

Power and Resistance in the Classroom:
Teachers' and Pupils' Narratives on Disaffection

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Abstract

This study sought to analyse critically the discourse of pupils' disaffection captured in the views of a teacher, a Learning Mentor and a group of six pupils from key stage 4 at a secondary school in south London. The analysis examined how some pupils acquired the label 'disaffected' and considered the extent to which dominant curriculum ideologies and power relations between teachers and pupils contributed to pupils' disconnection from learning. Additionally, the study examined the effectiveness of the Alternative Education project organised by the school in a bid to engage disaffected pupils in learning.

The corpus of data was generated through a combination of semi-structured one to one interviews and a focus group interview. Drawing on Fairclough's (1989, 2001, 2003) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), excerpts from the data were chosen on the basis of their salience to the key themes of the study to describe, interpret and explain the opaque and contradictory discourse of disaffection.

The teachers' narratives largely located explanations for pupils' disconnection from learning in pupils' cognitive, emotional and behavioural pathologies or the influence of a moral underclass culture in their communities. The pupils' counter-narratives suggested that their disengagement was a rational response to a perception of demotivating curricula and disrespectful teachers, resulting in a counter school culture, where resistance accorded status among peers and compliance with teachers' demands for conformity earned the derisory label 'Neek'.

The teacher's narrative also revealed that curriculum overload and the preoccupation with attainment targets posed significant challenges in his attempts to engage disaffected learners. However, the success of the Alternative Education Programme highlighted the importance of flexibility and positive educator-pupil relationships in capturing and sustaining the interest of learners.

It is argued that an adequate analysis of the determinants of disaffection ought to consider the impact of instrumentality in education on relationships in the situational, institutional and societal contexts of schooling. Furthermore, the significance of class, ethnicity and gender on the academic under-achievement of black working class boys, can not be overstated.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to develop a critical understanding of how, in the context of a school in south London, some young people have acquired the label 'disaffected'. It is not my intention to provide suggestions for a panacea to the problem of disaffection. Such projects have been pursued by numerous psychologists, social scientists and educational researchers, culminating in a vast corpus of literature on the subject. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, many of the research findings on disaffection have tended to locate explanations of disaffection in pupils' pathologies, their dysfunctional families and to a lesser extent, the structure of schooling and a perception of the irrelevance of the curriculum by pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4.

This enquiry seeks to problematise teachers' constructions of pupils' disaffection, in an attempt to bring into sharp focus the discursive practices which underlie this label in the situational, institutional and wider societal context of schooling, where such 'enunciations' have constitutive effects on individuals and groups of people, (Foucault, 1972). I do this by eliciting the perceptions of a group of six Key Stage 4 pupils in relation to research findings generated by the Norwich Area Schools Consortium (NASC) in collaboration with the University of East Anglia (UEA), (Gutteridge, 2002). The NASC enquiry sought the views of teachers on disaffection, culminating in a set of characteristics that disaffected young people are thought to present. These formed the initial basis for discussions in the focus group interview and subsequent one to one interviews that I conducted with young people, a Learning Mentor and a Teacher at School S. The interviews were not, however, limited to questions on the characterization of disaffection formulated by NASC. Dialogue with the pupils focused on their daily experiences of schooling, their perceptions of the curriculum and how it was taught, their relationships with teachers and other school personnel and the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme in re-engaging them with learning.

At various points during the initial focus group interview, the pupils explained that their resistance to teachers' demands for conformity in school was due to their reluctance to be labeled as 'Neek' by peers. Given that references are made to 'Neeks' and 'Neekness' throughout this thesis, an explanation of the term 'Neek' is necessary at the outset. In the pupils' narratives, the descriptions of a 'Neek' stood in opposition to what the teachers described as a 'disaffected' pupil. Some of the definitions of a 'Neek' given by the pupils were:

Neeks are those who do everything right basically. They wear long tie, trousers to the waist, shoes, shirt top button done up and stuff like that'. No one likes Neeks at school, but they are the ones that will get the best jobs. They are smart (Extract from transcript, Jonathan, Year 10).

Yeah they would like have their trousers high, shirt tucked in, long tie. They always sit in the front..always do their homework. They raise their hands to speak and always want to please the teacher. (Extract from transcript, James, Year 10).

The introduction to this thesis sets out the background to the study by providing a rationale for the choice of the topic of inquiry, explaining that my research interest derives from extensive experience of working with young people in my former role as a teacher, then a youth worker and subsequently a Parent Governor at a secondary school in south London. The wider context of disaffection is described as being couched in discourses of youth 'at risk' of social exclusion, who are portrayed as cause for concern in the media, prompting moral panics in representations of youth in British society and consequently, renewed focus on youth through policy responses under New Labour aimed at controlling them but at the same time protecting them from themselves and the communities in which they live.

The introduction briefly outlines prevalent definitions of disaffection in the light of multiple perspectives on the topic, highlighting ambiguity in the discourses of disaffection and their inadequacy due to a tendency to condense multiple referents under one label. The problems with definitions of disaffection are discussed and critically examined further in Chapter 2, under the Literature Review and Chapter 5, where the key themes of the research are systematically described, interpreted and explained.

The introduction describes the conceptual framework of the research, drawing on Fairclough's (1992, 1995, 2001, 2003) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It concludes with an outline of the research questions and lenses used in the study to achieve the aims of the research.

1.1 Background to the study

The disaffection of boys is a topic which has gained currency in recent years as a result of a moral panic fuelled by the sensationalist media reporting and New Labour's drive to tackle the perceived disaffection of a growing number of young people who have become known as 'at risk' of social exclusion.

My interest in youth disaffection stems from extensive experience of working with young people both in the formal and informal education sectors. I started my career in education as a secondary school teacher in the early 80s, but after a brief teaching career, I was employed as a youth worker between 1988 and 2003 in a local authority in south west London, with a Borough-wide brief to develop youth work programmes through multi-agency partnerships with schools, educational welfare services, the Youth Offending Team and the voluntary sector.

During this period I completed an MA and the focus of my dissertation was on the perceived decline in the take up of youth provision by 16 to 19 year olds. I conducted an Action Research project aimed at identifying the educational and recreational interests of 16 to 19 year olds and devised strategies to address the evident mismatch between the interests of this group of young people and the provision that was available to them. As part of this process, I initially conducted one to one semi structured interviews and focus groups with young people, youth workers and senior Local Authority managers in the field of youth and community services. I was intrigued by the recurrent theme of disaffection which was bandied about, and despite endless probing, I did not seem to get a satisfactory consensus as to what being disaffected actually meant.

During my employment with the Local Authority I felt the impact of the New Labour Government's renewed focus on youth in my professional practice from late 90s onwards. Of significance at the time was the report by the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment (1998) which gave evidence on the alarming increase in disaffected students. I was at the coalface, as it were, of youth work intervention to tackle youth alienation and provide life-enhancing opportunities for young people to engage in. I have experienced the enactment of pedagogic discourses (Bernstein, 1990) in my day to day work, expressed in a raft of Government policy initiatives in educational provision. During this time, I experienced myself as what Whitehead and McNiff (2006) describe as a living contradiction. What I mean by this is that I helped reproduce and maintain the Government discourses that view

young people as trouble makers or victims (Griffin, 1993) to be protected from themselves and to be contained for the greater good of society. For example, I developed an anger management programme in collaboration with the Youth Offending Team with a view to helping young people regain self-control, in other words, I sought to return them to normality. In hindsight, not only do I now see my actions as pathologising young people, I also know that I held these views whilst at the same time espousing a set of antithetical values, which preached about the importance of engaging young people in dialogue and enabling them to empower themselves. I was part of an 'epistemic community' (Foucault, 1972) that represented young people as problematic and deviant and sought to devise solutions to their problems.

Perhaps due to my inability to resolve the dissonance engendered by value conflicts, in 2003 I took up a Lecturing post on a Youth and Community programme, a role which enabled me to critically engage with theoretical, policy and practice issues relating to youth and policy interventions. It also allowed me to invite my students to interrogate the taken for granted common sense representations of youth in society and to consider whose interests are served, denied or ignored by dominant discursive practices in informal and formal education settings. The critical approach permeates throughout my teaching and learning encounters with students. I have recently documented the work that I have done with my students in an article in the Educational Action Research journal titled 'From Transmission to Dialogue: promoting critical engagement in teaching and learning in higher education, (Moustakim, 2007).

When I embarked on the Education Doctorate programme I was initially delighted to know that it allowed students to forge a strong relationship between theory and professional practice in their educational research, whereas some traditional approaches to doctoral studies treated theory and practice as separate entities. This, however, presented me with a dilemma, since I was no longer working with young people but was keen to develop an understanding around the notion of youth disaffection from schooling.

At this point, a Parent Governor vacancy arose at a secondary school, (School S), and my subsequent appointment to this role revived my interest in investigating the construction of youth disaffection within a school which is perceived to have significant problems in many aspects of teaching and learning. I was now able to link my developing understanding of disaffection to elements from my experience in the same way that Foucault described theorising his experiences in his writing, when he said:

Each time I have attempted to do theoretical work it has been on the basis of elements from my experience – always in relation to processes that I saw taking place around me. It is in fact because I thought I recognised something cracked, dully jarring or disfunctioning in things I saw in the institutions in which I dealt with my relations with others, that I undertook a particular piece of work, several fragments of autobiography. (Foucault, cited in Ball, 2001:143).

The contribution that I am making to what is known about disaffection draws on my own professional knowledge as a former teacher, youth worker and parent governor at the school where the research took place. I developed an interest in the topic of disaffection while I fulfilled these distinct but related roles in formal and informal educational settings, which placed me in a unique position to contextualise different conceptualisations of pupils' disconnection from learning. By drawing on the common experiences that I had with the research participants, as well as a critical examination of the wide range of literature on disaffection detailed in Chapter 2, I identified research questions and designed my study about an important topic in educational practice.

Although this study is very small in scale, its originality rests on its application of Critical Discourse Analysis in locating the finer details of the discourse of disaffection in a local and practical school setting within the wider institutional and social spheres. Through describing, interpreting and explaining how the discourse of disaffection was produced, consumed, simultaneously resisted and reproduced, I was able to analyse the complex set of negotiations that educational practitioners and pupils make in their attempts to reconcile contradictions in their perceptions and experiences of disaffection.

Disaffection as a topic became dominant in the narratives of practitioners at School S following an OFSTED inspection in 2007, which raised concerns about a wide range of difficulties associated with staff changes, the quality of teaching and learning and, consequently, poor students' achievement in Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). This was also compounded by concerns over the behaviour of many students in the school. A range of interventions were already in place to engage pupils in learning and to improve their behaviour.

One of these initiatives was the Alternative Education Programme which was set up by the Learning Mentor and other teaching and support staff just under a year prior to the OFSTED inspection in an attempt to re-engage Key Stage 4 pupils in learning. The learning mentor was encouraged by the Headteacher to lead the development of an Alternative Education project in partnership with the local Youth Service. He drew on his youth work background and his experience of working within an extensive multi-agency network to involve practitioners from the Connexions Service as well as

experienced Youth Workers with expertise in Multi-media and Creative Writing. The Alternative Education Programme was specifically aimed at young people from Key Stage 4 who were initially identified by their teachers as being disaffected. The criteria used for selecting pupils for the project was based on poor attendance, challenging behaviour and low academic achievement. Pupils who were deemed cause for concern based on the above criteria were referred to the Learning Mentor for initial assessment. The decision to allow pupils to opt out of one or two core subjects is taken at a panel meeting involving the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, the learning mentor, the Special Needs Co-ordinator, the pupil and his or her parent(s). Being on the Alternative Education Programme is optional and requires parental consent.

When the Alternative Education project first started in October 2006, only six pupils were referred to it. However, by March 2007 there were a total of 12 pupils who attended Multi-media and creative writing workshops. There were four year 10 and eight year 11 pupils. Of these ten were male and two were female. Both of the two young women were Black. Eight of the young people were African Caribbean, two were Asian and two were white. The adults involved in the project included two youth workers, a Connexions Advisor, a Learning Mentor and a teacher. The workshops were held twice a week for a two hour duration. The Learning Mentor and the two Youth Workers were the primary facilitators of the workshops, with the Teacher and the Connexions Advisor attending some of the sessions.

As Parent Governor, I became involved in the working group that co-ordinated alternative and pastoral provision at the school. This role gave me an opportunity to discuss issues relating to the students, the curriculum, teaching, immediate and wider context of the school at senior management level. I was conscious of the potential influence of my role within the school on the research process and realised the necessity for me to be critically reflexive at every step of this investigation. This is particularly important since in its analysis of power relations, the research methodology that I am drawing upon, CDA is biased towards the interests of dominated groups (Van Dijk, 2001). It is however a bias which is made explicit through engagement in reflexivity throughout the research process. As a Parent Governor, I had an interest in working towards improving the effectiveness and the quality of teaching and learning in the school. Equally, as a practitioner researcher I was seeking to understand how students perceived discourses of disaffection from school as understood by teachers.

1.1.1 Defining Disaffection

The term disaffection is described in the English Oxford Dictionary as 'Absence or alienation of affection or good will, especially towards the Government; physical disorder or indisposition' (2008: 556-557). This definition of disaffection refers to the relationship between the state and its subjects and was traditionally more commonly used in political discourse and specifically referred to disinterest in the democratic process expressed in voter apathy. There is no evidence that the term disaffection was in use in the educational context at the time, but it seems to have appeared in educational and sociological literature in the 70s and featured more prominently in education policy discourse in late 90s under New Labour's focus on 'Education, Education, Education' at the 1997 election, culminating in a raft of initiatives aimed at reducing social exclusion, particularly among the young.

The notion of disaffection in education is however not a new phenomenon; learner apathy probably goes back to when schooling became compulsory, as a report on schools in the Kendal district by HMI Seymour Tremenheere in late 19th century suggests, 'One of the chief causes of absenteeism appears to me to be either apathy or want of method on the part of the local authorities' (1884: 416). Tremenheere seems to attribute absenteeism to either learner apathy or the local authorities' failure to bring schools to account in relation to attendance. The student population that the report refers to evidently expressed their lack of enthusiasm for school by their non-attendance. However, some characterisations of disaffection in the literature surveyed distinguish between active and passive disaffection (Chrisp et al, 1997; Reid, 2002; Parsons, 2005). Passive disaffection is characterised by under-achievement and withdrawal and active disaffection by complete disconnection from schooling through truancy and exclusion, largely as a result of aggressive behaviour.

Invariably, much of the literature on the topic of pupils' disaffection locates explanations in their individual pathologies. In this respect, Heathcote-Elliott and Walters (2000) suggested three broad domains for analysing the causes of disaffection: affective, behavioural and cognitive. Other studies have identified specific factors as direct causes of disaffection, such as low self-esteem (Andrews and Andrews, 2003; Humphrey et al, 2004) and family breakdown (Steer, 2000; Wilson et al., 2008). Perhaps as a result of such diversity of explanations as to the roots of disaffection, the term disaffection appears to condense a variety of meanings and has become synonymous with any behaviour that is perceived to deviate from the norm. As a concept, it eludes precise definition as it seems to have acquired different meanings in

a variety of formal and increasingly informal educational contexts, rendering the notion of disaffection ambiguous. Osler and Starkey suggest that disaffection is

used as an explanatory term to account for a range of behaviours, including low attainment, persistent disruption, truancy and other forms of self-exclusion. Disaffection implies behaviour that is reactive to the school as an institution, though this is usually treated as an individual rather than a group phenomenon. (2005:199)

Hence the necessity, in my view, of a critical discourse analysis approach to an exploration of the sources of ambiguity by making visible inconsistencies in text, discursive and social practices that shape the cultural model 'disaffected'. With notable exceptions (Hesketh, 1987; Keys et al, 1995; Kinder et al., 1999; Jeffrey, 2001; Riley, 2004), what has been written about disaffection has mainly been from the perspectives of teachers, policy makers and educational researchers. This research attempts to capture both the views of teachers and those of pupils in order to develop a better understanding of how disaffection is construed and constituted in the teaching and learning context of the school.

1.1.2 The Wider Context of Disaffection

There has been a renewed focus on 'troublesome' young men in the national media in recent months as a result of an unprecedented spate of gun and knife crime of young people by young people. Tony Blair blamed the increase in youth gun crime on a 'distinctive black youth culture'. (Guardian, 12th April 2007). There is a view that the government policy responses to the problem of disaffection are essentially mechanisms for the containment of young people based on a 'deficit' model (Jeffer and Smith 1999; Griffin, 1993), where young people are perceived as deviant and attempts are made to restore them to 'normality'. Allied to the moral panic about the perceived delinquency of a growing segment of British youth, high levels of truancy and the lack of interest in education by a large number of young men is perceived as a national problem that is assumed to exacerbate social divisions by widening the socio-economic gap between the educated and the uneducated (Walton, 2000). Indeed UNICEF (2007) published a report on a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in the economically advanced nations, which depicted a bleak picture of the state of the nation's children and young people. The UK ranked last among 21 industrialised nations for the well-being, quality of family life and the number of children living in relative poverty. Britain was also reported to have high rates of teenage drinking, bullying, early sexual intercourse, teenage pregnancy and obesity.

In order to tackle Social Exclusion, 18 Policy Action Teams (PATs) were set up by New Labour within the Social Exclusion Unit (1998) in the Cabinet Office to co-ordinate policy development targeting disadvantaged neighbourhoods through partnerships between government agencies, practitioners, academics and local communities. Policy Action Team 12, which had a specific focus on children and young people published two important reports, *Learning to Succeed* (1999) and *Bridging the Gap* (1999), echoing concerns raised by the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment (1998), which estimated the number of disaffected pupils at 8% of all 14 to 16 year olds, predominantly male from African Caribbean backgrounds. The report also made a link with this group of young people and criminality.

