
CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION: IMPACT ON PUPILS

THE COMMON HISTORY PROGRAMME IN STRABANE

Our own practical involvement with schools through the project gave us an opportunity to consider how we might learn something about the effect of the programmes on pupils. Trew (1989) reviews the limited research on the impact of contact schemes for Catholic and Protestant children in Northern Ireland. Individual studies have variously used questionnaires, interviews, sociometric tests and participant observation, and it is clear that no single study will give comprehensive answers to questions about impact. We chose to focus on the 'Peoples of Ireland' programme which operated between first form pupils in five Strabane post-primary schools (3 secondary, 2 grammar). Details of the programme are given earlier in the report (Chapter 1). The programme was taught to all first form pupils (11-12 years old) in each school, but only one class from each school participated in a series of contact activities. This allowed us to identify a 'contact' and 'non-contact' class in each school. The programme was designed to be taught during normal history periods over a term, although it actually operated longer than this. This meant that we were able to gather data from pupils before the programme was introduced and again after the programme had finished, a period of approximately six months. Details about the pupils who provided data are given in Appendix B.

Percentages are used throughout when discussing results. For simplicity, pupils attending maintained schools are called 'Catholic' and pupils attending controlled schools are described as 'Protestant'. Whilst the former is almost certainly true in the Strabane context, we can be less certain about the latter. Although both controlled schools estimate that anything up to 10% of their total enrolment may be children from a Catholic background, we had no way of knowing how many of the pupils who supplied us with information fall into this category. We realise there are sensitivities about such labelling and apologise in advance for any offence it might cause. Our choice of labels is to draw attention to the perceived affiliations usually associated with controlled and maintained schools in Northern Ireland.

We wished to see what contrasts existed between pupils in controlled and maintained schools, whether their responses to various questions had changed by the time

the programme ended, and if any such changes appeared to be different for contact and non-contact groups.

Before the programme began, each class was asked to write a short essay on the subject 'My Country' with the instructions "*Do not worry too much about spelling or grammar. In this case we are only interested in your ideas. Do not spend a long time thinking about what you are going to write - put down the first ideas that come into your head*". This exercise took about 15 minutes.

When the essay was complete pupils were given a series of open-ended questions which took about fifteen minutes to complete. Pupils only saw these questions when their essay was complete.

Pupils were asked to complete the same tasks six months later once the programme was complete. Additionally pupils who had participated in contact were asked to complete an evaluation sheet. This asked them to say which of the groups who have settled in Ireland did they think had most influence; which parts of the course they did and did not enjoy and why; and how they felt about the part of the programme which involved meeting pupils from other schools.

Information collected in this way was analysed and, in the following sections, we describe the findings which emerged. For simplicity, the main findings have been grouped under four headings - IDENTITY; AWARENESS OF THE 'OTHER COMMUNITY'; UNDERSTANDING AND UNCERTAINTY; and PUPILS' OWN COMMENTS ON THE PROGRAMME.

IDENTITY

In the Northern Ireland context, national allegiance has been regarded as an important dimension of identity. Trew (1983) reviews a number of approaches which have been used to assess national allegiance among Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. These include Rose (1971) who presented adults with a choice of five identity labels, and Moxon-Browne (1983) who used an identical question. Both found that the majority of Catholics identified themselves as Irish (76% in Rose's 1968 study and 69% in Moxon-Browne's 1978 study), whilst most Protestants identified themselves as either British (30% Rose and 67% Moxon-Browne), or Ulster (32% Rose and 20% Moxon-Browne).

Robinson's (1970) questionnaire to 1,000 school-children in Derry indicated that 57% of Catholics looked to Dublin as their capital city, whilst 76% of Protestants named Belfast.

Weinreich's (1981) use of bipolar constructs suggested that the general rule, 'to be Catholic means to be Irish, but not at all Protestant and not at all British', and that a symmetrical statement about Protestants generally holds true.

Trew (1981) used an open-ended question which asked sixth-formers and university students, 'What Are You?'. The results were a little surprising, indicating that only a small percent (4%) of either Catholics or Protestants spontaneously referred to themselves using a national identity and none used descriptions such as Ulster or Northern Irish. Her review of these approaches led Trew to conclude "*the pattern of national identification is far more complex than many social scientists have realized. The findings also show that the different methods of investigation of national allegiance can lead to quite discrepant conclusions*".

Hosin and Cairns (1984) used the technique of a 'My Country' essay to see whether national loyalty varied in 9, 12 and 15 year-olds in Jordan, Iraq, Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland. Content analysis was used to code the essays by reference to violence, loyalty, identity, politics, law and order, and religion. The results suggested that the impact of violence was not dependent on its cultural setting.

