbie signs in, Lisa, the programme manager taps her on the shoulder and says hello and then asks Debbie a favour; could she borrow a pack of crayons she needs for the parents group. Debbie laughs and makes a comment about people always expecting the teacher to have crayons in their bag.

Debbie's office is a cramped first floor room in an adapted apartment block she shares with her team. It was big enough when she first started, but now her team, known to the programme as the multidisciplinary team, has grown and the office space is shared with three others. Actually Debbie likes the cosiness and being able to chat and bounce ideas off Jackie, the inclusion worker, although it can feel like working in a goldfish bowl when she meets parents. Jackie's job is the culmination of two years of battling in the programme to put parent's needs first. Debbie sees the inclusion worker post as pretty innovative and doesn't think there is anything else quite like it. The job is a tangible result of the struggles she's waged in the programme and although Debbie hates the idea of line-managing staff, is pleased to be able keep tabs on the direction of the post.

Debbie is rather troubled today as she knows she has to tackle the problem of one of the communication workers having a long term back complaint, which has been compromising her work for several months. Debbie hates these employment issues, but is determined to follow procedures to try to resolve the situation. She knows Mattie, the worker concerned, has been talking about changing to a desk bound job and although it will mean her training another worker, would be secretly happy for this to happen. Actually she likes Mattie, but is passionate about the Chatterbox group, and won't let anything get in the way of its success. The Chatterbox group was developed by Debbie to tackle the behaviour of two and three year olds with delayed communication skills. The clinical approach of the speech and language therapist just hadn't worked in this area, so Debbie had taken over with a targeted family group approach. Occupational therapists are part of the multidisciplinary team and Debbie has picked up so much from working with them.

In the early days the programme had listened to Debbie and agreed to fund two new core posts to support the project. Debbie had put together a job description and training package to 'skill up' the workers. Now, this morning, as Debbie makes her way towards her car, she feels let down by teacher colleagues. No-one has applied for the corresponding job in the neighbouring programme. The communication workers are already appointed, so in order to keep the project viable, Debbie has altered her work schedule to cover this area too. As she opens the boot of her car she pushes aside the bag of washing she has done for one of the families in crisis. She reflects on the potential roll out of the project to larger areas; she knows it's a workable model and producing results, but it will rest on teacher recruitment. Debbie takes a dim view that the manager of the Early Years service hasn't shown any interest in even visiting the project.

Staff trickle into the large hall. As one of the student OTs begins to push chairs to the side of the room, Debbie explains they have a no chairs policy because they find it stops parents getting involved in activities. The senior OT starts placing activities around the space, whilst the CW bluetacks the visual timetable on the wall, Debbie chats to the other CW. Two mums come into the hall breathless, behind enormous pushchairs laden with shopping, toddlers, and all their paraphernalia. The children are coaxed out of their seats despite their apparent weariness. The project is designed around action songs to start with, to stimulate the children and jolt them out of lethargy. The worn out mothers look relieved that for the next hour and a half, they are not alone in interacting with their children.

This afternoon there are only three children, but there are rumours of a chicken pox outbreak. Practitioners are used to low turnouts and are undeterred in following the flexible programme, even if it's only for one child.

Appendix O: Vignette of teacher facilitating intergenerational learning

Clare parks her car in the nursery car park and skips up the steps to the nursery entrance. The workers in the nursery are all so friendly and as Clare calls out a 'hi' she feels comfortable and at ease. Today it's the music group; the Sure Start nursery is open for all families with young children to come and join in. Clare sees her role as managing this group; she books Paul, the musician, secures funding, advertises the group and participates in its running. It's the sixth week Paul has been coming to the group now and the numbers are picking up. At the start few attended and one week only 3 families came, but today Clare is expecting about 20 children. Word has got round to the more affluent estate a few miles away, but Clare doesn't mind, in fact she's pleased there is a social mix of children.

Families arrive at the nursery and are greeted individually by Clare who seems to have remembered all their names. The children are prompted to find their own name cards and move them to the felt board above the table. Jodie and her Gran spend ages checking the cards before Jodie with help from Gran pounces on her name.

It's the start of the session and music is playing from the CD player. Families settle down with books to look at or puzzles to complete, in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Calming music is used to change children's behaviours. Children are given choices through selecting items representing songs from a bag.

Clare takes on a low level supervisory role. She contains one child for a while and has a little girl sitting on her lap. She takes on responsibility for maintaining boundaries, for example, she intervened when one boy helped himself to musical instrument from the box prematurely. Clare takes the role of ensuring the smooth running of the group. She discreetly and calmly offers an explanation, gently prompts the lad to pop the instrument back in the box and re-focuses him to another activity.

The teacher undertakes an organisational role on introductions and announcements at the end of the session. She participated and modelled during music session and chatted to the musician at the end of the session. Clare articulates the short-term aims for the group in terms of children's outcomes; namely to aid communication through, attention, listening and language skills.

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