Against this background a raft of strategies and legislation aimed at tackling disaffection and social exclusion among the young through education, welfare and crime prevention. These have included on one hand, *Connexions* (2002); *Every Child Matters* (2003), *Children's Act* (2004), *White Paper, 14–19 Education and Skills*, *Youth Matters* (2006), the *Aiming High: Ten Year Strategy* (2007). On the other hand, new criminal justice legislation was introduced, including the *Crime and Disorder Act* (1998), *Powers of the Criminal Courts Act* (2000), *Criminal Justice and Police Act* (2001), *Criminal Justice Act* (2003) and *Anti-Social Behaviour Order Act* (2003). Pupils and their parents were brought to account for allowing themselves to become socially excluded and parents were penalised for their children's lack of commitment to their schooling and their anti-social behaviour.

Additionally, a wide range of initiatives was introduced to address the issue of curriculum relevance at Key Stage 4, including the *Increased Flexibility Programme* (IFP) for 14-16 (DfES, 2002), the *14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform* (DFES, 2004) and the *14-19 Diploma* as part of the *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper*, (DfES, 2005). The impact of these reforms will be discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4. and in Section 5.3.2 in the light of relevant literature, including (Golden et al., 2005; Haynes, 2008 and Lynch et al., 2010).

1.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework which will guide the development of this critical investigation of the construction of youth disaffection draws upon Fairclough's (1992, 1995, 2001, 2003) approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) and in so doing, attempts to make visible the relationship between text, social practices and the context within which

disaffection is reified as an objective category. Fairclough views language as a social practice. He argued that 'language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language' (Fairclough, 2003:2). According to this view analysis should necessarily consider how discourse is produced and consumed and how it relates to the social context where it is located, (Richardson, 2007).

The Critical Discourse Analysis lens will enable me to consider how the educational 'epistemic community' (1972) creates and (re)produces disaffection and I want to unravel the underlying assumptions and the discursive practices that have given rise to this contested category. This is in line with one of the main concerns of CDA, which is to investigate how discursive activity constitutes and sustains unequal power relations, (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). CDA does this by describing and explaining how 'power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimated by talk and text of dominant groups and institutions' (Van Dijk, 1996: 84). To this end, in addition to eliciting the perceptions of young people in relation to schooling, I have also sought the views of two practitioners from the same school, a teacher and a Learning Mentor.

Fairclough (1989) suggests a procedure for CDA in three stages as follows: Description of text; interpretation of the relationship between the text and the interaction and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context. I shall focus on how three closely interrelated elements in the discourse intersect to create disaffection. These include representations of a disaffected pupil; the curriculum and the power relations between teaching and support staff and the pupils and the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme in engaging pupils in learning. It could be argued that power relations permeate through all three elements, but I shall specifically focus on how power is enacted and resisted between students and educational practitioners.

1.3 The Aims, Research Questions and Lenses Used in the Study

This study focuses on perceptions of 'disaffection'. Drawing on teachers' discourses of disaffection, it elicits the responses of a group of six Key Stage 4 pupils to these. It also includes the perspectives of a teacher and a learning mentor who work with these pupils. It examines critically the ideological assumptions and power relations which mediate pedagogical and curriculum dimensions of teaching and considers the effectiveness of strategies to promote disaffected pupils' engagement with learning. I sought to develop my understanding of the participants' perceptions of disaffection by

first seeking answers through a review of the literature on the topic, then conducting a focus group interview and a series of semi-structured interviews with the pupils, their teacher and learning mentor to the following questions:

- How do some pupils acquire the label 'disaffected'?
- How do pupils perceive teachers' characterisation of a disaffected pupil?
- How significant is the quality of pupils' and teachers' relationships on pupils' engagement with learning?
- How significant is curriculum relevance to pupils' engagement with learning?
- How significant is the influence of peers on pupils' engagement with learning?
- How effective is the Alternative Education Programme in engaging disaffected pupils?

The lenses which I have applied in the review of literature and for generating and categorising data are as follows:

- Constructions of disaffection;
 - Teachers' discourses of disaffection
 - Pupils' counter-discourses of disaffection
- Pedagogic dimensions of disaffection;
- The effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme in promoting students' engagement with learning.

In Chapter 2, the review of literature is guided by three key themes in line with the questions outlined at the end of the introduction to this thesis. Firstly, representations of young people in theoretical perspectives on disaffection and related policy and practice issues are critically examined.

Secondly, the power relations between young people and school staff are discussed, with sharp focus on the forms of resistance that young people use in the school to resist conformity demands. I argue that disconnection from formal learning is a rational choice that young people make in response to de-motivating curriculum content and disengaging instrumental pedagogies. In this process, I drew on Foucault's analysis of power as a dynamic construct and considered forms of resistance displayed by young people through a counter school culture. Finally, the efficacy of strategies to re-engage

young people deployed in the past decade are critically examined, with particular focus on measures introduced to tackle disaffection and truancy.

Chapter 3 outlines the epistemological foundations of my enquiry in relation to the discourse of disaffection of boys from schooling and explains the theoretical perspective and methodological approach which have influenced the research process followed to meet the objectives set out in Chapter 1, section 1.3.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed outline of the methods used for data collection and analysis. In line with critical discourse analysis, the link between theory and method is sustained throughout. Descriptions and explanations for the selection of the study sample are given and due considerations to ethical dimensions of the research are discussed.

Chapter 5 begins with a brief summary of findings from the study, with excerpts chosen from the transcripts for deeper analysis. It is then divided into three sections: Description, interpretation and explanation, in line with Fairclough's (1989, 2001) approach to CDA. The description stage examines the respondents' views expressed in the interviews through the three key themes of the enquiry, namely the construction of disaffection; pedagogical and curriculum dimensions of disaffection and the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme in reducing disaffection. It first considers the experiential values by identifying the discourse types drawn upon in the text. A discourse type, according to Fairclough is a 'meaning potential' or a 'particular constrained configuration of possible experiential, expressive and relational, and connective meanings' (2001: 125). In describing meaning potentials, words which are ideologically contested are closely examined. Secondly, metaphors used in the text are analysed, noting how social actors position themselves in relation to others through language in use.

The interpretation stage is guided by a set of questions for identifying discourse types in the situational context. These include: What is going on? Who is involved? In what relations? What is the role of language in what is going on?

The explanation stage teases out deterministic relationships between discourse and social structures, by examining the social determinants of disaffection and by bringing to light dominant ideologies that are drawn upon in the discourse of disaffection. These include the impact of the marketisation of education on relationships within the situational, institutional and societal settings. The impact of gender, class and 'race' on

academic achievement is discussed in light of the teacher and the Learning Mentor's narratives. Finally, the effects of the discourse of disaffection are analysed, identifying the extent to which they contribute to reproducing and sustaining disaffection or transforming it. Pupils' creative semiotic oppositional performances in school are put forward as offering possibility for transformation.

The conclusion sums up the main findings of the study in line with the research questions and culminates in reflections on the research process, identifying its strengths and limitations and pointing to possible research orientations to develop a better understanding of learner engagement. The implications of this study on my personal and professional development are outlined with a set of recommendations for the school at the end of the conclusion chapter.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

I used to think I was poor, then they told me I wasn't poor, I was needy. Then they told me it was self-defeating to think of myself as needy, I was deprived. Then they told me deprived was a bad image, I was underprivileged. Then they told me underprivileged was over-used, I was disadvantaged. I still don't have a dime, but I have a great vocabulary. (Jukes, Feiffer, cited in Pilger, 1989: 237).

Drawing on research findings from multidisciplinary perspectives on pupils' disaffection, this chapter attempts to critically examine discursive representations of some young people deemed to be disaffected, expressed in the wide range of conceptualisations of the opaque discourse of disaffection.

In order to ensure methodological consistency with critical discourse analysis, the review of literature will consider language in use associated with disaffection, discursive practices in the school and will extend to the wider social policy context. I am not suggesting that this will be done neatly in this order, since compartmentalising these elements of discourse runs the risk of missing important links and continuities that are crucial to unravelling and exposing the taken for granted commonsense category of disaffection. Thus, the review of literature will be guided by three key themes in line with the questions outlined at the end of the introduction to this thesis.

These will firstly consider constructions of youth disaffection captured in teachers' narratives on disaffection in the findings of a study which sought to define and characterise what a disaffected young person is, (Gutteridge, 2002). Counter-narratives on disaffection based on research which elicited pupils' perspectives, will also be examined, noting contradictions in the accounts given by teachers and pupils to explain disconnection from learning, whereby the teachers blamed individual pupils for their disaffection, and the pupils blamed the teachers and lack of relevance of the curriculum to their immediate lives. I shall argue that research findings on the affective, behavioural and cognitive causes of disaffection have contributed to the construction of deviant identities in schools by making claims of tenuous links between disaffection and a moral underclass culture.

Secondly, curriculum and pedagogic dimensions of disaffection will be critically examined, with particular focus on the impact of instrumental curriculum ideologies and managerialist approaches to school leadership on power relations between pupils and school staff. Drawing on Foucault's analysis of power as a dynamic construct I shall critically examine forms of peer group pressure as resistance displayed by young people through a counter school culture that stands in opposition to the school norms.

Crucially, the discussion about power relations will extend to a consideration of the impact of gender, class and ethnicity on learner engagement and corresponding academic achievement.

Finally, the efficacy of strategies deployed in the past decade to re-engage young people will be critically examined, with particular focus on measures introduced to tackle disaffection and truancy.

2.1 Constructions of Disaffection

The discourse of disaffection in its many guises is not a new phenomenon and probably goes back to when schooling became compulsory, as a report on schools in the Kendal district by HMI Seymour Tremenheere in late 19th century suggests, 'One of the chief causes of absenteeism appears to me to be either apathy or want of method on the part of the local authorities' (1884: 416). In this case it was referred to as learner apathy, but the report also attributed the possible cause of pupil disengagement to the local authority's failure to deploy appropriate interventions to improve attendance. It is also important to note that Tremenheere was referring to absent pupils and not those who may be present in body but not in mind, which current representations of disaffection include.

Historically, it is unclear when the first reference to disaffection in an educational context was made. The label disaffected appeared in educational and sociological literature in the 70s, but hitherto was more commonly used in political discourse and specifically referred to disinterest in the democratic process expressed in voter apathy.

The term 'disaffection' figured more prominently in educational discourse in late 90s and was used more than 70 times in grant application titles between 1995 and 1996 by 90 LEAs under the category 'Truancy and disaffected pupils' in bids for the Grants, Education and Support (GEST) funding, (Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin, 1999).

Perhaps the impact of the Thatcher era was beginning to be felt more acutely in education around this time, but the high levels of truancy and the perceived lack of interest in education by a large number of young men was beginning to exacerbate social divisions by widening the socio-economic gap between the educated and the uneducated (Walton, 2000).

When New Labour were elected in 1997, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair pledged to make 'education, education, education' one of the Government key priorities with particular focus on tackling social exclusion, disaffection and disengagement from participation in social and economic life. To achieve the Government's goals, the Social Exclusion Unit was set up in 1998 with 18 Policy Action Teams (PATs) within the Cabinet Office to oversee policy development targeting deprivation and social exclusion in neighbourhoods. PAT 12 specifically focused on young people and brought together academics, professionals, civil servants and community representatives. This collaboration led to the publication of a report on Truancy and Social Exclusion (1998) and fed into the fifth report: Disaffected Children, focusing on 14-19 age group. Bell and Jones point out that the report by PAT 12 asked for the Government swift action to establish 'coherent policies that will yield better services for significant numbers of young people at risk from a complex range of social problems' (Bell and Jones, 2002: 17). It called for the Government to change its spending focus from 'intervention to prevention' by improving the quality of services to young people in housing, health and administration of benefits and encouraging young people to play an active part in the design and delivery of services to young people.

The collocation of the words 'truancy' and 'social exclusion' in the report title 'Truancy and Social Exclusion' (1998) could be interpreted as, disaffection is the result of truancy and social exclusion is a consequence of it. However, it is important to note the distinction made in the literature between passive and active disaffection, where passive disaffection is understood as underachievement and withdrawal, whereas active disaffection suggests outright disengagement from schooling through truancy and / or aggressive behaviour leading to exclusion (Chrisp et al, 1997).

As far as passive disaffection is concerned, children and working class boys in particular have been over-represented in this category for several decades. With the exception of Lacey (1970), who found evidence of disaffection in selective schools, the bulk of literature on disaffection suggests that young people from working class backgrounds are more likely to be described as disaffected (Hargreaves, 1967; Willis, 1977; Corrigan, 1979, Reay, 2001; Colley, 2003; Newburn and Shiner, 2005). Ethnicity seems to add to the layering of disadvantage whereby black boys from disadvantaged communities are even more likely to be characterised as disaffected than their white working class counterparts (Sewell, 1998; Gilborn, 2000; Youdell, 2003; Osler and Starkey, 2005).

Parsons suggests that another form of disaffection is truancy, also referred to in the literature as 'active disaffection', when 'pupils vote with their feet because they feel that school has little or nothing to offer them' (Parsons, 1999, 61). However, in the absence of differentiated records of truancy, it is difficult to assess the extent of truancy in secondary schools accurately. Reid (2002) contends that the system for recording truancy is inaccurate as it fails to distinguish three major forms of truancy: low level truancy by able pupils who may miss one or two lessons occasionally; persistent low levels of truancy condoned by parents who frequently give sickness as reason for absence; and of most concern, the high level truancy by pupils whose schooling is 'seriously damaged by non-attendance, disruptive behaviour, often leading to exclusion' (Reid, 2002:122). Parsons (1999) agrees that differentiating between the three groups of truants when keeping truancy records would help devise targeted strategies to maximise attendance, in collaboration with parents, pupils and school staff. However, as Wilson et. al. (2008) point out, not all absences from school are considered as truancy due to the difference between authorised and unauthorised absences, which are defined as:

Authorised absence is absence with permission from an authorised representative of the school and includes absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided. Unauthorised absence is absence without permission of the school and includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. (Wilson et. al., 2008: 2).

Whilst differentiating the recording of truancy data is crucial to the deployment of appropriately targeted interventions, focusing on absenteeism alone in the battle against disaffection is unlikely to culminate in motivated and fully engaged learners. As discussed earlier, the label disaffection is used to describe a range of dispositions, behaviours and attitudes displayed by young people within and outside school. This is probably why as a term disaffection eludes precise definition. It seems to have acquired a variety of meanings in different institutional contexts and has become synonymous with any behaviour that is perceived to deviate from the norm. Piper and Piper point out that, 'in the absence of hard and explicit criteria for its application, disaffection constitutes a label which is both too generalised to be useful and judgemental and disapproving enough to be damaging.' (2000: 81). In a similar vein, Parsons posits that:

disaffection is an umbrella term which embraces a range of pupils whose disaffection manifests itself in different ways. It is a generic concept which needs to be unpacked in order to reveal the range of meanings collected together under the common title. (1999:56)

This observation is echoed in Osler and Starkey's suggestion that disaffection is

used as an explanatory term to account for a range of behaviours, including low attainment, persistent disruption, truancy and other forms of self-exclusion. Disaffection implies behaviour that is reactive to the school as an institution, though this is usually treated as an individual rather than a group phenomenon. (2005: 199)

Osler and Strakey point out important assumptions made in the discourse about disaffection as being self-inflicted and that it is characterised by dispositions and behaviours which are resistant to conformity demands within educational institutions. Such perception of youth disaffection is not limited to the school context; the term has entered the professional lexicon of other welfare agencies, such as social and youth services, and more so since the restructuring of Children and Young People's Services as a result of the introduction of Every Child Matters (2003), and subsequently, Youth Matters (2006).

As the definitions of disaffection cited above suggest, disaffection is not limited to school attendance, but is one of many symptoms of disconnection with the educational system and lack of commitment and engagement with learning, which have been causes for concern among teachers and policy makers for sometime. For example, the Central Advisory Council on Education produced a report named *Half Our Future*, (Newsom, 1963) where concerns were expressed over the growing number of school leavers who were described as lacking in commitment, enthusiasm and motivation in relation to the school curriculum.

More than twenty years later, similar concerns were raised in the Elton Report under the title *Discipline in Schools* (DES, 1989), but here was recognition that disaffection was a complex phenomenon and that its causes were not restricted to schools, but had their roots in wider social and economic disadvantage. The primary focus of the report was on pupils' aggressive behaviour towards teachers and other school staff. Pupils' aggressive behaviour accounted for a sharp increase in permanent exclusions from 3000 during the academic year 1990-1991 to 13,500 in 1995-1996, although Parsons (1999: 22) casts doubts on the accuracy of the early 1990s figures. However, nearly twenty years later, despite a multitude of initiatives aimed at reducing school exclusion, a report by Ofsted (2006) found that, exclusions, largely due to disruptive behaviour, had risen by 28% since New Labour came into power. The report identified that large schools, where there was a high turnover of staff, resulting in teachers not being able to get to know their pupils well, had the highest exclusion rates.

This would suggest that there is a deterministic relationship between the structure of schooling and educational outcomes for some pupils, however, conceptualisations of disaffection reviewed so far have mainly been from the perspectives of educational researchers and policy makers. Teachers also seem to locate the causes of disaffection in the pupils themselves and as will be discussed in the next section; their characterisations of a disaffected young person range from unwillingness to comply with the expected behavioural norms of the school to cognitive deficiencies.

2.1.1 Teachers' Perspectives on Disaffection

Parsons (1999) sums up a widely held view of disaffection

Arguably, a dominant public view and dominant teacher professions' view, set within limited educational resources and league tables, define disaffected pupils negatively and locate blame with the pupils themselves, the parents or the community. Where the discourse takes this form and is legitimised, schools and teachers are not required to adjust. (1999:53)

Despite adjustments made to the National Curriculum to allow greater flexibility under the Disapplication of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4, Parson's depiction of teachers' views of disaffected pupils still holds today. A report on the implications for teaching and learning of student disaffection by Elliott et al. (2005) on a Teacher Training Agency (TTA) funded 3 year research project involving seven secondary schools as part of the Norwich Area Schools Consortium (NASC) in collaboration with the University of East Anglia (UEA), was set up to engage teachers with and in educational research in a form that would contribute to school teaching as an evidence-based profession. This research drew upon the findings of earlier research by Gutteridge (2002) which sought the perspectives of teachers on disaffection, culminating in a set of characteristics that disaffected young people are thought to present. The findings in Gutteridge's research are of particular interest to this study since the set of characteristics which emerged from the NASC report were used in the focus group interview and subsequent one to one interviews with young people as the basis for initial discussions to elicit their views on the perspectives of the teachers involved in the research.