More recent work (Wetherell and Potter, 1988) has drawn attention to some of the difficulties with content analysis of discourse. They suggest that the method is often used with scant regard to the complexity of language, ignoring that people use language in a way which is dependent on context and full of internal contradictions. This undermines any analysis of discourse which implies that individuals are psychologically coherent and consistent.

The data gathered gave us two ways of looking at national allegiance as one dimension of pupils' identity. Firstly, evidence from the way pupils identified their country in the essay. Secondly, how pupils identified the capital city of their country in response to a specific question.

1 The 'My Country' Essays

Extracts from some of the essays are given in Appendix C and they illustrate the range and complexity of pupils' writing about their country. Although the statistical analysis of pupils' essays which follows is important, especially as a way of discerning the underlying pattern and structure of pupil opinion, we are left feeling that it does not do justice to the overall impact of the material we read. This created a more subjective view that there

is a deeply-embedded awareness among young people about the complex relationships which exist in Northern Ireland. The language in these essays created a strong impression that these twelve year-old children have already grasped that living in Northern Ireland requires that certain issues need delicate handling. The views held by children were expressed with honesty and accuracy, and often suggested strength of conviction. This suggests that our prejudices and insecurities have been transmitted to children in a variety of ways which are elusive and difficult to comprehend, but it has been done with a skill and sophistication that a formal system of education would find difficult to match. This overall impression lends support to the view that education has a role to play in counter-balancing some of the less-conscious aspects of cultural socialisation. Given the sheer amount of material available we decided to see if the content could be looked at in fairly simple terms to see what patterns might emerge. Each essay was read and note taken of how pupils identified 'My Country'. The following table shows the identity labels which pupils chose for their country.

Percentages of Children and the Identity Labels they used for their Country:

(n=)	Protestant				Catholic			
	Contact		Non-Contact		Contact		Non-Contact	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
	(45)	(29)	(42)	(35)	(84)	(76)	(80)	(63)
Ireland	49	14	7	6	51	50	49	48
N Ireland	24	35	43	31	14	5	14	24
Britain	9	14	2	0	0	0	2	0
Other	9	14	14	14	13	18	13	8
No Label	9	23	34	49	22	27	22	20
Totals	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The 'other' category included pupils who had identified their country as Strabane or some local name, perhaps confusing county with country. It also included two pupils who simply identified their country as part of Europe. **Overall a quarter of the pupils found ways of writing the essay without giving an identity label, mainly by a decriptive technique which mentioned people, places and events, but not naming the country itself. Noticeable was how there was an increase in the use of this strategy by both Protestant contact and non-contact groups after the programme was taught.** This perhaps suggests an increasing 'uncertainty' about how their country could be labelled. It could be that the experience of the programme encouraged some Protestant pupils to see the identification of their country by a single label as more complicated than they had previously thought. If such an effect was brought about by the programme then it appears attributable to the way the programme was taught rather than the experience of contact activities, since the effect was the same for both contact and non-contact pupils.

The analysis seems to be in line with earlier work reviewed by Trew (1983), in suggesting that the majority of Catholics identify with Ireland as a whole. Protestant pupils were more likely to identify their country as Northern Ireland. A notable exception was the Protestant contact group where 49% identified their country as Ireland before the programme began. After the programme significantly fewer pupils in this group (14%) used the labelled their country 'Ireland'. Instead, some must have opted to use no identity label (as mentioned above), whilst others must have decided their country could be better labelled 'Northern Ireland'. No corresponding change took place within the Protestant non-contact group. All this suggests that, whilst Catholic pupils' identity labels for their country remained fairly static before and after the history programme, the experience of contact for Protestant pupils dissuaded them from identifying their country as 'Ireland' and encouraged them to either:

- (a) avoid using a label, perhaps because they now perceived choice of label as a complex issue, or
- (b) identify their country as 'Northern Ireland' rather than 'Ireland', perhaps because they had now clarified the political identity of their country in their own mind.

Further analysis of the essays went on to see whether pupils gave evidence to suggest that their country is a contested issue and, if so, what essential reasons were given for this (see Appendix D). An assessment was also made of whether pupils gave any overall evaluation of their country in generally positive, negative or balanced terms (see Appendix E). Finally, a list of positive features (Appendix F) and negative features (Appendix G) of the country were generated and how frequently they were mentioned. This generated data which allowed us to look for differences between the responses of Protestant and Catholic pupils, differences between contact and non-contact groups, and differences over time.