The list of characteristics which, according to the NASC teachers' representation of a disaffected young person, are in themselves descriptions of behaviours and attitudes that many young people are likely to show at some point during a school day. Many factors external to the person may influence this, including the nature of the curriculum, the structure and organization of schooling and potentially, a mismatch between

teachers expectations and young people's lack of motivation to engage actively in learning. The characteristics of a disaffected young person were defined as follows:

- often requires reminding about instructions given to the whole class
- often does not complete the homework set
- uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work
- is often reprimanded for talking in class
- does not have a study diary
- frequently infringes school uniform requirements
- presents substandard work
- fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book
- does not contribute to class discussion sensibly
- often forgets to bring books to the lesson
- takes no pride in her or his exercise book
- expresses little interest in his or her progress.

(Gutteridge, 2002: 165-166).

I should point out the absence of any reference to aggressive behaviour or to propensity to commit crime in the teachers' characterisation of a disaffected young person. Essentially, the above characterisation can be summed up as, failure to heed teachers' instructions; task avoidance; lack of engagement in class; infringement of school uniform requirements and lack of motivation. However, the definitions of disaffection considered earlier equate disaffection with a wide range of deficits, and point to the inextricability of criminality, unemployability and social exclusion. Fairclough (1992) describes as 'intertextuality' in discourse 'The property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict or ironically echo' (1992:84).

The 'snatches' of texts present in the wider discourse of disaffection are many and varied and include, being 'at risk' and the infamous phrase, 'Not in Education, Employment and Training' (NEET). This results in these labels becoming synonymous with each other. It is interesting how, when reduced to a label such as 'NEET' or 'disaffected', a statement about the socio-economic status of a young person or his/her attitude to schooling acquire and condense several meanings under one category. It is also worth noting that socially constructed categories, such as disaffection, can acquire different labels at different times, as the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter epitomises with a degree of irony. The so-called disaffected youth have been labelled variously as 'disengaged', 'disenfranchised', 'disconnected', 'dislocated', 'disappeared' and 'status zero' among a range of other negative labels, often starting with the prefix 'dis', suggesting deficiency of some sort.

2.1.2 Pupils' Perspectives on Disaffection

Hesketh (1987) conducted a series of interviews with young people from secondary schools and a Pupil Referral Unit to elicit their views on disaffection. He found that school rules provoked indiscipline and that confrontational strategies used by teachers to gain control exacerbated the problem. Hesketh also found that the students at the Pupil Referral Unit where he conducted the research enjoyed the free atmosphere and the feeling of being treated like adults. Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin (1996) conducted a study titled '*Talking Back: Pupils' views on disaffection*' and found that among the key factors which lead to 'misbehaviour' in class or truancy are the influence of friends, relationships with teachers, the content and delivery of the curriculum, family factors, classroom context, and problems arising from pupils' personalities and abilities.

Having reviewed numerous studies on disaffection from the perspectives of pupils, (eg Hesketh, 1987; Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin, 1996, Stoll and O'Keefe, 1993; Morgan, 2003; Miller, 2005; Wilson et. al, 2008), it seems that the top three reasons cited by young people for lack of interest in school were: influence of friends and peers; relationships with teachers and the content and delivery of the curriculum. Stoll and O'Keefe (1994) found that truancy was a rational choice made by young people due to lack of relevance of certain subjects, particularly in years 10 and 11 (i.e. aged 14 to 16). This has been recognised in the Working Group on 14-19 curriculum reform Final Report (2004) and confirms that curriculum relevance is a significant contributory factor to students' lack of engagement. It points out that,

too many young people are turned off learning and fail to achieve between 14 and 19. Disengagement peaks during Key Stage 4 and is manifest in truancy, exclusion and bad behaviour. Some of the causes of disengagement are cultural, social and economic and not easily addressed through changes to curriculum and qualifications. (2004: 93)

Morgan (2003, 2) argues that '(re) inclusion and change processes for disengaged young people can be fostered through a combination of developing 'basic skills' and enhancing emotional and relationship skills'. Miller (2005) argued for more holistic approaches to educating pupils in schools, drawing on the principles of social education to enhance engagement with formal learning. Having considered these dimensions in the context of relevant research, disaffection appears to be a rational response to the uninteresting and disengaging formal educational context, which some young people are unable or unwilling to tolerate as they become more independent from parental control, hence higher levels of truancy at Key Stage Four. This is consistent with the NASC study findings, which suggested that disaffection,

emerged as a rational response on the part of students to particular conditions in classrooms rather than simply a general disposition to deviate from acceptable norms of behaviour (2002:49)

Like Miller, I see merit in humanising relationships between pupils and teachers by embracing more democratic and dialogical pedagogies, which place the interests of the young person at the centre of the educational encounter, not the needs of the industry. I also agree with Parson's (1999) suggestion that the usefulness of the label disaffected in accurately defining the youth population it attempts to describe must be questioned and problematised. In the next section, I will examine how links made between disaffection and criminality in some research on the causes of disaffection has led to the construction of deviant identities. This is a particularly important debate in the light of renewed focus on 'troublesome' young men in the national media in recent months as a result of an unprecedented spate of gun and knife murders of young people by young people.

2.1.3 Affective, Behavioural and Cognitive Causes of Disaffection

The wide diversity of perspectives in the literature on disaffection can be attributed to the multidisciplinary interest in the topic from academics in the fields, of psychology, sociology, education policy; and, in recent years, a growing body of literature generated through practitioner enquiries with disaffection as the main focus of the research. Research on the causes of disaffection seems to locate explanations in young people's deficiencies. Indeed, Heathcote-Elliott and Walters (2000) reviewed reports and research findings on disaffection by Chrisp et al, (1997); Merton, (1998); Sanders and Hendry, (1997) and concluded that the indicators of disaffection invariably fall into three broad domains; affective, behavioural and cognitive. The table below illustrates their findings:

<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Behavioural</i>	<i>Affective</i>
Lack of goals and aspirations Low expectations	Avoidance (e.g. truancy at school, absenteeism at work) Confrontation (violent and aggressive acts) Criminal / deviant activity Prolonged engagement in high risk activities (e.g illicit drug use)	Feelings of estrangement and alienation Feelings of disempowerment Low self-esteem

Table 2.1 Heathcote-Elliott and Walters (2000:3)

Heathcote-Elliott and Walters (2000) argued that disaffection occurs in a staged progression along a continuum starting from the affective domain, with the pupil feeling lost and lacking in self-esteem. This sense of estrangement is then expressed in resistant behaviour, such as truancy and confrontation, which in their view can escalate

to criminality and high risk taking. In the absence of remedial intervention, according to Heathcote-Elliott and Walters, the affective and behavioural abnormality culminate in cognitive deficits, expressed in low expectations and general lack of goals and aspirations. Other studies have identified specific affective, behavioural and cognitive factors as direct causes of disaffection including fractured relationships such as family breakdown (Steer, 2000; Reid, 2002), child psychiatric disorder in post-war Britain (Rutter, 1995) low self-esteem (Andrews and Andrews, 2003; Reid, 2002), drug abuse (Goodman, 1999; Witt and Crompton, 1996) and involvement in crime (Witt and Crompton, 1996; Martinek, 1997; Reid, 2002; Blanden, Hansen and Machin, 2008). Arguably, disconnection from schooling could be a contributory factor to subsequent involvement in crime and adversely, involvement in crime could result in truancy but there is no evidence of the direction of causality, (Wilson et al., 2008).

A large proportion of young people in Britain today could be described as sharing many behavioural, cognitive and affective characteristics identified by the above studies as antecedents to disaffection. Indeed, in 2007, UNICEF published a report on a comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in the economically advanced nations, where the UK ranked last among 21 industrialised nations for well-being, quality of family life and the number of children living in relative poverty. Britain was also reported to have high rates of teenage drinking, bullying, early sexual intercourse, teenage pregnancy and obesity. Are we to conclude from this that Britain has the highest number of young people 'at risk' of disaffection in the 21 economically advanced nations surveyed in the UNICEF report? Or, should we be asking a different set of questions? Starting with: what is the impact of locating explanations of pupils' disconnection from learning in their affective, behavioural and cognitive deficiencies?

2.1.4 Labelling and the Construction of Deviant Identities

In their book, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Berger and Luckmann (1991) suggest that humans create the social world by selecting and ordering sense experience in particular ways and ascribing meanings to them, a process they describe as '*typification*'. These *typifications* become '*habitualised*' or normalised through interactions between social actors. Subjectivities are then reified in objective categories through language and discourse. This is in turn reinforced through socialisation and what has been constructed or created now becomes '*institutionalised*' taken for granted objective reality.

Disaffection is an example of such reification, which needs to be deconstructed in order to shed light on its ambiguity and to generate a better understanding of the processes that give rise to the construction of this category of deviant youth. Because, once a label is applied to an individual, it becomes a 'master status', that is, it overrides all other possible statuses that a person might possess. For instance, a young person might be 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET), but they have multiple identities or statuses, eg. being a person, being good at playing an instrument, being pro-social and so on. Yet, the label NEET, essentialises the young person as having a fixed quality which is brought to the fore by the label applied to her/him. Labeling theories offer explanations to the processes through which labels applied to individuals and groups deemed to be deviant have a powerful marginalizing effect. Such theories can be categorized as 'interactionist', 'phenomenological' and 'critical'. It must be pointed out that many aspects of the original theories about labeling (e.g. Lemert, 1962; Becker, 1963; Goffman, 1968) are now dated, however, they remain highly useful as lenses through which labeling, deviance and control can be understood. Furthermore, recent studies have revisited earlier labeling theories and confirmed their continuing usefulness in understanding deviance, (eg. Best and Kellner, 2001; Best, 2004; Rupa, 2006).

Earlier interactionist perspectives on deviance (Lemert, 1962, 1997; Becker, 1963; Goffman 1968) argued that labeling can produce the effect of a 'self-fulfilling' prophecy'. Becker (1963) suggested that there is no such thing as a deviant act, and that human action only becomes deviant if it has been labeled as such. However, the meaning making in the process of interpreting what constitutes disaffection is not dependent on how disaffection is defined, but on a range of variables, including, who commits the supposedly deviant act, when and who is observing the act and their relationship to the supposed deviant. Disaffection occurs primarily in the interaction between young people and the agents of social control, in this case, teachers who have the power to label them as such. Becker argued that:

Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather, a consequence of the application by others of the rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom the label has successfully been applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label. (1963: 9).

Lemert (1962) emphasised the role of 'social reaction' to deviant acts in reinforcing what he calls 'secondary deviation', or the self-fulfilling prophecy effects on the labeled individuals and groups. According to Lemert, when labels are ascribed to individuals, their self-concept mirrors the societal view of them, leading them to act accordingly. 'Happy slapping' is a good example of how social reaction serves to reproduce a deviant act. 'Happy slapping' began in south London around 2005 and consisted of indiscriminate physical assault on members of the public, often by young people, while the assault is recorded by an accomplice using a mobile phone. Once slapping unsuspecting victims whilst filming the ordeal for subsequent public viewing on internet sites such as Youtube occasioned public outrage, the act of slapping complete strangers on buses, in markets, or while they are enjoying a cappuccino, became ubiquitous. Sensationalist media reporting can amplify the effects of labeling, whilst causing moral panic (Cohen, 1995), as we have seen in the reporting on youth knife crime in the British tabloids in recent years.

The phenomenological perspective on deviance and labeling is similar to the interactionist perspective, but the phenomenologists are not interested in the extent to which labeling leads to deviance, but how different actors understand the processes and interactions involved in becoming deviant. Cicourel (1995) conducted studies on juvenile delinquency in two separate cities in California, which led him to conclude that whilst 'delinquents' are the product of the agencies of social control, the outcomes of delinquency were negotiated. Cicourel gave the example of middle class parents of delinquents' interaction with the authorities, leading to delinquents being 'let off lightly'.

This would suggest that the agents of social control, in this case the police, use their discretion in the enforcement of law in favour of middle class delinquents and conversely, to the detriment of working class delinquents. The same can be applied to schools as agents of control. When young people contravene school rules leading to potential exclusion, one could argue that class and ethnicity could influence differentials in the outcome of parental intervention. This view reflects a traditional Marxist perspective on deviance which posits that the agents of control serve the interests of the ruling class, particularly with regards to the protection of property (Mannheim, 1960; Chambliss, 1976, Snider, 1993).

In the case of disaffection, however, the concern is not with the protection of property, but of national interest, in terms of maximizing long term employability and neighbourhood safety, and safeguarding Britain's position in the world. Successive Prime Ministers from James Callaghan in his 1976 'Great Debate' speech at Ruskin

College to present day Gordon Brown, have asserted that if Britain is to continue to prosper, young people, who hold the key to its future success have to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve future employability and be able to function as productive members of British society.

However, there is a view that the government policy responses to the problem of disaffection are essentially mechanisms for the containment of young people based on a 'deficit' model (Jefferies and Smith, 1999: 46), where young people are perceived as deviant and attempts are made to restore them to 'normality'. Jefferies and Smith sum up the widely held negative perceptions of young people as follows:

As thugs they steal cars, vandalise estates, attack older (and sometimes, younger) people and disrupt classrooms. As users they take drugs, drink and smoke to excess, get pregnant in order to jump the housing queue and, hedonistically, care only for themselves. As victims they can't find work, receive poor schooling and are brought up in dysfunctional families, (1999:46).

Griffin states that 'Young people are frequently presented as either actively 'deviant' or passively 'at risk', and sometimes as both simultaneously' (1993: 11). She points out that young men are often perceived as actively 'deviant' or aggressive, particularly working class and black young men and young women as victims or 'at risk' in some way.

Young people are assumed to hold the key to the nation's future, and the treatment and management of 'youth' is expected to provide the solution to the nation's 'problems' from 'drug abuse', 'hooliganism' and 'teenage pregnancy' to inner city 'riots'. Griffin (1993:12).

A Home Office funded research by Graham and Bowling (1995) made a link between crime and truancy or exclusion from school. It was confirmed a year later in the Audit Commission Survey (1996) that 42% of young offenders had been excluded from school and 23% had 'truanted significantly'. These findings prompted the provision in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) of police powers to remove truants from public places and return them to school through co-operation with Local Education Authorities (LEA) under Section 16 of the Act.

Parental responsibility for children's truancy began to carry liability to prosecution under Section 444(1A), Education Act 1996, it was later amended by Section 109, Education and Inspections Act (2006), which stated that 'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence' (EIA, 2006). Additionally, under Section 16 of the Crime

and Disorder Act (1998), police were given powers to remove truants from public places and return them to school. If found guilty, parents face a maximum fine of £2,500 and/or a 3 months prison sentence.

It is evident from the literature reviewed so far that these discourses of disaffection are couched in what Levitas (1998) calls a 'Moral Underclass Discourse' (MUD), which views disaffected young people as deviant and a menace to society. The discursive practices which accompany these representations of young people do not go unchallenged in schools. Indeed, O'Donnell and Sharpe suggest that:

Schools engage in what is sometimes a losing battle to counterbalance the collective influence of the peer group, particularly the male peer group. The gap between what teachers are trying to achieve with 15 and 16 year olds and what some of the boys would rather be doing can create an air of non-communication and a sense of cross purpose in the classroom'. (2000: 89).

The next section will consider how power relations are manifested in and behind the discourse of disaffection and will consider the impact of the curriculum and pedagogies employed by teachers on learner engagement. The effect of peer group pressure in the form of sub-cultural resistance to the school as an institution will also be examined.

2.2 Power and Resistance in the classroom

This section of the literature review will examine the power relations between young people and school staff, with sharp focus on the strategies that young people use in the school to resist conformity demands. I shall draw on Foucault's and Fairclough's analyses of power as a dynamic construct, and will consider forms of resistance displayed by young people through the construction of a counter school culture.

2.2.1 Power in and behind the Discourse of Disaffection

Relationships between pupils and teachers involve power relations mediated through social practices which, according to Fairclough (2003), embody 'genres' or ways of acting; 'discourses' or ways of representing and styles or ways of being. In an examination of power, Fairclough (1989) made a distinction between power in discourse and power behind the discourse. An analysis of power in the discourse is concerned with how power is enacted through interaction between unequal participants, or what Fairclough (ibid) calls an unequal encounter, eg. pupil to teacher relationships.

Elliott et al. (2002) found that teachers' '*control* and *authority* exercised without *respect* for them as individuals' was cited by young people as one of the barriers to their engagement in learning. Teachers have the power to control and constrain the contribution of pupils by being in a position to determine the content of lessons, not only through the prerogative to select materials to be covered, but also by determining what is sayable and what is not in the contributions that pupils make to the discussion. Such constraints are expressed in teachers' representations of a disaffected young person as one who 'is often reprimanded for talking in class' and 'does not contribute to class discussion sensibly' (Gutteridge, 2002: 165-166).

Fairclough (1989) suggests that in unequal discourse encounters, the powerful participant may not have direct control over the less powerful participant, but 'the constraints derive from the conventions of the discourse type which is being drawn upon' (Fairclough, 1989: 39). To use the example of examinations as a discourse type, teachers can control relations in classroom, in terms, for example, of who sits where and when they can and can not interact with other pupils. The teacher addresses pupils using directive speech acts to issue instructions. In this unequal encounter, the pupils are only allowed to comply.

Power behind the discourse according to Fairclough (1989:51) belongs to the power holders in an institution who are the 'enforcers of conventions'. In the case of schools, various quality assurance mechanisms ensure accountability and enforcement of conventions. However, Foucault suggests that:

power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society, (Foucault, 1981: 93).

Hence, the enforcers of conventions rely on strategies in discourse, to appropriate rational values of transparency, honesty and openness to manufacture consent. For example, the original meaning of accountability in education was framed around a notion of teachers being accountable to pupils, their parents and to the community at large and not many teachers resented this form of accountability. However accountability is one of a family of number of words that have been *appropriated* by Neo-Liberal and New Labour politicians in pursuit of their political ends. It has acquired a new meaning: accountability to central government and to the industry through bureaucrats and regulators such as OfSTED.

An analysis of power in and behind the discourse is a departure from conventional analyses of power as unidirectional, exerted by powerful individuals on powerless ones, (Richardson, 2007) when one person or group exercises power over another person or group. Richardson identified a second 'face' of power, when dominant values and practices influence individuals in the decision-making process to include and exclude topics for consideration. Richardson further identified a third dimension of power that he called a 'systemic' phenomenon, when 'individuals and groups gain power from their social relations to others and their position in a hierarchical social system' (Richardson, 2007:31).

This conceptualisation of power does not fully capture the complexities of power relations as it implicitly suggests that power is directed in a top down fashion. It underplays the power of resistance, which can come from bottom up or sideways sources in the hierarchical system. Like Foucault's, Hall's analysis of power captures the circular nature of its enactment. He suggests that:

power relations permeate all levels of social existence and are therefore to be found operating at every site of social life – in the private spheres of the family and sexuality as much as in the public spheres of politics, the economy and the law. (Hall, 2001: 77).

Similarly, Foucault highlighted the presence of power in relationships between people and within systems, but pointed out the possibility for power to emerge from multiple sources. He states that:

An understanding of power must not be sought in a unique source of sovereignty from which secondary and descendent forms would emanate; it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but they later are always local and unstable....Power is everywhere not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. (Foucault, 1981b: 92).

But power is not achieved through physical means of coercion, it is exercised in a manner that makes others respond in particular ways. Foucault pointed out that 'where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power' (Foucault, 1981:95). This would suggest that power is co-constructed between social actors, and not solely determined by socio-economic structures. The study of youth subcultural resistance to authority as a form of class struggle was captured in a collection of articles produced by the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, by Clarke et al (1975) in a book called *Resistance Through Rituals: The Struggle Against Cultural Domination*. The book's main theme revolves around the emergence of youth sub-cultures in post-war

Britain as a form of struggle against cultural domination, which will be the subject of discussion in the next section.

2.2.2 Disaffection as Resistance to the School as an Institution

It could be argued that young people in schools today represent a youth subculture within the wider school 'adult' culture. Subcultures are defined as 'groups of people that have something in common with each other (i.e they share a problem, an interest, a practice) which distinguishes them in a significant way from other social groups' (Thornton, 1997: 13). Youth subculture stands in opposition to the school mainstream culture. This opposition is expressed in a distinctive style of dress, music and language codes (Hebdidge, 2005), and generally, distinctive 'values and norms', (Eadie and Morley: 2003: 552). Hebdidge (2005) used semiotics, or the study of signs and symbols in language and human communication, to understand youth subcultures. He suggested that subcultures take every day objects and transform their meanings by creating 'secret' meanings as a form of resistance. He gave the examples of the Teddy Boys using the Edwardian suits and Punks using safety pins and ripped Jeans, suggesting that youth subcultures 'represent creative attempts to try to win autonomy or space from dominant cultures' (2005: 55).

Collins (1998) suggests that pupils express their opposition to schooling through a number of ways, including 'derisive comments about teachers and kids who conform to teacher expectations' (Collins, 1998: 7). The conformists become under pressure from peers to 'disobey' the teacher's instructions and the school rules. This could be interpreted as a form of resistance to the rules. Foucault said:

Rules are empty in themselves, violent and unfinalised; they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing those rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them, so as to overcome the rulers through their own rules (1977:151)

This is probably why peer group pressure has been identified as an important factor in disaffection, (Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin,1996). Larson and Richards (2005) suggest that by early adolescence, young people spend twice as much time with peers as any other group. This is part of identity formation and membership of peer groups is characterised by distinct dress codes, distinct dialects and behaviours, as a way of defining a niche within a larger social structure. Peer groups allow young people to express values and pave the way for relationships with others, (Brown, 2003). Peer

groups thus have a huge influence on behaviour in school and attitudes to curriculum subjects and teachers.

Willis (1977) conducted ethnographic studies on classroom resistance, from which new perspectives of resistance as positive opposition rather than what was formerly described as deviance were developed. The opposition according to Willis is against the structures of schooling, the overt and hidden curriculum, which serve to maintain and reproduce social divisions. Willis's work was mainly focused on white working class resistance to schooling, but more recently, Warren (2005) examined oppositional performances in school as part of a study on African Caribbean young men's agency and school exclusions in three London schools. Warren argued that such struggles can indeed reproduce disadvantage, but at the same time, provide transformative potential. He states:

The historical and contemporary struggles to constitute particular racial settlements in education, instituted in and through the form and substance of schooling, can both reproduce social disadvantage and offer transformative possibilities (2005: 249).

Echoing Mac an Ghail's (1994) warning of the potential danger of essentialising and pathologising black youth when speaking about them as a collective group, Warren (2005) points out that while their experiences of schooling are local, individual and differentiated, they are located within school contexts where conscious or unwitting racialising discursive practices are naturalised. Teachers' attitudes towards black pupils and the hidden curriculum through which these are expressed represent the practice of power *in* and *behind* the discourse that I discussed under section 2.2.1.

Giroux argued that theoretical perspectives on the hidden curriculum have provided analyses of the ideologies which penetrate curriculum content and shape the relationships between headteachers, teachers, students, politicians, parents and the wider society (Giroux 1983). According to Giroux, literature on the hidden curriculum has provided the means of analysis that 'uncover the ideologies and interests embedded in the messages systems, codes, and routines that characterise daily classroom life' (1983:72).

Allied to the hidden curriculum are Bourdieu's (1986) forms of capital eg, social and cultural which he argued operate to disadvantage working class pupils in schools. Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu relates to the ability to understand and being able to operate successfully within the cultural norms and expectations of dominant society. This includes ways of speaking and relating to the social world. For example,

Bernstein (1990) proposed that differences in speech patterns between working class and middle class children related to social systems in which language acts as a code. He distinguished what he called 'elaborated' and 'restricted' codes, referring to modes of speech employed by working class and middle class students respectively and proposed that these differences lead to disparate levels of achievement between class groups. Social capital on the other hand refers to social relationships and support networks which put middle class children at an unfair advantage. The next section of this literature review chapter, will examine curriculum and pedagogic dimensions of disaffection, emphasizing ideological assumptions implicit in different curriculum approaches.

2.2.3 Pedagogical and Curriculum Dimensions of Disaffection

Among the findings in the report by Elliott et al. (2002) on implications for teaching and learning of student disaffection, curriculum, or more precisely its lack of relevance was cited by young people as one of the barriers to their engagement with learning. Whilst the report highlighted the significance of subject dimension to classroom disaffection, disaffected pupils are reported to find little relevance overall in the curriculum subjects studied to their future career interests.

Disconnection with the National Curriculum is better understood through critical examination of curriculum ideologies and their influence on schooling in the last sixty years or so. There are rival conceptions of the curriculum, couched in distinct ideologies about knowledge and knowledge acquisition and the nature and purposes of education. Kelly (2004) suggested that competing ideologies have vied for the control of the curriculum but none of them could claim exclusive influence over the content and shape of what is taught. Kelly's contention captures the tensions inherent in debates about the curriculum and identifies three dominant curriculum ideologies: Firstly, 'curriculum as content and education as transmission, which rests on the assumptions that certain kinds of knowledge are eternal and absolute. Absolutist theories of curriculum according to Kelly view knowledge as 'timeless, objective, in no sense related to the particular circumstances of individual eras, cultures or human beings (Kelly, 2004: 26). The view of curriculum as product and education as instrumental relates to focus on tangible outcomes that lead to employability, or what Ball (2001) calls 'performativity'. Ball describes performativity as a

Technology, a culture and a mode of regulation, or even a system of 'terror' in Lyotard's words, that employs judgements, attrition and change. The

performances of individual subjects or organizations – serve as measure of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality’, or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection. (Ball, 2001: 143).

Instrumental ideology has dominated educational policy discourse and finds expression in all aspects of curriculum design, teaching and assessment. In Britain, the tripartite system may have almost come to an end, but there are more sophisticated means of entrenching and perpetuating social divisions. These include the uncritical adoption of teaching approaches which valorise the acquisition of knowledge and skills which prepare students for the world of work over the development of autonomy and critical inquiry. Giroux cogently expressed this when he said:

The pedagogy of critical inquiry and ethical understanding has given way to the logic of instrumental reason, with its directed focus on the learning of discrete competencies and basic skills. (1983:43).

Both approaches to curriculum considered so far view learners as passive recipients to whom learning is transmitted through the medium of the teacher. Both are concerned with the knowledge to be taught, although the former emphasises the integrity of what is being taught and the latter focuses on engendering behavioural change through systematic teaching methods. However, the third model views curriculum as practice or process. As Smith suggests,

curriculum is not a physical thing, but rather, the interaction of teachers, students and knowledge. In other words, curriculum is what actually happens in the classroom and what people do to prepare and evaluate’, (Smith, 2004:4).

In the curriculum as process the focus is on the total classroom and school experience, including the development of the child or young person. It is not on the transmission of knowledge or what Freire (1973) described as the ‘banking’ system, whereby deposits are made by the teacher and avidly stored by students for later retrieval during assessments. Elliott captured this point succinctly when he stated that:

to regard learning as a process which is directed towards some fixed-end state is to distort its educative value, because what makes it educative is not its instrumental effectiveness in producing ‘knowledge’ outcomes that can be independently defined, but the quality of thinking realised in-process.” (1985: 233)

Focus on the process motivates pupils, intrinsically, to engage with what they are learning. The NASC study found that teachers made the curriculum more engaging for

pupils when they focused on their individual learning needs, gave them formative feedback and praised them when appropriate. Behaviour was better managed through establishing clear boundaries and positive relationships with pupils. Teachers who used different teaching strategies, combining class teaching, pupil and group tutorials, were able to enthuse pupils and capture their interest.

2.3 The impact of Gender, 'Race' and Class on Academic Achievement

An adequate analysis of the causes of disaffection ought to take into account the multiple factors that influence young males, and particularly, young black males' attitudes to education and their resultant achievement. An examination of the causes of disaffection solely located in the individual pathologies of young people, without due consideration of the wider social, economic and political structures within which schools operate, would be incomplete. The intersectionality of gender, ethnicity and class compound the challenges faced by many young men who, during adolescence are making significant transitions which may become fractured as a result of other factors such as family breakdown and peer pressure.

Although the extent of the respective significance of gender, ethnicity and class on academic achievement is contested, there is overwhelming evidence of the negative collective impact of these characteristics on the general wellbeing and life experiences of individuals throughout their lives. Drawing on research evidence supplied by Blanden, Hansen and Machin, (2008) a recent report by the Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF), *Deprivation and Education: the evidence on pupils in England, foundation to Key Stage 4*, suggests that there is a:

very clear pathway from childhood poverty to reduced employment opportunities, with earnings estimated to be reduced by between 15 and 28% and the probability of being in employment at age 34 reduced by between 4 and 7%' (DCFS, 2009: 7).

The report also found evidence that Black African and Black Caribbean boys were more likely than other groups to live in areas of high deprivation with half living in the 20% most deprived areas. It found clear links between children and young people receiving Free School Meals and academic under-achievement. This is particularly evident in African-Caribbean boys on Free School Meals only a third of whom (32%) achieved 5 A* – C in the GCSE examinations in 2008. Pupils from Black and Minority groups were more likely to receive Free School Meals (FSM), with approximately 18.6% White and Black Caribbean, 24.3% Black Caribbean, 19.9% Pakistani, 24.8% Bangladeshi, compared to 9.4% White British.

Furthermore, the report found that pupils eligible for FSM are less likely to achieve the Key Stage 4 threshold measures of 5+A*-C including English and Maths. Only 21% of FSM pupils achieved 5+ A*-C GCSEs including English and maths in 2007 compared to 49% of non-FSM pupils. FSM pupils are also more likely to be absent from school than non-FSM pupils, particularly in secondary schools and are three and a half times as likely to be permanently excluded from secondary. These figures show that the intersectionality of ethnicity, gender, class and academic achievement are highly significant, but they are absent in the discourses of disaffection which seek to locate explanations of disengagement in individual pupils' pathologies.

Osler and Starkey found that 'Young people from minority ethnic communities, refugees and other newly-arrived students are more likely to be characterised as disaffected and are often poorly served by their schools' (2005: 196).

The impact of gender and class on academic achievement is well established. Studies conducted between the 60s and 80s found evidence of significant academic under-achievement by white working class males. In the *Social Construction of Youthful Masculinities*, O'Donnell and Sharpe reviewed research that sought to establish why working class boys under-achieved academically (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Ball, 2001) and related it to their own research including the impact of the construction of masculinities within and across different ethnic groupings. They observed that the theoretical themes which emerged from earlier studies pointed to the significance that teachers had contributed to the:

relative educational failure of working class children through the labelling process. Specifically, the negative labelling of children can lead to conflict with teachers, loss of confidence and alienation from school – with likely destructive consequences for children's educational and career success', (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2004: 92).

O'Donnell and Sharpe (2004) also found evidence that racism played a part in the construction of African Caribbean masculinities and pointed out that:

The masculinities of young African Caribbean boys can not be understood without contextualisation in relation to white racism and patriarchy in both their contemporary and historical manifestations (2004:106).

Indeed, Connolly (1998) conducted a study on racism and gender identities with 5 and 6 yr olds in inner-city schools and found that teachers' attitudes towards black boys reflected wider discourses on and stereotypical assumptions about 'race', which were reflected in the exercise of disproportionately strict discipline and punishment towards

black boys. Such representations have far reaching consequences for black young men, including associations with academic underachievement and subsequent criminality. Blyth and Milner (1996) found evidence of a disproportionate risk of exclusion in secondary school age black males. Two years later, a report by the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment (1998) gave evidence on disaffected students, estimated to represent 8% of all 14–16 year olds predominantly male from African Caribbean backgrounds. The report made a link with this group of young people and criminality. More recently, Tony Blair blamed the misbehaviour of young people on a 'distinctive black youth culture'. (*Guardian*, 12th April 2007).

Connolly (1998) found that black boys lived up to a 'hyper-masculine' image and sought status and respect from peers through non-academic pursuits. However, Sewell (1998) conducted an ethnographic study in an inner city boys school in an attempt to 'challenge the homogenisation of black (i.e. African Caribbean) boys into one big lump of rebellious, phallogentric underachievers' (Sewell, 1998:103). He reworked Merton's model developed in his *Social Theory and Social Structure* work in late 50s, where Merton (1957) proposed a typology of four subject positions ascribed to and assumed by pupils. These categories were firstly, the 'conformists' who accepted the broader aims of education and its means. Secondly, the 'innovators' accepted the aims of schooling but rejected its means. Thirdly, the 'retreatists' rejected both and fourthly, the 'rebels' also rejected both, but replaced them with their own agenda.

Sewell argues that 'there is a need to look at positions around different discourses and cultural forms and regard Merton's categories not as fixed entities but as rooted in positions that come from acceptance or resistance to the various discourses and cultural forms of the school and the boys' subculture' (1998: 104). Sewell argues for the importance for developing an understanding of the cultural influences that play a crucial role in the positioning, both ascribed and assumed, of subjects in the school. He cautioned that teachers need to avoid two falsehoods. Firstly, the denial that African Caribbean boys face disproportionate punishment for behaviour and that this is borne out of re-conceived stereotypical notions about African Caribbean boys posing greater challenges to teachers in schools. Secondly, the espousal of the essentialising view of African Caribbean boys as 'a homogenous lump of rebellious phallogentric underachievers' (Sewell, *ibid*). Indeed, the process of othering involves the homogenisation of the out-group and differentiation of the in-group, whereby, identical characteristics are attributed to all members of the 'out-group', along with collective culpability, whilst in-group members are viewed as separate people whose individual

behaviours do not pose any threat to the identity of the whole group. Naming 'race' or ethnicity as a factor to be considered is not unproblematic, for, as Omi and Winant point out:

There is a continuous temptation to think of race as something fixed, concrete, and objective. And there is also an opposite temptation to imagine race as a mere illusion, a purely ideological construct which some ideal non-racist social order would eliminate (Omi and Winant, 2002: 7).

However, we are also reminded by Gillborn (2000) and Gillborn and Youdell (2000), that when education policy discourses are de-racialised in a liberal attempt to raise achievement among 'all' children, exclusion and oppression in schools and in the wider social context are entrenched. Several initiatives and policy documents were introduced in recent years to tackle the under-achievement and disproportionately high level of exclusions from schools of children and young people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, very little has changed. Of particular significance are the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (Home Office, 2000), Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Ensuring the Attainment of Black Caribbean Boys (DfES, 2004), the Priority Review: Exclusion of Black Pupils 'Getting it. Getting it right' (DfES, 2006) and the Curriculum Review: Diversity and Citizenship (DfES, 2007).

However, the academic achievement of children and young people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups remained low. Commenting on the appallingly high numbers of African-Caribbean young men who are subjected to school exclusions, far more than any other ethnic group, as evidenced by numerous reports (Gillborn and Gipps, 1996; Ofsted, 1996, 2001; Osler, 1997 and SEU, 1998), Warren (2005) asserts that 'Given this knowledge, it is difficult for the education community to claim ignorance, and therefore an unwitting responsibility for the racialised and racialising effects of educational practices' (2005: 244). Warren argues that such ignorance amounts to institutionalised forms of racism in schools. This is because deracialising the discourse about education, despite the evidence of enduring inequalities in educational outcomes, skewed against black boys constitute blatant omission. However, as will be discussed in the next section of this literature review, the past 13 years have seen the deployment of a wide range of strategies aimed at promoting disaffected pupils' engagement with learning and maximising potential, many of these pupils are black boys.