2 The Capital of 'My Country'

Once they had completed their essays pupils were asked to answer a series of open ended questions. One asked pupils 'What is the capital city of your country?' The following responses were given:

Percentages of Pupils Naming their Capital City

	Protestant (n=151)	Catholic (n=303)	Before (n=251)	After (n=203)
Dublin	15	61	43	49
Belfast	80	18	38	39
London	1	2	1	3
Other	2	14	13	5
None	2	5	4	4
Totals	100	100	100	100

This supports earlier work which suggests that Protestant children identify Belfast as their capital, and Catholic children identify Dublin.

Linked to the evidence from the 'My Country' essays it suggests that both Protestant and Catholic pupils had less uncertainty about identifying their capital city, than they had in labelling their country. **It indicates that there are a number of Protestant pupils who are comfortable in calling their country Ireland, but see its capital as Belfast. There are also a number of Catholic pupils who identify their country as Northern Ireland, but see Dublin as the capital city of their country. This suggests that 12 year-olds are quite capable of living with ambiguity and contradictions which some adults might consider to be logically inconsistent.**

Neither the 'My Country' essays, nor the Capital City question, provided any evidence to suggest that pupils' identities, in terms of national allegiance, were eroded by the history programme or the experience of inter school contact. Indeed, there is a suggestion that after the experience of contact some Protestant pupils had either, become aware that labelling is a complex issue, or had clarified how they wish to label their country. We would hope that both these could be interpreted as positive experiences for the pupils concerned. If this is the case then we feel it is helpful to the process of mutual understanding, since understanding the position of others is also about clarifying where you, yourself stand.

AWARENESS OF THE 'OTHER' COMMUNITY

Given that part of the programme brought Protestant and Catholic children together we wished to see if there was some indirect way of detecting whether pupils became more aware of the 'other' community, and whether this was different for contact and non-contact groups. Two questions were related to this and these are now described.

1 The Surnames Question

An initial part of the history programme involved an introductory research exercise for pupils. All pupils carried out a survey of surnames in their area. Each school drew up a list of the most common names. These were then circulated to the other schools so that a more comprehensive picture was built up. Given that most people in Northern Ireland are adept at associating a person's name with their religion or cultural background, we were interested to see what preconceived ideas children had about surnames and whether these preconceptions were at all affected by the research exercise.

Pupils were asked to state the three most common surnames in Strabane. The question generated over a

hundred different surnames. Each time a surname was mentioned it was given a point. Four lists of names were generated - the top five names mentioned most frequently by Protestant and Catholic pupils are listed for before and after the research was carried out.

Pupils' Perceptions of Most Common Surnames

Protestant		Catholic	
<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
Smith	Smith	Doherty	Doherty
Doherty	Doherty	Kelly	McLoughlin
Hamilton	Robinson	McLoughlin	Kelly
Kee	Hamilton	McGarrigle	Gallagher
Robinson	Kee	O'Neill	McGarrigle

Apart from the name Doherty which is very common in the area, it was noticeable that one had to look a good way down the different lists before names commonly associated with the other tradition were reached. Pupils' perceptions of the most common surnames in Strabane remained remarkably fixed over time. Even though

they completed a common research exercise with shared data most pupils remain convinced that the most common names in Strabane are names associated with their own religious or cultural identity - clearly both cannot be right.

2 The Schools Question

Pupils were asked to make a list of all the schools in Strabane. The data was then organised to see how many pupils from controlled schools named maintained schools, and vice versa. The contact and non-contact groups were compared to see if their awareness of the schools changed over the time the programme operated.

It was found that the Protestant pupils' awareness of the Catholic post-primary schools increased over time, whilst the Catholic pupils' awareness of Protestant post-primary schools declined. This suggests the process was a differential one - Protestant contact groups became more aware that the maintained schools exist, whilst the Catholic contact groups' awareness of the controlled schools declined (Figures 4.2 and 4.3):

Figure 4.1: Change in controlled pupils' knowledge of Catholic post-primary schools