2.4 The Effectiveness of Strategies to Promote Pupils' Engagement with Learning

This section will critically examine the effectiveness of strategies to re-engage disaffected young people deployed in the past decade, with particular focus on measures introduced to tackle disaffection, truancy and disruptive behaviour. I shall outline key policies and initiatives introduced under New Labour to tackle disaffection and examine their effectiveness. Kinder and Wilkin identified three broad categories for reviewing the effectiveness of strategies aimed at tackling disaffection in schools. These are: *maintaining and monitoring attendance; non-curriculum related and curriculum related*, (Kinder and Wilkin, 1998: 15). However, given the limited scope of this section of the literature review, it will not be possible to assess the effectiveness of all initiatives that fall under these categories.

A raft of policies focusing on youth have been introduced at the turn of the century, the most significant of which is *Every Child Matters* green paper (ECM) (2003), leading to the publication of *Every Child Matters: Next Steps* (2004). ECM was the result of a report by Chief Inspectors and the Lord Laming inquiry report into the death of Victoria Climbié. The latter report identified major weaknesses in child protection systems and processes and its recommendations continue to have a significant impact on policy and practice in child protection and children and young people's services provision. ECM received cross party support and subsequently shaped the Children's Act (2004). However, concerns over 'troublesome' youth, who were not 'making a positive contribution to social life, eg. NEETs led to the formulation of *Youth Matters* (2005).

The focus of *Youth Matters* was to provide opportunities for young people to engage in positive activities provided by Youth Services. Smith contends that it the introduction of Youth Matters represents a 'continuing attack on the civil rights of young people' (Smith, 2005: 1). Smith is referring to the *Youth Opportunity Card*, which proposed to create accounts for young people with credit points to pay for activities deemed worthwhile, with higher credits for young people deemed disaffected or disadvantaged. Young people under this scheme would receive additional credit points for engaging in volunteering in community projects.

It is clear that the marketisation and commodification of education has extended to the informal education sphere, whereby young people are treated as customers, rather than citizens (Smith, 2005). A more recent strategy aimed at engaging young people is *Aiming High: A Ten Year Strategy* (2007) which was introduced under Gordon Brown's leadership. It cites the 'experience of the education system and labour market' (2007: 3) as one of the key factors to influence the transitions that young people make.

This statement implies that full engagement in the labour market is a direct outcome of successful school experience. However, the transitions that young people make in modern times are no longer as linear as they were thirty years ago. Newburn and Shiner (2005) point out that, where in previous decades, the main transition that young people had to make was from school to work, but by the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first, young people have had to deal with multiple transitions.

The emphasis is increasingly on the differentiation and elongation of multiple transitions. In particular, there has been a significant expansion of 'traditional' routes through academic education, the creation of new routes via vocational education, and the growth of a relatively new 'destination': temporary or permanent unemployment. Crucially for many young people, the length of time taken to complete transitions to employment is now considerably extended (Newburn and Shiner, 2005: 5).

With the multiple choices that young people now have as a result of more complex and extended transitions, come greater risks and uncertainties. Newburn and Shiner (2005) suggest that while many young people negotiate these challenges successfully, for young people who come from disadvantaged communities, live on Council Estates, are on Free School Meals and are from minority ethnic groups, the potential for disaffection and social exclusion is much greater.

A wide range of initiatives has been introduced by successive governments to tackle disconnection from learning as a result of a perception of the curriculum being irrelevant, particularly for those in Years 10 and 11 (Stoll and O'Keefe, 1993; Elliott et al., 2002; Morgan, 2003; DfES, 2004 and Miller, 2005). The development of the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) for 14-16 year olds (DfES, 2002) is seen as an attempt to bridge the perceived gap between vocational and academic qualifications by broadening vocational learning opportunities to address issues of relevance for young people at Key Stage 4 for whom a traditional academic curriculum may be less appropriate, (Haynes, 2008). The IFP was introduced as part of the 14-19: Extending opportunities, raising standards. It allowed pupils in years 10 and 11 to gain GCSEs, NVQs and GNVQs in a variety of subjects, through flexible and non-formal teaching and learning routes, in collaboration between schools, FE colleges and other providers. These developments have also widened the scope of Alternative Education provision. Evidence suggests that the IFP contributed to higher achievements in NVQ and GNVQ results for Key Stage 4 pupils (Golden et al., 2005).

Further reforms of the 14-19 curriculum followed, reflecting a recognition by policy makers that curriculum relevance is an important part in the debate about disaffection,

(Golden et al., 2005 and Lynch et al., 2010). The working group on 14-19 reform, chaired by Tomlinson, produced the 14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform final report (2004), which fed into the publication of the White Paper: *14-19 Education and Skills* (2005). These developments highlight the significance of widening the scope of multi-agency partnerships in the delivery of the post-14 curriculum and the subsequent introduction of the 14-19 Diploma as part of the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper (DfES, 2005). They also mark the Government's determination to create a vocational pathway from secondary and further education into higher education, (Haynes, 2008). Haynes (2008) conducted a survey of 301 secondary school headteachers in England to assess the effectiveness of the vocational GCSEs and NVQs in meeting their intended outcomes and whether they were achieving parity of esteem among young people, their teachers and their parents. Haynes (2008) identified a degree of scepticism and uncertainty among headteachers in relation to the parity of esteem between vocationally based qualifications and the traditional academic routes into further and higher education. She found that the extent of the popularity of vocational qualifications depended on headteachers' and teachers' attitudes towards them. Haynes (2008) argued that the National Diplomas which began in 2008 could play a role in bridging the gap between the academic and vocational divide, but only if they are promoted by the schools as having equal worth to traditional qualifications.

Another strategy to engage young people in learning is Excellence in Cities (EiC) which was introduced between September 1999 and March 2006 for schools in the most disadvantage urban communities, but since 2006, the funding for EiC has formed part of the School Development Grant. Its focus was on improving academic standards and reducing disruptive behaviour and truancy. One of the strands of EiC involves the use of Learning Mentors in schools to work within the pastoral care system targeting young people deemed at risk. The role of the Learning Mentors is described as

to support young people in order to overcome their individual barriers to learning. They could use a range of means to achieve this including one-to-one support and guidance, group work and through accessing specialist agencies, (Golden et al., 2002: 1).

Indeed, drawing on the successes of mentoring in North America, the SEU has made several recommendations in its reports, urging the Government to fund mentoring schemes in the Youth Justice system and in education, to reduce crime and tackle disaffection. The term Mentoring became a permanent fixture in the discourse about social inclusion. Colley noted that:

In education, mentoring became a standard ingredient in the recipe of

almost every major new policy initiative, including prevention of school truancy and drop-out from postcompulsory education and training (PCET) (DfEE, 1999a), responses to the report on the Stephen Lawrence inquiry which highlighted institutional racism (DfEE, 1999b), proposals to develop 'gifted and talented' children (DfEE, 1999c), and the *Learning Gateway* initiative to support labour market transitions for young people who had not succeeded at school (DfEE, 1999d), (Colley, 2002: 522-523).

Newburn and Shiner (2005) state that by 1996, an estimated 4000 mentors were operating in more than 400 educational establishments. With EiC, many primary and secondary schools in inner cities began to employ Learning Mentors by the year 2000. However, with notable exceptions, eg (Kendall et al., 2005; Colley, 2002; Newburn and Shiner, 2005), there are very few studies in the UK which have sought to assess the effectiveness of Mentoring in dealing with disaffection. Kendall et al. (2005) studied the impact of EiC strands, including the role of the Learning Mentors between 2000 and 2003 and reported that overall, the EiC was cost effective and had an identifiable positive impact on attendance of one day per pupil per year.

However, the report did not find any evidence of change in pupils' attitudes to school as a direct result of EiC. The teachers commented positively on the contributions that EiC made, particularly with regards to greater availability of resources and opportunities to exchange ideas with colleagues. More homework help clubs and summer schools were set up under EiC. The study found that Learning Mentors helped pupils gain self-esteem and improve their behaviour, resulting in less disruption in classrooms. However, whilst behaviour is observable and, arguably, measurable, it is not clear how gaining self-esteem can be evidenced as resulting from direct interactions with Learning Mentors. Focus on self-esteem in teaching and learning is consistent with what Hayes (2004) calls the 'therapeutic turn' in education, where the language used draws upon psycho-pathological discourse types. Pupils are viewed as helpless vulnerable victims who need to be assessed by the expert Learning Mentor, who then engages in some form of therapeutic talk. Ecclestone characterizes the therapeutic ethos in education as

...not merely the extension of therapeutic processes into new areas of life. Instead, it is the subtle ways in which the language, codes and symbols of therapy change our idea of what it means to be human. According to Nolan, notions of the Rogerian self, which is positive, optimistic and naturally disposed to improve, grow and learn, are giving way to a more negative, dysfunctional view of self and an acceptance of weakness caused by 'being only human', (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2008: 135).

Not only does the therapeutic approach in education encourage passivity and acceptance of 'failure', it also objectifies pupils as 'cases', to be opened, then closed,

presumably when the therapeutic intervention is completed. In the process, pupils are expected to reveal aspects of their lives, which have led them to 'deviate' from established norms and expectations.

In most inner city schools in Britain, disruptive pupils are referred to a Learning Mentor for what could be described as a 'talking cure' or treatment. Foucault describes discipline and confession as two major 'technologies' of power (Fairclough, 1992: 52). The purpose of discipline, which according to Foucault involves some form of examination, is to produce 'docile bodies', thereby objectifying people. Confession on the other hand 'subjectifies' them. The therapeutic discourse type is drawn upon when pupils are referred to Learning Mentors. However, there is no professional body for the formation of Learning Mentors and no National Occupational Standards. Learning Mentors are not trained counselors and although most have some background in work with young people in a pastoral setting, the absence of a professional body for Learning Mentors may lead to variation in practices and the role of mentors is largely in line with the school educational priorities. It is therefore unsurprising that negative perceptions from teachers of Learning Mentors were identified in the study by Kendal et al. (2005). One of the main challenges the study reported, was the 'difficulty of implementing a complex initiative within a short time frame, with the resulting increase in teachers' workloads', (Kendal et. Al, 2005: 24). There is little evidence that the Learning Mentors have made significant impact on disruptive behaviour and exclusions, however, there are reports of good practice in alternative education provision where Mentors make contributions to facilitating workshops with Key Stage 4 pupils for whom the curriculum has been disapplied. This is probably due to the informality of the relationship that a Learning Mentor is likely to have with pupils and is a further indication that the pedagogic dimension of teaching and learning is crucial to learner engagement.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The literature reviewed has confirmed the findings in the Elton Report more than twenty years ago under the title *Discipline in Schools* (DES, 1989), which recognised that disaffection was a complex phenomenon and that its causes were not restricted to schools, but had their roots in wider social and economic disadvantage. I have argued that the constructions of disaffection in the text, talk and discursive practices in research on disaffection, policy documents and in some teachers' narratives are not only ambiguous, but their attempts to locate explanations of disaffection in the affective, behavioural and cognitive dispositions of some pupils, have marginalising

effects. The tenuous links made in some of the literature reviewed between truancy, school exclusion and criminality provide little evidence of the direction of causality and, in the main, echo the government discourses of toughness on youth crime and loutish behaviour expressed in a raft of crime prevention policies, eg the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), Powers of the Criminal Courts Act (2000), Criminal Justice and Police Act (2001), Criminal Justice Act (2003) and Anti-Social Behaviour Order Act (2003).

I have argued that some pupils' counter narratives to teachers' discourses of disaffection suggest that their alienation from education is a rational response to a perception of the curriculum being irrelevant, poor relationships with teachers and to some extent the influence of a counter school subculture which stands in opposition to the school norms and values. In this respect, I have considered different curriculum ideologies and their impact on teaching and learning and argued that instrumental ideologies in the curriculum and in the organisation of schools create a climate of disaffection, not only among pupils, but teachers too. I have argued, in the light of research evidence, that an adequate analysis of alienation from education must consider the impact of the intersectionality of gender, class and ethnicity on academic under-achievement and subsequent life and career chances. Finally, despite the wide range of strategies introduced by the Government since New Labour came into power to tackle disaffection and social exclusion, the literature I have reviewed casts doubts on its effectiveness, as far as raising attendance, reducing the number of school exclusions and improving behaviour. As I have stated throughout this literature review, disaffection is a complex and multi faceted phenomenon, which may require radical solutions to address the multitude of barriers to learning and transitions that many young people have to make. These include wider social and economic disadvantage that is unlikely to disappear in the immediate future, despite the Government's lofty goal of eradicating child poverty in Britain by 2020. This will certainly not happen in my lifetime, especially given the unprecedented economic crisis and the recent findings in a report commissioned by the National Equality Panel titled *An anatomy of economic inequality in the UK (2010)*, which opens with the statement:

Britain is an unequal country, more so than many other industrial countries and more so than a generation ago. This is manifest in many ways – most obviously in the gap between those who are well off and those who are less well off. But inequalities in people's economic positions are also related to their characteristics – whether they are men or women, their ages, ethnic backgrounds, and so on (2010: 1).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ernest describes research as conducting 'a systematic enquiry with the aim of producing knowledge' (1994: 8), but researchers are far from being detached and neutral agents, at the very least, they are gendered, raced and classed and their subjectivities may influence their conceptualisations of knowledge and its acquisition.

Given that I am interested in how some young people acquire the abstract and ambiguous label 'disaffected', the focus of my research is on the construction of 'disaffection' of boys from mainstream schooling and by implication, the discursive practices which give rise to what Foucault (1972) called 'enunciations' that have constitutive effects on individuals and groups.

In this chapter, I outline the epistemological foundations of my enquiry in relation to the discourse of disaffection of boys from schooling and explain the theoretical perspective and methodological approach which have influenced the research process followed to meet the objectives set out in chapter 1, section 1.3.

3.1 Developing a Research Approach

It is important that ontological and epistemological commitments are made explicit at the outset of the research process to avoid value conflict and ambiguity (Pring, 2000). Indeed Usher reminds us that 'it is failure to examine these assumptions which leads to research normally being understood as a 'technology', as simply a set of methods, skills and procedures applied to a defined research problem' (1996, p9).

My positionality as an educational researcher will be made explicit through fleshing out the underlying assumptions of my theoretical perspective and by way of considering these in juxtaposition with other theories of knowledge and knowledge acquisition.

The broader philosophical questions relating to the nature of being and knowing, Objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism are conceptualised in the research literature as representing the categories within which researchers position themselves depending on their conceptions of social reality (Crotty, 2003; Pring, 2000; Cohen et al., 2000). The underlying assumptions of the nature of reality necessarily determine the approach of the researcher to solving problems in the social world (Cohen et al., 2000).

As an educator seeking solutions to problems encountered in my particular professional setting, I aim to develop an understanding of the particular context within

which I am working as a Parent Governor in an urban secondary school. The underlying assumptions of my approach to social and educational research are congruent with critical constructionist epistemological values. This is based on my belief that reality is not “out there” but is constructed through human interaction, (Crotty 2003). Research is a context dependent activity which is influenced by the environment in which it is located and may be seen as a ‘social practice’ (Usher 1996: 9). Carr and Kemmis suggest that “to identify the actor's motives and intentions correctly is to grasp the 'subjective meaning' the action has for the actor.” (1986: 88). In order to do this, the researcher must view phenomena holistically and must systematically reflect on who she or he is in the inquiry. This is because research with people takes place in the natural world and thus requires sensitivity to personal biography and how it shapes the study by using multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic. It should be emergent, rather than tightly prefigured (Rossman and Rallis, 1998).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) identify three research typologies within interpretive research with varying foci. Some of these focus on individual lived experience, such as phenomenological approaches, some feminist approaches and narrative analysis. Others focus on society and culture such as ethnography and feminist research. A third tradition focuses on language and communication or sociolinguistic and semiotic approaches. These variants of interpretivism are underpinned by traditional, critical or postmodern assumptions.

Traditional assumptions view knowledge as subjective and posit that the researcher should be neutral, but try to understand participants’ perspective. This is based on the assumption that society is structured and ordered (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Critical theory assumptions also view knowledge as subjective, but raise the question of knowledge being truth or ‘reality’. They view society as being conflictual and oppressive and see the research as involving issues of power (Crotty 2003). According to this view the researcher is not neutral, but gendered, raced and classed. It is overtly political and seeks to give oppressed groups a voice and is based on the belief that traditional research has silenced people from marginalised groups. Critical theorists interact with participants in the research instead of manipulating them. The theoretical backbone of the critical perspective is critical sociology, Marxism and Feminism (Atkinson et al 2002). It contends that reality may be out there, but whose reality is it? It questions whose values are being used? Whose interests are being served, ignored or denied by the expression of these values in the form of discursive

practices? My research is influenced by the latter variant of interpretivism through CDA as a theory and method.

3.2 From Phenomenology to Critical Discourse Analysis

When I started writing the Research Project Design, Data Generation and Collection Module assignment over a year ago, the theoretical framework upon which I intended to draw in my investigation was phenomenology. The main reason for choosing phenomenology at the time was firstly, the need to explore people's different ways of experiencing and understanding the phenomenon under investigation and secondly, in order that the influence of the judgements and interpretations that I brought to the research was minimised. This is because my primary interest was in young people's and education professionals' conceptions of disaffection. I am of course still interested in the perceptions of young people and school practitioners in relation to disaffection, but I am looking at the whole investigation through the influence of a critical lens under CDA. This is a significant shift from one of the important requirements of phenomenology which Husserl called 'back to the things themselves' (Crotty, 2003: 79), or the process of engaging in the analysis of our consciousness of things as they appear to us directly instead of "through the media of cultural and symbolic structures' (Cohen et al., 2000: 24). In order to achieve this direct consciousness of things, Husserl invites us to 'bracket' our previous experience and knowledge of phenomena. This, according to Husserl, would reduce the structure of consciousness to 'three elements – the 'I' who thinks, the mental acts of this thinking subject, and the intentional objects of these mental acts' (Cohen et al., 2000: 24).

The broad aims of phenomenology initially appeared unproblematic to me, however, as I approached the end of the assignment, I began to gain a better understanding of the implications of the choices in relation to my theoretical and methodological framework and came to the realisation that phenomenology was not entirely congruent with my ontological commitments. In light of this I began to reconsider my methodological approach.