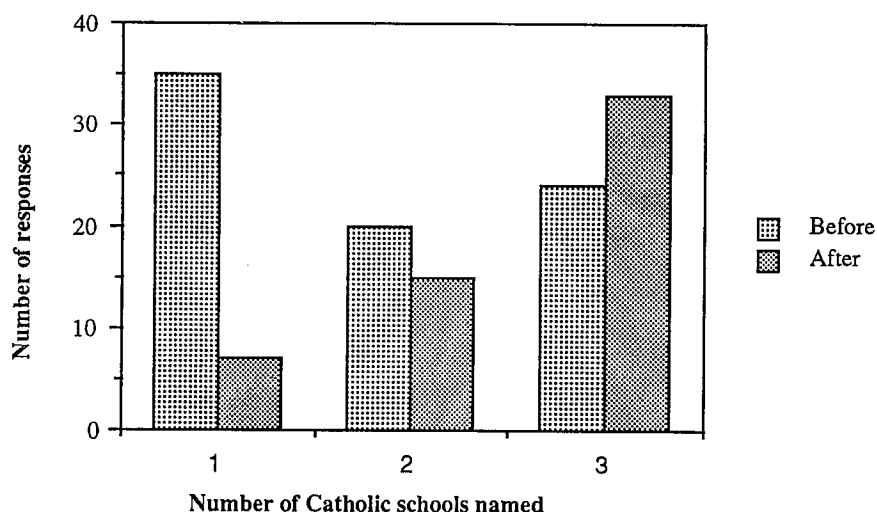
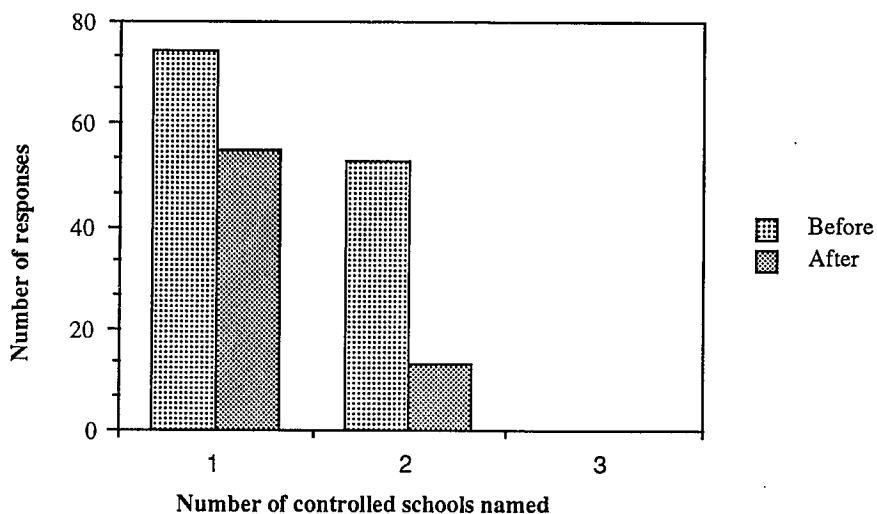


Figure 4.2: Change in Catholic pupils' knowledge of controlled post-primary schools



Responses to these questions suggest two things. First, that even when a programme contains a feature which encourages pupils to draw from an 'objective' pool of knowledge, they are still influenced by the perceptions commonly held within their own cultural group. Second, when a contact programme is organised the ratio of pupils from each tradition appears to be an important consideration. Once certain limits are exceeded it seems that the minority group become more acutely aware of the majority group than vice versa. A majority/minority ratio of 70/30 appeared to produce this effect in Strabane.

UNDERSTANDING AND 'UNCERTAINTY'

The rest of the questions which pupils answered bore some relation to history or the programme they studied. Some of these were concerned with pupils' ideas about the importance of History, reasons for emigration from Ireland, pupils' sense of 'time', and their definitions of the term 'Plantation'. These provided evidence that pupils had picked up some of the historical concepts which teachers had hoped the history programme would convey. The results to these questions are given in Appendix H. However, two questions gave interesting results because they suggested that the historical material which pupils had studied may have encouraged them to adopt a more questioning attitude about Ireland and the settler groups which are part of its history. These two questions are now discussed.

1 The Native People of Ireland

The history programme looked at different groups which had settled in Ireland from earliest times, through Celts, Vikings, Normans, organised Plantations, Scots, Huguenots, Quakers, Palatines and more recent immigrants. We were therefore posing a dilemma for pupils by asking them to say who are the native people of Ireland. Does the question mean who were the very first group of settlers? Does it mean which group from all those who have settled have had most influence on the country? Does it mean which ancestral group has left its descendants most ownership rights to the country? The programme had clearly raised the issue that the notion of a 'native' person is by no means a simple one, perhaps people of many origins can come to think of themselves as native of the same country. We wished to see whether pupils chose to identify a particular settler group, or number of groups, as 'native', and whether over time there was evidence that pupils became more suspicious of the term 'native'.

Responses to this question initially look confusing. A few pupils named more than one of the groups they had studied as part of the history programme, but most opted to select one of the settler groups. The top five answers were ranked in order. When we contrasted the responses of Protestants with Catholics, before and after the results proved interesting.

**Who are the native people of Ireland?
Percentage of pupils' giving the top five answers**

Protestant		Catholic	
Before (n=87)	After (n=64)	Before (n=164)	After (n=139)
Normans 18	Dont know 22	Celts 53	Celts 38
Dont know 17	Irish 20	Dont know 10	Vikings 17
Stone Age 16	Celts 18	Irish 7	Irish 14
Celts 12	Scots 16	Vikings 7	Stone Age 9
Vikings 8	Vikings 8	Stone Age 6	Normans 7

The effect over time seems to have dissuaded Protestant pupils that the Normans are the native people of Ireland, with most no longer knowing who to put. Perhaps this suggests that the programme has had some effect in raising doubt in pupils' minds about what is meant by 'native'. After the programme some of the Protestant pupils have used the more generic term 'Irish' for the native people of Ireland, where they previously did not.