Whilst I believed that capturing the subjective meaning of the research participants and foregrounding their voices in the analysis of data was very important, I had difficulty with the idea that it was possible to 'bracket' my preconceptions as a researcher in order to ensure the 'pure transfer' of information. For along with making sense of the subjective meanings of the 'I's of the research participants, I was involved in this meaning making process and my interpretations did not take place in a vacuum. They

were the result of the dynamic interplay of shared understandings that I sought to capture as a researcher.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theory and method is an orientation that I have arrived at, having reconceptualised my original ideas around how notions of youth disaffection are constructed in texts and talk in schools and policy documents and how they give rise to ambiguous cultural models. My initial orientation to a phenomenological study led me to a realisation that a critical discourse analysis approach was more closely in consonance with my ontological commitments.

My ontological commitment is to the idea that education can and should play a role in contributing to social justice, and the underlying assumptions of my conception of social reality is that social divisions are maintained by inequitable power relations between people in the workplace, in schools and in society at large. Educational research must expose discourses which reproduce and maintain social divisions (Giroux, 1983) and engage in what Whitehead (2004a) calls 'the education of social formations'.

3.3 The Research Approach Taken in this Study

In order to orient my research in the direction of my values, I changed the orientation of my research, mainly drawing on some aspects of CDA. It is important to point out that there is no single method for conducting CDA and that different critical discourse analysts have used different approaches in the investigation of the relationship between text, social practices and contexts. Van Dijk (1996) argued that unlike other research approaches CDA does not have a single commonly agreed theoretical framework or methodology and is better understood as encompassing a shared perspective and having common concerns. This is partly to do with the multidisciplinary nature of CDA, as it has common interests with other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, history, psychology and philosophy amongst others. Scholars associated with CDA reflect this diversity in the orientation of their work, for example, Whetterell and Potter (1992) draw extensively on social psychology; Weiss and Wodak (2003) adopt a more interdisciplinary or 'discourse-historical approach' in their research; the work of Van Dijk (1996) has a cognitive focus, whilst Fairclough is strongly influenced by Systemic Functional Linguistics of Halliday (1985). My approach to CDA is influenced by Fairclough's view of language as a social practice. He argued that 'language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account

of language' (Fairclough, 2003: 2). According to this view analysis should necessarily consider the form and function of text, how it is produced and consumed and how it relates to the social context where it is located, (Richardson, 2007).

Fairclough and Wodak identified eight principles of CDA as follows:

- 1) CDA addresses social problems
- 2) Power relations are discursive
- 3) Discourse constitutes society and culture
- 4) Discourse does ideological work
- 5) Discourse is historical
- 6) A sociocognitive approach is needed to understand how relations between texts and society are mediated
- 7) Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory and uses a systematic methodology
- 8) CDA is a socially committed scientific paradigm, (1996: 17-20).

Pennycook (2001) identified two different domains of CDA. One focuses on unequal power relations in discursive interactions, eg who determines what is talked about and in consequence what is excluded from the conversation or more broadly, language in use, be it written or verbal. The second is concerned with the content of what is said, and in particular, the ideological assumptions inherent in texts.

Along relatively similar lines, drawing on empirical studies of discourse analysis by Phillips and Ravasi (1998), Phillips and Hardy (2002) identified two theoretical dimensions in CDA, the first of which is concerned with power dynamics enacted in language use and the second on the processes by which language is used to construct social reality. To illustrate this, Phillips and Hardy produced a diagram to represent continua between four different perspectives along two axes, as shown in figure 1 below. The first continuum runs between text and context, where at one end of the spectrum, emphasis is on textual features, including vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and turn-taking. At the other end of the spectrum, focus is on the broader context within which language is produced, consumed and reproduced. The second dimension along which discourse analysts' positionality varies gravitates between constructivist and critical approaches to the study of discourse.

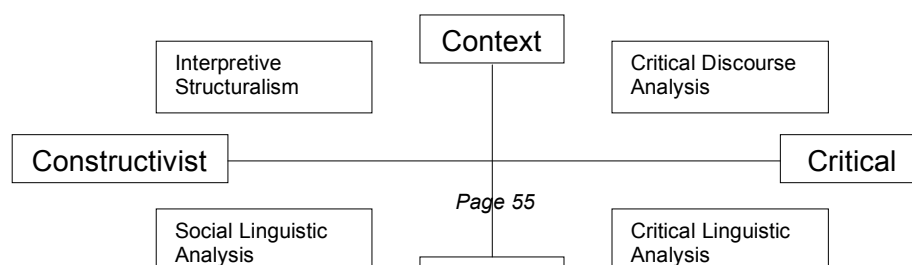


Figure 3.1 – Different Approaches to Discourse Analysis, adapted from Phillips and Hardy (2002: 20)

Whilst Phillips and Hardy's representation of the dimensions along which approaches to discourse analysis can vary is helpful in identifying the orientation of a piece of discourse analysis, it is important to note that the differences are along continua and that a consideration of the construction of social reality involves a degree of criticality and similarly, a critical perspective is concerned with description, interpretation and explanation, which essentially deal with constructions of the social world. Berger and Luckmann (1966: 149) suggest that 'society exists as both subjective and objective reality, any adequate theoretical understanding of it must comprehend both these aspects'. They argue that an adequate understanding of social life must recognise the dialectical relationships between what they call moments of 'externalisation', 'objectification' and 'internalisation'. According to Berger and Luckmann, humans create the social world by selecting and ordering sense experience in particular ways and ascribing meanings to them 'externalisation'. Subjectivities are then reified in objective categories through language and discourse 'objectification'. This is in turn reinforced through socialisation and what has been constructed or created now becomes taken for granted objective reality 'internalisation'. The dialectical relationships between these three 'moments' are mediated through language in use in an ongoing process of production, consumption and re-production.

3.4 Criticality in Critical Discourse Analysis

So what is critical about CDA? One would expect the analysis of any discourse to be critical. However, the critical part in CDA refers to acute sensitivity to and critique of power relations. The concern with critique derives from the Frankfurt School of critical theory whose proponents included (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1973; Horkheimer, 1972; Habermas, 1976, Marcuse, 1978). The key tenets of the Frankfurt school critical theory were: a rejection of naturalism, or the notion that social practices and common sense categories such as labels are an objective representation of social reality; a challenge to rationality, or the belief that scientific logic is a reliable tool for uncovering the truth; neutrality, or the idea that scientific research can be neutral Rogers (2004). Critical theory challenges Marxist overdeterminism of structure and argues for a dialectic relationship between structure and human agency. This is not unproblematic

for in its analysis of power relations, CDA is biased towards the interests of dominated groups (Van Dijk, 1996). It is however a bias which is made explicit through engagement in reflexivity throughout the research process.

Rogers (2004) argues that another interpretation of the critical in CDA is an attempt to describe, interpret and explain the relationship between the form and function of language. Fairclough argues that discourse analysis should take account of the form and function of text, and how it relates to its production and consumption within its wider social context. Richardson posits that CDA approaches discourse as a circular process, whereby

social practices influence texts, via shaping the context and mode in which they are produced, and in turn, texts help influence society via shaping the viewpoints of those who read or otherwise consume them [...] the circular and reinforcing nature of discourse can appear like a spinning roundabout, difficult to jump onto; how do we distinguish cause and effect when effects become causes? (2007: 37)

Such dilemma points to the dialectical nature of Critical Discourse Analysis whereby language in use shapes reality and is in turn shaped by it. It suggests an interactionist alternative to the long standing debate on structure and agency. For instance, is disaffection a rational choice by young people as free thinking agents who are disillusioned by what schools have to offer them, or are they victims of rigid schooling systems which compound their alienation from social life? My research will show that discursive practices in the immediate school context intersect with other societal factors to marginalise young people.

Foucault described discourses as sets of statements or what he called 'enonces'. He stated that 'discourses are composed of signs but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this move that renders them irreducible to language and to speech. It is this move that we must reveal and describe' (1972: 49). Fairclough describes discourse as 'Discourse is, for me, more than just language use: it is language use, whether speech or writing, seen as a type of social practice' (1992: 28). Given that language is viewed in CDA as discourse and social practice, the critical analysis of discourse is not limited to text, but considers interactions between what Fairclough (2003: 21) calls 'processes of production and processes of interpretation' of text and how these relate to prevalent discursive practices in the immediate and wider social context. Rogers (2004) points out that discourse is never just a product, but a

set of consumptive, productive, distributive, and reproductive processes that is in relation to the social world (2004: 5).

Gee (1999) made a useful distinction between discourse with small d and Discourse with a capital D. He identifies the discourse with small d as text and talk at the level of the sentence, eg. grammar, vocabulary etc, whereas Discourse with a capital D, according to Gee, represents 'ways of combining and interpreting language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognisable identity' (1999: 21). Hence the discourse of disaffection would fall under this category since a range of characteristics, as we shall see later, are associated with the 'disaffected' label. Critical discourse analysts focus on 'the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance, (Van Dijk, 2001: 300). This is of particular interest to me as I am interested in how young people become labeled as disaffected. I want to unravel the underlying assumptions and the discursive practices that have given rise to this contested category. This is in line with one of the main concerns of CDA, which is to investigate how discursive activity constitutes and sustains unequal power relations (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Luke posits that an adequate understanding of power relations in the social world must take account of the social, economic and political realm. He suggests that

the very raison d'être of critical discourse studies is to engage in ways of criticising and second-guessing prevailing and dominant ways of naming the cultural and natural worlds as a means for questioning social, economic and political power (2004: 150).

CDA does this by describing and explaining how 'power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimated by talk and text of dominant groups and institutions' (Van Dijk, 1996: 84). However, Foucault (1980) pointed out that power is not an entity to be possessed. He suggests that it is not a noun, but rather a verb or something which circulates and is enacted by individuals and groups in different ways. This conceptualisation of power views power and resistance as being inextricable. Foucault suggested that

There are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised; resistance to power does not have to come from elsewhere to be real, nor is it inexorably frustrated through being the compatriot of power. It exists all the more by being in the same

place as power (1980: 142).

Although the term resistance implies a reaction to an external power to preserve or defend one's position, it is nevertheless a state of struggle to prevent those who exercise power at a given time from achieving unfettered control over common resources or in the pursuit of a specific agenda. This implies that power is not a quantifiable and fixed entity of which those exercising it are in a constant state of powerfulness.

I am particularly interested in Foucault's contention that truth claims in discourses are resisted through counter-discourses which serve to challenge their authority and legitimacy. One of the key themes of this research focuses on strategies used by young people to resist and challenge the discourse of disaffection by creating counter-discourses to subvert institutional ideology. Blommaert suggests that in CDA, the analysis of power should focus on how it affects others. He states that

[A] critical discourse analysis should not be a discourse analysis that reacts against power *alone*. ... My point of view is that ... it should be an analysis of power *effects*, of the outcome of power, of what power *does to* people, groups, and societies, and of *how* this impact comes about. The deepest effect of power everywhere is *inequality*, as power differentiates and selects, includes and excludes. (Blommaert, 2005: 1).

To this end, in addition to eliciting the perceptions of young people in relation to schooling, I have also sought the views of two practitioners from the same school, a teacher and a Learning Mentor. As suggested earlier I am drawing on aspects of Fairclough's (2001) approach to CDA. That is a close examination of the relationship between three elements of discourse: Text, interaction and context. Text includes talk, in this case the interviews with young people and practitioners about disaffection. Textual analysis will consider the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of language in use, (Fairclough, 1995). The ideational function considers how language is used to communicate ideas and concepts, events and processes, and the people involved in them, (Richardson, 2007). The interpersonal function refers to how language is used to express the speaker's attitude to what s/he is saying and how it communicates the perceived relations the speaker has to the hearer. In order to fulfil the ideational and interpersonal functions of language, the textual function requires language to be presented 'in coherent, adequate and appropriate texts' Richardson (2007: 243).

Fairclough (2001) suggests a procedure for CDA in three stages representing different levels of abstraction as follows: Description; interpretation and explanation of discursive practices at the local, institutional and societal levels of analysis. This procedure will be outlined in detail in the next chapter.

As discussed earlier, this is a critical investigation into the construction of youth disaffection. It critically interrogates the assumptions inherent in the label 'disaffected' and attempts to expose the ambiguity in the discourse of disaffection. It also seeks to consider the extent to which learner apathy and alienation is a rational response to a mismatch between the interests of young people, the structure of schooling and the nature of curriculum content.

In order to develop a deeper understanding of the complex and multi-layered disaffection discourse, I have been influenced by Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. As a theory and method, not only has CDA influenced the general data collection approach I have used, it has also provided the theoretical backbone for my developing understanding that an adequate analysis of language in use necessitates an appreciation of the dynamic relationships between text, discursive practices and the wider context.

Drawing on ideas from CDA has supported the development of my research design which I outline and discuss in the next chapter.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter provides a detailed outline of the methods used for data collection and analysis. In line with critical discourse analysis, the link between theory and method is sustained throughout. Descriptions and explanations for the selection of the study sample are given and due considerations to ethical dimensions are discussed.

Whilst the choice of methods does not in itself determine my positionality as a researcher, epistemological consistency demands that my conduct is congruent with my ontological commitments (Crotty, 2003).

The methodology is related to the paradigm and is an approach which involves the perspective of the researcher. The methods used do not necessarily reflect the paradigm, they are simply tools for conducting research. However, methods are often associated with methodologies, which can make it difficult to distinguish between the two. I feel that it is important to clarify the distinction at the outset to avoid ambiguity which is exacerbated by the false dichotomy often made between quantitative and qualitative approaches to research, implying a distinction at the level of method. Crotty (2003) argued that such distinctions are unjustified as they give rise to a false association of quantitative methods with objectivist research and qualitative methods with constructionist or subjectivist research. Hence although collection of quantitative data is generally associated with the positivist approach to research, there is no reason why quantitative data about people cannot be used within an interpretivist framework, but it would depend on what is done with that data that would distinguish the epistemological positioning of the researcher.

The methods used are thus not distinct to my theoretical perspective, but the underpinning philosophy and how the results will be interpreted are in line with how I view the nature of knowledge and knowledge acquisition.

In Critical Discourse Analysis, data is collected through a wide range of methods. These may include participant observation, in-depth interviewing, analysis of media and documents amongst other investigative tools. As discussed earlier, various factors influence the decision to employ particular research methods. My choice of methods for data collection and analysis reflects my interest in the dialectical interplay between the subjective meanings that the actors ascribe to their interpretations and actions in the social world and the objective reality created in the process.

4.1 The Study Population

Although the school where the research took place is located in a highly affluent area, the majority of pupils who attended it came from an enclave of working class communities occupying adjacent social housing or from poorer inner city neighbouring boroughs. The income gap between the dwellers of the grand Victorian houses surrounding the school and the working class communities in the estates built by the Local Authority in the 1960s widened between the 1980s and the early part of the 21st century, culminating in a stark juxtaposition of affluence and deprivation. During this period the population profile of the council tenants and leaseholders changed from almost exclusively white, to predominantly Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

The school was originally set up in early 1930s as a county boys school, but in late 1970s became a mixed comprehensive school. The proportion of pupils from Black and Minority Ethnic groups accounted for 58% of the total school population, which stood at 758 in 2007. Four out of every ten pupils were eligible for Free School Meals and more than 42% spoke a first language other than English. A total of 26% of the pupils had Special Educational Needs but only 16% of pupils who were from Black and Minority Ethnic groups were statemented. A total of 107 teaching and support staff were employed by the school, including the Management Team who comprised a Headteacher, a Deputy Headteacher, a Director of Learning and three Assistant Headteachers. Additionally, there were 67 Teachers in twelve Departments and 34 support staff. Although there was a good gender balance in the Management Team with 3 males and 3 females, employees from Black and Minority Ethnic groups in the whole school accounted for no more than 28%, only 11 of whom were teachers while the rest were support staff.

The sampling strategy used was non-probability sampling as it was not my intention to generalise from the findings, but it was rather to develop a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding disaffection as understood by the research participants in the school context. I used purposive sampling due to the 'typicality' of the group that I wanted to conduct the research with (Cohen et al., 2000: 103). Guba and Lincoln assert that

It is virtually impossible to imagine any human behaviour that is not heavily mediated by the context in which it occurs. One can easily conclude that generalisations that are intended to be context free will have little that is useful to say about human behaviour (1981:62).

Furthermore, validity is value laden; indeed, Blatchford (1995) suggested that validity and value have the same etymological origin, while McNiff (2004) acknowledges the importance of values as standards of judgment in evaluating the worth of educational inquiry. Traditional researchers view validity in terms of the extent to which the instruments used in the research measure what they are intended to. Van Dalen expresses this as follows: 'The research findings obtained from a sample of subjects can be no better than the instruments employed to collect the data' (1979:135). I am however in agreement with Habermas's (1987) criteria of social validity, which necessitate comprehensibility, truthfulness, sincerity and appropriateness. I believe that I have applied these criteria during the description, interpretation and explanation stages of this study.

The group of Key Stage 4 pupils were selected for the Alternative Education Programme on the basis of their perceived disaffection. The criteria used by the school to select pupils for the AEP relates to poor behaviour, low academic attainment and low attendance. Of significance is the over-representation of young men of African Caribbean descent in the study population. Out of the six male participants who took part in the focus group interviews and one to one interviews, one was white and five were of African Caribbean descent. Four were fifteen years of age and two had just turned sixteen. They all lived in South West London. They were all on Free School Meals and were all living in single parent families with the caring parent of two of the respondents being unemployed, while three were in semi-skilled part-time employment and one in domestic full-time employment.