Most Catholic pupils continue to identify the Celts as the native people of Ireland, although a smaller percentage think this after the programme. Use of the more generic term 'Irish' has increased and more Catholic pupils have identified the Normans native.

Taken together it could be argued that the results show some form of reciprocal process at work where both cultural groups provide evidence that some of its members were either:

- willing to acknowledge the possibility that settler groups, other than the one usually associated with their own tradition, may have a claim to be native or,
- sought to identify a more common, generic term for those presently living in the country.

Both these movements could be interpreted as 'signals across the divide' that attempts at understanding 'the other' position are being made.

2 Which Settlers had the Most Influence?

At the end of the programme 105 pupils from the contact groups completed evaluation sheets. Amongst other things, pupils were asked to state which of the groups studied have had most influence on Ireland.

The most influential settlers from the Protestant pupils' point of view were the Celts. The main reasons given were the introduction of agriculture, e.g. "because they brought more idea of farming and how to make houses", and the similarity in language, "because they had a language similar to ours". The Vikings and Normans were also seen as influential by the Protestant pupils. The Vikings mainly for their warlike qualities, e.g. "Because they are violent and they hate other religions"; "Because there is still fighting, killing and stealing going on today". The Normans "because of

the way they could organise themselves and they were Christians"; "Because they showed us how to farm and be peaceful with each other". Fewer pupils mentioned the Plantation period, usually by referring to the English who "gave us the English language"; "brought over towns"; "brought Protestantism in and a lot of the people in N. Ireland today are Protestants"; "started the plantations which brought in the split between N. Ireland and Eire".

From the Catholic pupils' point of view the most influential settlers were the Vikings who were "very strong and fighting people and had a big influence over the people of Ireland"; "because there is so much the Vikings taught us, like standing up for ourselves and of course hygiene". Catholic pupils saw the Normans almost as influential "Because we would still be speaking Irish although I would have liked to speak Irish"; "because it was them that brought over the English Nationality"; "because they made the Penal laws and the Irish took on some of their ways"; "because if the Normans hadn't come to Ireland the English wouldn't be ruling Co Tyrone today".

More Catholic than Protestant pupils mentioned more than one group or suggested that all the settlers have had an influence because "They all taught the Irish different skills and trades. Each group of people taught the Irish different skills"; or "because they all came to start fights with others".

The responses are summarised in the following table:

Percentage of pupils identifying particular settlers as influential

	Protestant	Catholic
Stone Age	3	10
Celts	34	9
Vikings	21	23
Normans	21	21
Plantations	14	6
All Had	7	17
Other or none	0	14
Totals	100	100

Both questions about settler groups show differences before and after the programme. These differences suggest three things. **Firstly**, there is evidence that some pupils became less certain about their previous answers to questions about the settler groups, with a number of them changing their responses as a consequence of the programme. **Secondly**, there is evidence that some pupils became more suspicious of terms, such as 'native', either finding it more difficult to respond to the question about native people (by responding 'don't know'), or by looking for a more complex answer than

simply choosing a single settler group as native or most influential (by responding 'all of them'; using a more generic term like 'Irish' rather than one settler group name; or by naming more than one settler group as equally influential). This suggests that uncertainty and changes in response are evidence of pupils becoming more critical and aware of the complex issues involved in the study of Ireland's settler groups. **Thirdly**, many pupil comments about the influence of various settler groups provide evidence that they have drawn on information from the course (e.g. about the characteristics of different settlers) and applied this knowledge to make some sense of the way Northern Ireland is today.

All three of these suggest that study of the joint history programme generated a certain amount of uncertainty in pupils' minds which may have been crucial in encouraging them to develop an 'understanding' of the complexity of inter-group relations in Northern Ireland. Pupils provided evidence that they are able to tolerate ambiguity, so we are not suggesting that the generation of uncertainty is about creating confusion. Rather it seems to be a step in the learning process, on the road toward critical thinking.

PUPILS' OWN COMMENTS

When pupils were asked to complete evaluation sheets at the end of the programme they were asked what they enjoyed most about the course; what they disliked most about the course; and what they felt about working with pupils from the other schools. The responses to these are now described:

1 Which Part of the Course did Pupils Enjoy Most?

There was overwhelming agreement between Protestant and Catholic pupils that the most enjoyable part of the course had been the trips and site visits because "it was very good fun and was educational"; "Because we were learning new things about our country and because I made lots of new friends on trips and it was good crack meeting them all"; "Meeting new people, finding out about our past and learning to mix with other religions"; "Because lots of people think there is a difference between Catholic and Protestant and going on those trips and meeting people from the other religion I have proven to myself that there isn't".