I also interviewed a teacher and a learning mentor who have both worked very closely with the young people who took part in the study. The teacher had been at the same school for more than twenty years. The learning mentor had previously worked as a youth worker for many years before becoming a mentor. The sampling strategy for selecting the adult respondents was also purposive. Both the teacher and learning mentor were male of African Caribbean descent. This was partly the reason why both Mr T and Mr H were selected for the interviews. Given that five out of the six young people who took part in the research were of African Caribbean origin, they were more likely to have greater affinity and a good understanding of the issues facing Black boys in education. Furthermore, Mr H and Mr T were involved in setting up the Alternative Education Programme and their particular interest in school disaffection meant that they were able to provide informed narratives about the effectiveness of strategies employed by the school to engage Key Stage 4 pupils in learning.

I had hoped to conduct a focus group interview involving a group of six teachers from the school, including core subject teachers. However, given asynchronous and highly demanding work commitments of most teachers at the school, it was not logistically feasible to synchronise meeting dates. Additionally, having conducted the initial interviews with Mr H, Mr T and the pupils, I was satisfied that, in conjunction with the NASC teachers characterisation of disaffection, I had sufficiently rich data that provided answers to my research questions.

4.2 Setting up the Fieldwork

I initially discussed the prospect of conducting the research in School S. at a Parents' Governors meeting, when the Headteacher and the school Governors agreed in principle, but I was asked to confirm my proposal in writing (Appendix 1). I also wrote to Mr H and Mr T (Appendix 2) to confirm interview arrangements that I had made with both of them informally.

Once I gained the Headteacher's approval to go ahead with the research at the school, I visited the youth centre during the Multimedia and Creative Writing workshops. There were 12 young people present, 10 male and 2 female. Four were from Year 10 and eight from Year 11. I knew the two youth workers who were facilitating the sessions and I was introduced to the young people by the Learning Mentor. Some of the young people had seen me in the school, but were not aware that I was a Parent Governor. I told the young people about my background as a youth worker and explained that my interest in young people's attitudes to school related to research I was conducting in connection with a course I was taking at the University of Exeter. I explained that the research would inform recommendations that I planned to make to the school governing body aimed at enhancing pupils' experiences and developing strategies to support alternative provision while ensuring that pupils on the Alternative Education Programme continue to have access to stimulating learning opportunities in an informal environment and that they are supported in making informed decisions about the many options that were available to them.

I stressed that participation in the interviews and focus groups was voluntary and that, if they chose to take part, they could withdraw from the research at any time. I had prepared a consent form and a letter intended for parent(s) or guardian(s) to give their approval for them to take part in the research if they so wished. I stayed on to the end of the session and took part in a 'quick write' exercise. The exercise entailed writing about a topic, given by the youth worker, non-stop for five minutes. One of the rules of

the exercise was that if we could not think of anything to write, we had to literally keep jotting 'I can't think of anything to write' until we could think of something to write. I was pleased to note that completing the exercise with the young people added informality and humour to our encounter, as I was keen for them not to position me exclusively as a Parent Governor with the potential effect of perceiving me as 'negative' authority.

Within a week, six of the young people returned the completed consent forms. The remaining six young people, including the two young women, had forgotten to bring their consent forms. I made two attempts to remind those who attended the workshops over the two weeks that followed, but to no avail. I accepted that perhaps they were reluctant to take part in the focus group interviews and concluded that they would join the discussions on the day if they were inclined to.

It would have added a new dimension to the research had I succeeded in eliciting the participation of the two young women in the focus groups and one to one interviews, but their attendance was erratic and despite the youth workers' efforts to include them in collaborative tasks with the young men, they tended to keep to themselves. I discussed ways of including them in the research with the youth worker and the learning mentor, but they were both of the view that Year 10 and 11 boys and girls tended to rarely mix with pupils of the opposite sex who attended the same school. Furthermore, young women were rarely described as disaffected in the school and pupils who were referred to the learning mentor tended to be almost exclusively boys. However, this is clearly an area that merits further investigation to ensure that young women who become disconnected from learning are adequately supported. This will be included in the final recommendations of this study.

The focus group and one to one interviews with Mr H, Mr T and the pupils were based on almost identical questions (Appendices 4, 5, 6 and 7), albeit there were slight deviations from the schedules as a result of probing questions in response to the participants' responses during the interviews. The reasons for using similar questions was to elicit narratives from all respondents to common issues in line with the broad lenses of the research. For example, all the interviews started with a question inviting the participants to comment on the NASC teachers' characterisation of disaffection. This was done in order to, on one hand ascertain the extent to which the adults in the school agreed or disagreed with the definitions suggested by other practitioners and to capture their conceptions of disaffection. On the other hand, the pupils were invited to provide counter-narratives to the NASC teachers' claims. The remaining questions

revolved around curriculum and pedagogic dimensions of disaffection and the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme in re-engaging pupils in learning.

4.3 The Focus Group Interview

I conducted a focus group interview with six pupils in order to detect patterns and trends that would not be easily identifiable in other interview situations. Krueger (1994) posits that the size of focus groups should be between 6 and 12 as this, according to Krueger provides an opportunity for participants to share ideas in a non-threatening situation. Focus group interviews are said to create a 'natural environment where participants influence and are influenced by each other in the same way they are in everyday situations'. (Cohen et al., 2000:288). In a similar vein, Krueger suggests that 'Focus groups produce qualitative data that provides insights into the attitudes, perceptions and opinions of the participants' (1994: p.151). Focus group interviews assume that beliefs and views are formed in social contexts through debate and discussion. However, as I discovered during the focus group interview at the youth centre, the dynamics which are brought to the interview situation change considerably in a group situation.

I facilitated the focus group interview jointly with F, one of the Youth Workers who had worked with the young people since the Alternative Education project began. It was important to create an informal atmosphere, so the initial conversation revolved around questions relating to how long the young people knew each other and whether they had always been at the same school. The purpose of the focus group interview was then explained to the young people, with a statement about confidentiality. Given my role as a Parent Governor at the school, it was important for the young people to understand that the research was not organised by the school, but related to my own research interest in teaching and learning. I assured the young people of complete confidentiality and that no names would be attached to any specific comments that any of them made. We then agreed a set of ground rules for the conduct of the focus group. Most of the suggestions for the ground rules were made by the young people and broadly related to relational dimensions of the interaction, eg. Respecting others' views, turn-taking, avoiding sarcasm etc.

The first question related to what young people liked most and what they liked least about being at school. Their responses suggested that being with friends and peers was the most appealing aspect of being at school. Their preferences for subjects varied, but the order of preferences by the highest number of respondents were PE,

English, Drama, ICT and History. However, there was a consensus among the respondents that the extent of engagement with subjects depended on the approach and attitude of the teacher. Friendliness, respect, humour, easy going were used to describe the qualities that the young people thought a good teacher had. On the other hand, disrespect, sarcasm and rudeness were used to describe a teacher who was not considered to be nice.

At the start of the focus group interview, I projected a list of characteristics based on a research project conducted by Gutteridge (2002) in conjunction with the Norwich Area Schools Consortium (NASC), which included local schools and the University of East Anglia (see table 1). The research sought to identify major indicators of student disaffection and found that a disaffected student is someone who regularly does the following:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• often requires reminding about instructions given to the whole class• often does not complete the homework I set• uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work• is often reprimanded for talking in class• does not have a study diary• frequently infringes school uniform requirements• presents substandard work• fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book• does not contribute to class discussion sensibly• often forgets to bring books to the lesson• takes no pride in her or his exercise book• expresses little interest in his or her progress |
|--|

Table 5.1 – Characteristics of Pupils' Disaffection, (Gutteridge, 2002)

The focus group participants were invited to discuss the statements in light of their own experiences of schooling and to explain reasons why they agreed or disagreed with the teachers' assessment of what they considered to be a disaffected young person. In addition, they were asked about their views on the Alternative Education Programme (Appendix 4). Some of the members of the group dominated the discussion thereby inhibiting as well as influencing contributions by others. Some of the group members seemed less inclined to express their views in the presence of others. This confirmed some of the advantages and disadvantages reported in the research literature. What appears to have inhibited some of the participants' contribution to the discussion could be what Fern describes as 'evaluation apprehension' (2001, 106). Fern suggests that due to fear of disapproval, participants in focus groups prefer not to express their views in public. For the same reason, some participants are more likely to succumb to 'normative influence' by agreeing with the majority view of the group. A case in point was when J. disagreed with the other participants who believed that the teacher effect

was more significant than the subject effect on learner engagement. The disagreement turned into an argument about turn-taking, at which point both F and I intervened to remind the participants of the ground rules. J withdrew after this point despite encouragements to get him to explain elaborate. As Knight suggests 'Dominant individuals can obliterate alternative points of view' (Knight, 2002: 70) and this can mean that less assertive individuals' views remain unheard, (Krueger and Casey, 2000). However, good preparation and sound facilitation techniques can help minimize conflict between group members, (Merton, 2000). I found the ground rules agreed at the beginning of the focus group a useful reference point when participants deviated from the agreed code of conduct.

After the focus group interview, I met with F and discussed the key themes which arose from the discussions. We both agreed that one to one interviews would yield more rich data, as they would enable participants to elaborate on their responses without feeling inhibited by others. I decided to conduct one to one interviews with a total of six young people and two practitioners, a teacher and a learning mentor. This is not to say that data elicited through the focus group was useless. I have drawn on it in my discussion and analysis Chapter and confirming Cohen et al.'s (2000) suggestion, it was very useful in constructing devising one to one interviews, which I discuss in the next section.

4.4 One to One Interviews

As previously mentioned, six Key Stage 4 boys who participated in the initial focus group interview agreed to take part in one to one interviews at a local youth centre which had links with the secondary school in south London where I am currently a Parent Governor.

The reason why I opted for one to one interviews is on one hand because I am interested in young people's narratives about disaffection and, as Cohen et al. suggest, 'interviews could be seen as a conversation with purpose where a research participant's perspective and narrative are of interest' (2000: 267). An interview could therefore be conceived as an encounter sharing many of the features of everyday interactions.

Conceptions of the interview situation may be represented through three substantive models: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In the structured interview, the protocol is strictly adhered to (Bartlett and Burton, 2000). It is perceived as potential

means of pure information transfer and the aim is to 'remove all sources of bias in order to maximise truth-telling' (Cohen et al., 2000: 267). This may involve the use of several interviews to check reliability and validity.

I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews to ensure that the protocol provides a basic structure for the interaction whilst giving the participants the opportunity to expand on or shift topics and maintaining focus on the broad themes of my investigation (Appendix 5). The interaction was informal and took the form of a conversation. It was equally important to set the right tone at the very outset, with greetings, introductions and making the participants feel at ease. I was conscious of how opening lines had the potential of a lasting effect throughout the interview encounter and that the tone was set by more than words. For example, I paid particular attention to the seating arrangements, posture and body language and the tone of voice.

Interview questions were kept simple and mainly open ended in order to yield much richer responses, eg. one of the opening questions asked the respondents to describe a typical day at school. This provided further opportunities for probing, eg. 'You said that teachers stand at the gate each morning to check if the correct uniform is worn by students, could you describe what they expected you to wear?'. I also asked young people to comment on the major indicators of disaffection proposed by Gutteridge (2002) (listed in page 11) and invited them to talk about what constituted a good and a bad relationship with teachers and other school personnel.

The questions relating to the major indicators of disaffection identified by teachers from the Norwich Area Schools Consortium (NASC) were equally important in the interviews with the teacher and learning mentor and the young people. On one hand, the responses to them provided a measure of the extent to which the teacher and learning mentor shared the views of the teachers from the NASC and on the other, young people were able to comment on each of the indicators in light of their own experiences.

4.4.1 Interview with a Year 10 Teacher

I spoke with Mr H. about my intention to conduct research at School S. on pupils' disaffection. I asked him if he would be interested in taking part in a one to one interview. Mr H. was receptive to the idea and I subsequently wrote to him to confirm interview arrangements (Letter in Appendix 2). The interview with the teacher was also semi-structured and started with a discussion around definitions of disaffection using the indicators of disaffection identified by the Norwich Area Schools Consortium (NASC) Gutteridge (2002). The teacher was then asked to describe a typical profile of a disaffected young person and invited to offer his views on why some young people were not interested in school. Three areas were discussed in this respect, namely the curriculum, relationships with teachers and conformity demands. I felt that it was also important to elicit the teacher's views on any aspects of teaching that get in the way of dedicating more time to meeting the needs of disaffected pupils. Allied to this was a discussion on what could be done to encourage students to become more interested in school. The impact of the Alternative Education Programme was discussed in terms of its aim to raise the academic achievement, improve behaviour and attendance. The views of the teacher were also sought in relation to the extent to which disaffected young people were benefiting from government initiatives such as Every Child Matters and Extended Schools (Appendix 6). Given that I was interested in power relations between teachers and young people, I also asked questions relating to any strategies students used to resist teachers demands for compliance.

4.4.2 Interview with the Learning Mentor

The Mentor was a qualified youth worker with extensive experience of working in youth services throughout south London. He had been a mentor, then a senior Learning Mentor at the same school for the past 12 years. The interview with the mentor followed the same protocol as the teacher's, but the responses given related to the supporting role that he had in the school. This led to probing questions to further explore themes of interest which emerged from the mentor's responses. Of particular interest was his representation of his approach as holistic and person centred and the framing of his relationship with pupils in therapeutic terms. Questions about his role led to further discussions about the external networks he had developed with agencies such as the youth service and the youth offending team (Appendix 7). The mentor made repeated references to his collaboration with the Youth Offending Team on projects involving a few young people from the school.

4.5 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves the process of structuring and interpreting the data and identifying the emerging patterns in the process. There is a clear relationship between data collection and analysis from the outset (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

As indicated earlier, there is no blueprint for conducting the analysis part of CDA. The analysis may begin with individual cases of language in use, incidents or experiences and develop progressively into more abstract categories to synthesise, understand and explain the data and identify patterned relationships within it. Chamaz suggests that 'by studying data the analyst is likely to become much 'more aware of the respondents' implicit meanings and taken-for-granted concerns' (1995: 36). Although Chamaz is referring to the analysis in Grounded Theory, the move from the particular to the general is consistent with CDA.

I stated in the methodology section that drawing on Fairclough's procedure for CDA, the analysis of the corpus of data gathered through this research will examine three elements of discourse, text, interaction and social context. Correspondingly, these will be considered in three stages of CDA, 'description of text, interpretation of the relationship between the text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context' (2001: 91). The nature of the data gathered for the analysis is largely determined by the research focus on the underlying assumptions of the construction of youth disaffection, highlighting any ambiguities in the discourse and whether learner apathy and alienation is a rational response to a mismatch between the interests of young people, the structure of schooling and the nature of curriculum content. An adequate analysis of such a multi-faceted and complex network of relationships requires as a starting point a rigorous synthesis of the order of discourse or what Fairclough defines as 'the totality of discursive practice, either recorded past practice or ongoing practice, that falls within the domain of the research project' (1992: 227).

Selecting a typical or representative sample of teachers' talk about disaffection was the result of trawling literature generated through an enquiry aimed at defining disaffection. This study by Gutteridge (2002) made certain claims to knowing the major indicators of disaffection based on interviews with teachers from twelve schools in Merseyside. One of the reasons for selecting this text for analysis was that it echoed common conceptualisations of disaffection in the corpus of literature examined. This was enhanced through eliciting the judgements of young people a teacher and a learning

mentor from the same school through conducting interviews where the major indicators formed a starting point for discussions. Fairclough suggests that

interviews are widely used to enhance the corpus of data. One can interview those involved as participants in corpus samples, not only to elicit their interpretations of those samples, but also as an opportunity for the researcher to probe into issues which go beyond the sample as such, to try to discover, for example, whether a person is more conscious of the ideological investment of a particular discursive convention in some situations than others (Fairclough, 1992: 228).

On gathering the initial data through the focus group interview with six pupils, it became clear that there were common themes in the pupils' narratives about disaffection. This is unsurprising since they were all referred to the Alternative Education Programme either due to repeated absences from school, disruptive behaviour or under-achievement. I therefore decided to explore these themes in-depth through one to one interviews with all the participants.

4.5.1 Stage One: Description

The first stage of the analysis, description, examines the experiential, relational and expressive values of text, including the vocabulary and grammar. I must point out at this stage that the references I shall make to grammatical constructions of text will be in an attempt to examine the function of language and will not be limited to linguistic features. What I mean by this is that my concern is with how grammatical features can be configured in such a way that issues relating to agency, causality and responsibility become unclear. By taking a close look at experiential values in text, attempts to obfuscate agency, causality and responsibility can be identified. Fairclough suggests a set of questions to guide the description stage in CDA, which are too numerous to list under this section and will be fully answered in Chapter 5 under the headings Description, Interpretation and Explanation, respectively. However, the following is a brief summary of what each of the values of the formal features of text seeks to describe.

Experiential value is concerned with content, knowledge and belief implicit in text and is defined as 'a trace of and a cue to the way in which the text producer's experience of the natural or the social world is represented' (Fairclough, 2001: 93). For instance the experiential value in vocabulary includes discourse types, eg. the discourse that suggests that disaffection leads to criminality or unemployability. Equally, experiential value focuses on ideological contestability in words and meaning relations between them (Fairclough, 2001). For instance, disaffection as a term eludes precise definition

as evidently manifested in the ambiguity in teachers' talk about disaffection. Similarly, the experiential value in grammatical features of language are concerned with process, agency, nominalisation and whether the sentences are constructed in active, passive, positive or negative modes.

The second formal feature of text to consider in the description stage of CDA is what Fairclough (ibid) refers to as relational value in vocabulary and is concerned with how social relationships between people are enacted in language, through euphemisms and the formality or informality of language chosen. It also considers the use of pronouns and where they position the author of text or speech and the listeners or those talked about. An examination of these linguistic features may reveal significant aspects of power relations between people and within institutions.

Finally, the expressive value of text examines subjects and social identities eg through metaphors used. The expressive value of grammatical features considers important features of expressive modality. Fairclough posits that 'the ideological interest is in the authenticity claims, or claims to knowledge, which are evidenced by modality forms' (2001:107). For instance a statement which includes 'pupils *may remove their blazers whilst in class during the summer*' signals possibility, but also gives permission. A statement which includes 'pupils *must*' denotes certainty and obligation. Table 4.1 below represents the dimensions of meaning in formal textual features and corresponding values and structural effects.