The residential visit to Dublin was picked out for particular mention by 30% of Protestant and 20% of Catholic pupils, e.g. "Because we were able to see a real viking village and we were able to see Newgrange"; "Because it was good sleeping away from home".

Nearly a quarter of the Catholic pupils also picked out a particular section of the course, usually because they enjoyed the way it was taught. There was no evidence to support the view that pupils who enjoyed the study of

a particular settler group then saw that group as the most influential on Ireland. Pupil responses are summarised in the following table:

Percentage of pupils who enjoyed different parts of the history course

	Protestant	Catholic
Trips	94	72
Project work	2	2
Particular section	1	23
All of it	2	1
No reply	1	2
Totals	100	100

2 Which Parts of the Course Did Pupils Not Enjoy?

A third of Protestant and Catholic pupils identified classwork as the least enjoyable aspect of the course "because it was boring and I did not like it"; "because we write too much I get a sore hand"; "Because the teacher wouldn't stop mouthing on about them Normans". Some pupils drew attention to the difficulty they had with questions in the course book, "They were hard to understand with all these fancy words and very hard to answer too"; "I hate them questions and you don't learn anything from them".

A number of pupils mentioned part of the course which studied a particular group of settlers, noticeably the Plantations because "I couldn't understand them very well"; "because you can't remember half the people". One class stood out as enjoying the Normans least but this was "because a different teacher was teaching us". Responses to this question are summarised below:

Percentage of pupils who did not enjoy parts of the history course

	Protestant	Catholic
Classwork	34	32
Particular section	15	26
Answering questions	1	4
Homework	3	7
Writing	3	4
Liked all of it	6	9
No reply	38	18
Totals	100	100

3 What Did Pupils Think About Meeting the Other Schools?

The frequent comments about the value of contact fell into three broad categories. **Firstly, the opportunity it gave to make friends**, "I think its brillrant meeting other schools because you make more friends. Yes it is important to mix"; "Pupils from other schools are great, because you can make friends with them, and see them again, and sometimes they might meet you somewhere, and they would know who you are". **Secondly, were comments which recognised a community relations value in contact**, "Meeting other children of the same age and different religion gave me a sense of friendliness. I found out things that I hadn't thought of before"; "I think it is important not to have any religion or colour barriers between us at this early stage in our life. I thoroughly enjoyed it and have made new protestant friends through it"; "I do think it was important because it taught us to get on with prods"; "I like meeting catholicks and I think mixing the two religions is very good and when we are older we could discuss are differences"; "yes because later in life you might be working with protests and you have to learn to except them"; "I think it is important because we need to meet people of different religions to bridge the gap of violence. In other words to stop the troubles". **Thirdly, were comments which simply saw value in people mixing**, "because we were able to mix with them and ask all sorts of questions"; "because we got to learn all about them, we mixed with them and even asked them questions and talked to them"; "I think this is important to associate with other schools, because out off school we fight and call each other names".

Some pupils made a specific link between the contact and the history course they studied, "I think it is a good idea...we find out what they thought about the coarse"; "If we are going to know about our ancestors we should at least know the people around us. I enjoyed it a great deal"; "I think it was important because it helped us to see that we are all people but have different ways, just as the Vikings had different ways of living than the Irish".

A higher percentage of Protestant (16%) than Catholic (4%) pupils felt that the contact with other schools had made them feel awkward, embarrassed or was not important, "because other people didn't like you"; "Well I thought it was alright and I made some friends but some people were ignorant"; "I thought it was hard to make friends with them because they came from the other area"; "It has been enjoyable and a bit embarrassing at the same time but I have got alot more friends now"; "I liked meeting people because we shared jokes and sweets. But I don't think it was important". It is not clear whether this is related to feeling 'outnumbered' by the larger numbers of Catholic pupils involved in the programme, but suggests that some consideration should be given to the equality of representation from

the different traditions as part of future contacts.
Responses to this question are summarised below:

Percentages of pupils comments on value of contact

	Protestant Catholic	
Making friends	34	24
Community relations important	24	27
Meeting other people	19	21
Felt embarrassed or awkward	11	3
Not important	5	1
No reply	7	24
Totals	100	100

EVALUATING SELF-ESTEEM IN LIMAVADY

The participation of approximately a hundred P7 children in a six-week series of workshops in Limavady provided us with the opportunity of investigating whether the programme had any impact on pupils self-esteem. This was done using an instrument developed by Harter (1985) and involved a questionnaire, 'Self-Perception Profile for Children'. This asks children to identify with certain traits or characteristics on a four point scale. Questions are grouped to define self-esteem in six dimensions, Scholastic Competence, Social Acceptance, Athletic Competence, Physical Appearance, Behavioural Conduct, and Global Self-worth.

The questionnaire was given to the contact class in each school. Questionnaires were also given to two other classes who were not part of the programme to establish control groups. Questionnaires were completed before and after the programme. We were therefore interested in differences in self-esteem between Protestant and Catholic pupils, between contact and non-contact pupils, and whether this changed over time (2 months) for any of these groups.

The results revealed significant differences between the sexes in Athletic Competence (.009) and Behavioural Conduct (.010). However, these were unrelated to the variables we were looking at, and no significant differences were found between groups by religion, contact or over time.

This does not suggest that the programme had no impact in terms of EMU aims. There are many limitations in using this sort of instrument in relation to EMU programmes. **Firstly**, although many practitioners assume a link between high self-esteem and positive inter-group attitudes, the research evidence is less clear on the relationship between these. **Secondly**, when we look at the whole programme 'Myself and Others' it is clear that only a relatively few of the activities were specifically designed to improve self esteem. Other specific aims included improving communication skills, encouraging co-operation and, listening to others. Perhaps a less specific instrument, such as the 'Acceptance of Others' questionnaire developed by Fey (1955), might have given a different picture. So, other conflict or prejudice-reducing effects of the programme would not have been picked up by the instrument used. **Thirdly**, it may be unrealistic to expect any significant change in self-esteem over the, relatively short, two-month period which the programme operated. Certainly the general comments made by Limavady pupils about the value of meeting others was broadly in line with those already described for Strabane pupils, so **we would sound a cautionary note about the results of quantitative instruments which are not contextualised by qualitative information.**

SUMMARY

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT FROM THIS?

The term, Education for Mutual Understanding, has at least three notions bound up in one. **First**, it is to do with **education**, not just in the sense of acquiring **knowledge**, but also in the sense of **learning** how such knowledge can influence the way we see and relate to each other. **Second**, EMU contains the notion of **mutuality**, that is that there should be some **reciprocal process** at work, that the processes which are operating between pupils are not unidirectional. **Third**, EMU is to do with **understanding**. It seeks to create a climate which encourages Protestant and Catholic pupils to use the knowledge they have acquired to help form their own, informed opinions about inter-group relations in Northern Ireland. But it is also about **seeing someone else's point of view even if you cannot agree with it**.

Our attempts to evaluate the impact which the study of a common history programme had on pupils focused on three aspects of their experience. First, it looked at the influence which the programme may have had on pupils' sense of national or cultural identity. Second, it looked at the extent to which pupils became more aware of the other community in their area, how important they saw the contact between them. Third, it explored the sort of knowledge pupils picked up from the programme and how they did or did not use this to support views expressed about their country, its past and the way it is today.

These three aspects of our evaluation do not map neatly on to the dimensions we have identified in Education for Mutual Understanding. However, our findings do allow us to say something about the effect of contact as part of an EMU programme. We have therefore summarised our conclusions under three separate heads, Education?, Mutual?, and Understanding?

1 Education?

Firstly, the evaluation does suggest that EMU's primary thrust for teachers is education in its critical sense. That is, education in the sense that pupils provided evidence that their knowledge of history had increased through the programme; they became knowledgeable about different settler groups in Ireland; were able to talk about their characteristics; had some sense of when and why they came; became familiar with historical terms such as Plantation. Pupils also provided evidence of relating this knowledge to an understanding of why Ireland is the way it is today. This was particularly evident in statements from pupils when asked to comment on the influence of different settler groups.

Secondly, the evaluation provided evidence that the programme did not have any significant influence on the different labels which Protestant and Catholic pupils traditionally use to identify their country, and from this we infer that the programme did nothing to erode Catholic and Protestant childrens' respective senses of national or cultural identity. Indeed, there was some evidence to support the view that the experience of contact may have encouraged the minority group (in this case Protestant pupils) to clarify their national allegiance. This was particularly evident in the analysis of the 'My Country' essays and the question on the capital city. This is an important finding because the programme did not set out to achieve any of these things, that is to dilute any sense of national or cultural identity already held by pupils. This should be reassuring to those who may be suspicious that the primary thrust of EMU is political proselytisation rather than educational practice. Our findings suggest that, even were this the case, its impact would be limited by the influence of more potent social processes external to the school.

2 Mutual?

There is evidence from pupils' comments that they were aware of studying a common programme, saw contact as important, and appreciated that one of the reasons behind it was a community relations dimension. However, the section on surnames suggested that, even **when exercises designed to generate a common data base are included, pupils are still likely to base their perceptions on their preconceived beliefs.** This points up the limitations of programmes which are educationally-based. Nevertheless, **there was evidence of some form of reciprocal process taking place on an inter-group basis**, whereby individuals within cultural groups 'sent out signals' that they were willing to entertain notions not normally associated with their own cultural tradition (this came across most powerfully in the analysis concerning the native people of Ireland).

The findings are not so clear on how important symmetry is to achieving mutuality. There were some indications that an imbalance between the number of Protestant and Catholic children participating may lead to a less positive experience for the minority group (see for example, some comments made by Protestant pupils about the value of contact). There was also some evidence to suggest that a lack of symmetry may lead to the situation where the minority group becomes more aware of the majority group than vice versa (see for example, the differential awareness of other schools between Protestant and Catholic pupils over time). On the other hand, the experience of clarifying their national allegiance could be interpreted as a positive outcome for Protestant contact pupils. **This suggests that the dynamics and prerequisites of what constitutes 'mutuality' is a question worth pursuing.**

3 Understanding?

EMU seeks not only to promote knowledge and a sense of mutuality, but also that the interplay of these will generate greater understanding of the other cultural group. The evidence is not so clear about the extent to which the programme helped Protestant pupils became more sensitive to the way Catholic pupils view the world, and vice versa. Some of the comments by pupils about the value of contact suggest it raised questions they had not considered before, but do not clarify what these questions might be. Class discussion which took place toward the end of the programme about the way people respond to immigrant groups may have proved revealing, but the researchers were not privy to these. Other comments by pupils suggested that the experience of contact affirmed for them that they are all fundamentally the same, yet the findings on national allegiance indicate that substantial differences do exist between Catholic and Protestant children in this area. **It is therefore important that EMU programmes recognise that the the understanding they seek need not be a consensus or agreed view held by all pupils.** Any understanding pupils acquire will reflect that they have much to share in common, but they retain the right to maintain separate and distinctive views on certain issues.

Our study suggests that it is reasonable to expect that contact programmes will do little to erode the aspect of pupils' identity which is to do with national allegiance, but may encourage pupils to become more aware of the 'other community', provided the majority/minority demography is acknowledged sensitively. Most importantly, it is crucial to have realistic expectations of what sort of 'understanding' may emerge from the contact experience. Such understanding is unlikely to be manifested by pupils having sudden insight into what it is like to be a member of the 'other community', so that they no longer perceive relationships between the two communities in Northern Ireland to be problematic. It is much more likely that the experience of contact, particularly if it has explored issues relevant to our history, can best hope to encourage a more critical attitude in pupils. This may manifest itself by pupils questioning 'accepted versions' within their own community, but weighing the evidence and arriving at their own view, accepting that a reaffirmation of their own cultural group's version is as legitimate an outcome as a rejection. We have suggested that one aspect of this may be that pupils provide evidence of 'uncertainty' where previously issues had seemed simple and clear cut. The emergence of 'uncertainty' need not be about the creation of confusion. It can be seen as an indication that pupils are becoming more aware of the complex nature of social relationships and a move away from simple 'them' and 'us' versions of Northern Ireland society.

APPROACHES TO EVALUATION

Any single study, including this one, cannot hope to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact which particular contact programmes have on children. For practical reasons decisions have to be made about how the evaluation will proceed, what sort of methods will be used and these decisions are made in the light of the resources available. We feel the information gathered has provided useful insight into the way pupils experienced this programme. Where possible we have allowed the pupils' own words to speak for themselves. Nevertheless our approach has also pointed up some of the limitations of evaluative approaches which are overly reliant on a single method (the Limavady questionnaire is a good example of this). In such cases it is impossible to capture what some researchers have called the 'texture of reality'. When this is missing important dimensions are inevitably missed. We feel that there is plenty of room for the precision associated with quantitative approaches to be complemented by the feel for a situation which qualitative approaches can provide. The difficulty often lies in marrying the two in one study.

A ROLE FOR TEACHERS?

Given that there will be no formal assessment of EMU as part of the school curriculum we feel it is doubly important that we continue to explore avenues which give us some insight into the impact of contact programmes on children. There is certainly room for more ethnographic and biographical study. Often the difficulty with these is access or the time involved in looking at pupils' experience in a longitudinal way. However, teachers themselves are ideally positioned to overcome both these difficulties. With a growing responsibility for work in this area we would hope that they too would have a concern to find ways of monitoring the effects of educational practice in EMU. It may be possible that teachers can find ways of building monitoring techniques into the programmes which they design.