Dimensions of meaning	Values of features	Structural effects
Contents	Experiential	Knowledge / beliefs
Relations	Relational	Social relations
Subjects	Expressive	Social identities

Figure 4.2 Formal features: experiential, relational and expressive values. Taken from Fairclough (2001:94)

4.5.2 Stage Two: Interpretation

The interpretation stage is the second phase of Fairclough's approach to CDA. Fairclough (2001) suggests that both the participants to an enquiry and the analyst are involved in ongoing interpretations of language in use, based on what is in the text or speech and what he calls member's resources (MR). MRs are the sum of the participants' and the analysts background knowledge, including beliefs and assumptions about the natural and social world.

Fairclough identified six major domains of interpretation, two of which are concerned with the interpretation of the context, while the other four focus on the text. Below is a diagram representing the six domains and corresponding 'interpretive procedures or MRs, to explain the interpretation stage of CDA. However, the analysis in this study will focus more on the context and power relations than on textual features.

As discussed in Chapter 3, approaches to CDA vary along two theoretical dimensions, covering four different perspectives. The first continuum relates to power dynamics enacted in language use with a constructivist lens at one end and a critical one at the other. The second continuum is concerned with the processes by which language is used to construct social reality with greater focus on text at one end and on the context at the other end, Phillips and Hardy (2002).

The focus of the interpretation stage of this study will be on the situational and intertextual contexts. I am particularly interested in how the Teacher, Learning Mentor and the pupils draw on discourse types to interpret what goes on in the school. This according to Fairclough (2001) involves external cues or:

features of the physical situation, properties of participant, what has previously been said; but also partly on the basis of aspects of their MR in terms of which they interpret these cues – specifically, representations of societal and institutional social orders which allow them to ascribe the situations they are actually in to particular situation types how participants interpret the situation determines which discourse types are drawn upon, and this in turn affects the nature of the interpretative procedures which are drawn upon in textual interpretation (2001: 121).

In the process, I will take account of the intertextual context or the series of other discourses, with the underlying assumptions and ideologies that participants draw upon in the interpretation of text and talk. For instance, in discussions about disaffection from schooling, discourses of social exclusion, crime and employability are often alluded to explicitly or implicitly.

Fairclough suggests a set of questions for identifying discourse types in the situational context. These include: 'What's going on? Who's involved? In what relations? What's the role of language in what's going on' (2001: 122). Answering these questions about situational and intertextual contexts will reveal different discourse types relating to contents, subjects and relations.

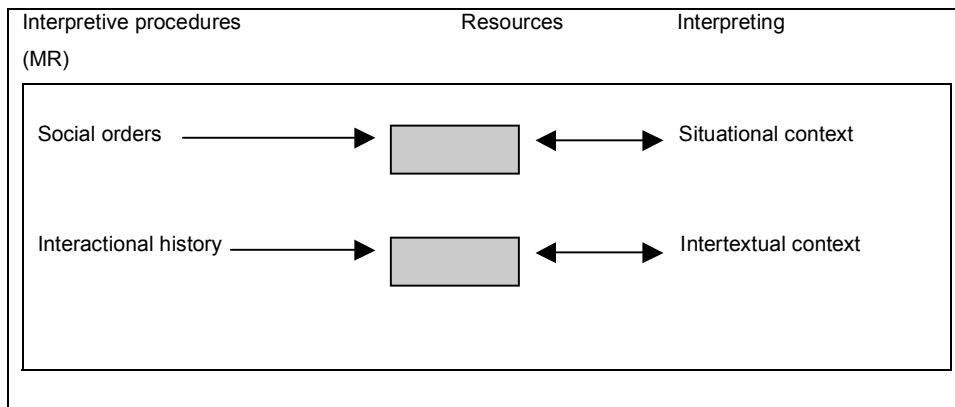


Figure 4.3 Interpretation. Fairclough (2001:119)

4.5.3 Stage Three: Explanation

The final stage of CDA according to Fairclough (2001) is explanation. Fairclough summarises the explanation stage by raising 3 questions:

1. Social determinants: what power relations at situational, institutional and societal levels help shape this discourse?
2. Ideologies: what elements of MR which are drawn upon have an ideological character?
3. Effects: how is this discourse positioned in relation to struggles at the situational, institutional and societal levels? Are these struggles overt or covert? Is the discourse normative with respect to MR or creative? Does it contribute to sustaining existing power relations, or transforming them?

Fairclough (2001: 138)

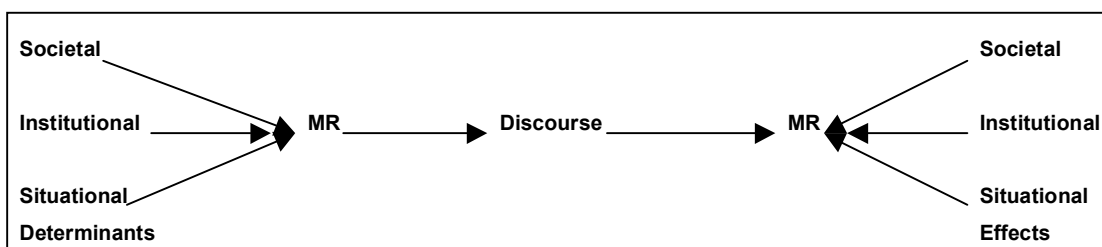


Figure 4.4 Effects and Determinants of Discourse, Fairclough (2001:119)

4.6 Ethical Considerations

The research proposal was approved by the University of Exeter Ethics Committee as conforming to its ethical principles. I have also used the British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2004) as a reference point, particularly with regards to conducting research with young people. However, given the nature of the study, the age of some of the participants and my role as parent governor at the school where the research was conducted, ethical dilemmas were present throughout the research. Cohen et al. posit that 'Ethical concerns encountered in educational research in particular can be extremely complex and subtle and can frequently place researchers in moral predicaments which may appear quite unresolvable' (2000: 49).

The British Educational Research Association Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA) stress the importance of conducting educational research within an ethic of respect for 'the person, knowledge, democratic values and the quality of educational research' (2004:3). However, these guidelines relate to principles of ethics rather than rules of research conduct, for as Pring points out

the researcher is caught up in a process of deliberation which too often is not recognised for the complex moral and practical debate that it is. Either they fail to see the moral dimension of what they are doing, or they apply rather dogmatically one principle for example telling the truth irrespective of the consequences to the exclusion of others. (2000, p.145).

Dilemmas are often amplified when research is conducted by practitioners within their professional context, particularly if they are perceived by the participants to be in positions of authority, (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998; Gray, 2009). My role as parent Governor at the school where the research was conducted brought to the fore ethical deliberations at every stage of the research, from gaining the Headteacher's approval, obtaining the informed consent of the participants, conducting the research to analysing the data and making recommendations to the school at the end of the research. It is stated in the Bera Ethical Guidelines (2004) that dual roles, in this case as a researcher and school governor, can introduce tensions and dilemmas, for example in maintaining confidentiality, that have to be negotiated ethically.

Although I initially began to think about potential sources of ethical dilemmas at the point of choosing the research questions, gaining the approval of the Headteacher to conduct the research at the school marked the start of my deliberations about the costs

and benefits of different decisions that I had to make about involving some of the pupils and the adults who worked with them in the research. When I discussed the possibility of conducting my study at the school, I explained to the headteacher and the parent governors what the research aimed to achieve, how I envisaged to conduct it and with whom. I stressed that no identifying features would be given in relation to the school, the staff or the pupils in any material generated from the research. I stated that I would keep the headteacher and the parent governors informed about the general progress of the research but pointed out that the anonymity of the participants would be maintained and that no specific information relating to what individual participants may say would be discussed with anyone in the school.

Once access to the school to conduct the research was gained, the first point of deliberation related to making decisions about the sample of people to involve in the one to one interviews and focus groups and to obtain their informed consent. I contacted all the teachers and some of the support staff in the school by email to ask for volunteers to take part in the research. However, due to exam pressures only four teachers responded suggesting that they would be willing to take part in the interviews at a later date. I then contacted Mr H and Mr T who had indicated that they were interested in participating to make arrangements for the interviews. I was keen to ensure that the adults in the school gave informed consent by making sufficient and accessible information available to them (Gray, 1998). Gray argues that what is considered sufficient will depend on the nature of the research and the degree of potential harm to the participants. Whilst I could not conceive of any potential physical harm to the Teacher and Learning Mentor, they were likely to share information and express views in the interviews that, if shared with other staff in the school could result in distress and serious emotional harm. I explained the aims of the research, what it involved, the time required to conduct the interviews and what would happen to the data collected. I assured them of anonymity and that no identifying features of the school or names of individuals would be included in the research report. I referred to the School as school S throughout this report, used pseudonyms for all the participants and referred to the school as being located in south London. However, as Denscombe (2010) suggests, complete anonymity can decontextualise the analysis, particularly when characteristics of the participants' age, gender or 'race' are significant to the analysis. Given that the ethnic background of the Teacher and the Learning Mentor added to the quality of the analysis, I included information about their ethnicity in the text.

Owing to the fact that this study was conducted in a school and a youth club, there were established codes of ethical practice. Both Youth Work and teaching are guided by professional and ethical principles of practice in the school and at the youth centre, respectively, but this is not to say that the ethical dilemmas were any less significant. I assured the teacher and the learning mentor of confidentiality, but explained to them that if any information were to be disclosed by them through the interviews that constituted potential or actual harm to pupils or others, confidentiality could not be guaranteed. However, as Gregory asserts 'failure to guarantee confidentiality will sabotage attempts to obtain consent' (2003: 50). Furthermore, as a Parent Governor and a researcher, I do not have the same legal status as priests and General Practitioners do with regards to the confidentiality of information gained in the exercise of their service or profession, (Denscombe, 2010). I was therefore not in a position to guarantee absolute confidentiality as I had a legal obligation to break confidentiality if there were to be any cause for concern about harm to individuals or groups. It is worth noting, however, that since the introduction of children's welfare legislation and policies in the past decade (eg. Every Child Matters, 2002; Children's Act, 2004) teachers and youth workers have worked under strict child protection guidelines in a culture where the safety and well-being of children and young people are held as paramount. The limits of confidentiality are therefore accepted by professionals as rational and reasonable safeguards and are therefore not seen as a threat.

Ethical deliberations in the course of conducting the research with young people also related to ensuring that they did not feel coerced in participating in the interviews (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998; Bera Ethical Guidelines, 2004). I made sure not to coerce the young people into taking part in the research, when only six of them, all boys, returned signed consent forms, which I had given to the whole group during my first visit to the youth centre. I wanted to include the only two girls in the group in order to get their perspectives on disaffection, but after making a few attempts to remind them to bring the signed forms to no avail, I stopped reminding them.

Additionally, I stressed the participants' right to withdraw from the interview process at anytime. It was important to engender trust and to ensure that participants gave informed consent. Furthermore, as Bartlett and Burton (2005) suggest interviewing can take the form of interrogation or conversation depending on the symmetry or asymmetry of power relations, the nature of the research and its intended goals. I ensured that the participants were given most control over the exchange. However, throughout the interviewing process with young people, I was conscious of asymmetrical power relations between the young people and I, as an adult with the

perceived authority that my role as school governor conferred. Holding the interviews with young people at the local youth centre was a conscious decision to minimise the power effects of the schooling environment.

However, interviewer effects were unlikely to have been totally eliminated from the interviewing encounter, and I believe that it is important to recognise their existence in order to control sources of bias and use them as an object of reflexivity in order to gain awareness of and minimise the effect my preconceptions on the collection and interpretation of data. Nightingale and Cromby note that

Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research (Nightingale and Cromby ,1999:228).

Reflexivity is particularly important when using CDA, as it requires the analyst to have reflexive sensitivity to the assumptions s/he is using in the interpretation and explanation of discourse, (Fairclough,1989). Willig (2001) identifies two types of reflexivity: Personal and epistemological. Personal reflexivity requires that the researcher reflects on how his or her values, preconceptions and commitments shape the research process and how he or she is changed by this process. On the other hand epistemological reflexivity involves reflecting about how decisions about the research design may have influenced the research, from the selection of methods and methodologies to the types of questions asked. It is through adopting personal and epistemological reflexivity throughout this study that I believe I have negotiated the tensions and ethical dilemmas of my dual role as a researcher and a Parent Governor at School S.

5. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The primary datasets drawn on in this thesis consisted of a total of nine transcripts, which derived from the following sources:

- A focus group with six young people
- Semi-structured one to one interviews with six Key Stage 4 pupils who took part in the Alternative Education Programme,
- One to one semi-structured interview with a teacher
- One to one semi-structured interview with a learning mentor.

The six young people were chosen on the basis of their referral to the Alternative Education Programme as they were deemed to be disaffected as a result of poor attendance, under-achievement and challenging behaviour. Both the teacher and Learning Mentor were chosen due to their extensive experience of working with Key Stage 4 pupils in their respective roles. They were also from African Caribbean descent and had both worked with Black young people in Inner City formal and informal education settings. Mr H had been teaching at School S for twenty years and had a particular interest in working with pupils with challenging behaviour. Mr T had worked at the same school for over twelve years and is a former Youth Worker in the borough where the school is located. His professional knowledge of Children and Young People's Services gave him a good understanding of established multi-agency networks involving other professionals in the youth justice and welfare system.

The richness of these data provided useful insights into the narratives of the adults and the counter narratives of the pupils about constructions of disaffection, pedagogic and curriculum dimensions of disaffection and the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme in achieving its stated goal of re-engaging disaffected pupils in learning.

I generated additional datasets through the notes I made after each interview and the memos I wrote throughout the data gathering process, which proved extremely helpful during subsequent analysis and discussion. These also consisted of detailed notes of post-interview conversations with all the participants about emerging themes and observations made during my visits to the youth centre where the Alternative Education activities took place. Additionally, I brought to the analysis a shared understanding of issues surrounding the diminished life chances of Black boys in areas such as education and employment. As a black man, a former Youth Worker, Teacher and

Parent Governor at the school where the research was conducted, I was able to generate contextualized critical accounts of the experiences of Black and working class boys and the adults who worked with them.

I also used secondary datasets which derived from the narratives captured in the characterisations of disaffection identified by a total of eighteen teachers from five secondary schools in the Norwich Area Schools Consortium (NASC) who took part in research conducted by Gutteridge (2002), from the University of East Anglia. The NASC teachers' typification of a disaffected pupil provided useful insights into how some teachers define disconnection from learning and proved to be a useful starting point for discussions with my research participants at the beginning of the one to one and focus group interviews.

The analysis of data focuses on six questions under which the literature on disaffection was reviewed and interview transcripts were coded and categorised. These are:

- How do some pupils acquire the label 'disaffected'?
- How do pupils perceive teachers' characterisation of a disaffected pupil?
- How significant is the influence of peers on pupils' engagement with learning?
- How significant is the quality of pupils' and teachers' relationships on pupils' engagement with learning?
- How significant is curriculum relevance to pupils' engagement with learning?
- How effective is the Alternative Education Programme in engaging disaffected pupils?

The analysis of data was conducted in three stages: description, interpretation and explanation. All the interviews were transcribed and excerpts for deeper analysis were selected on the basis of their salience to the research questions along the three broad lenses or domains of this study. I used Rogers' (2004) approach to the analysis of data. This initially entailed devising a CDA coding chart for identifying elements of discourse in the text (Appendix 11). I annotated each transcript with codes, compared and contrasted the responses from each participant to generate common themes under the domains of constructions of disaffection; curriculum and pedagogic dimensions of disaffection and the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme. The focus of the analysis of textual features is on ideological representations coded in the vocabulary used and how power and resistance are

exercised between teachers and pupils through constraints on contents (what is said or done), relations (social relations in discourse) and subjects (the positions that social actors occupy), Fairclough (1989).

I coded each of the selected excerpts for genre (ways of interacting), discourse (ways of representing) and style (ways of being), for each of the participants in each of the domains (Appendix 8 and 9). These three elements of discourse are also known as orders of discourse (Fairclough, 2003). Orders of discourse represent the “totality of discursive practices of an institution and relationship between them” (Fairclough, 1993: 138).

All the coding was done using Nvivo for categorising the data, generating Nodes and running coding queries. I first created a structure for the project, which entailed creating folders and subfolders, eg. a folder for the interviews, Focus Group and project documents. I imported all the transcripts as well as relevant documents into relevant subfolders. I then created a temporary Tree Node structure, under which I coded the transcripts for the three domains. Nvivo provided me with a simple way of coding the data by viewing transcripts and selecting words or sentences and dragging and dropping them into respective Nodes (themes). As I was reading through the transcripts, I created additional Free Nodes and at one point I had an extensive list of themes, which after re-reading the text, I deleted and merged with others (Appendix 8 and 9). As shown below, in describing the orders of discourse in School S., I have identified a range of discourse types and related them to the production and interpretation of discourse. This process has enabled me to identify patterns which are critically discussed in this chapter, against the background of research on disaffection detailed in Chapter 2 and my developing understanding of the multiple factors which influence pupils' experiences of schooling.

5.1 Description

In this descriptive stage of the analysis I shall first consider the experiential values in the interview transcript excerpts by identifying the orders of discourse in the respondents' narratives. The aspect of experiential values of most interest in the context of this study relates to the ideological differences in the representations expressed in the vocabulary used by all participants to describe and make sense of their experiences.

5.1.1 How Do Pupils Acquire the Label Disaffected?

The aim of the first question, '*How do pupils acquire the label disaffected?*' is concerned with identifying the experiential values that words have by alternating the focus of the analysis from text to the discourse types that the text is drawing upon. A discourse type, according to Halliday is a 'meaning potential' or a 'particular constrained configuration of possible experiential, expressive and relational, and connective meanings' (1994: 28). In describing meaning potentials, words which are ideologically contested will be closely examined. In describing salient themes in the text, I shall particularly focus on how ideological differences between the NASC teachers, Mr. H. and Mr. T. and the pupils are coded in the vocabulary they used, respectively, to describe and make sense of teaching and learning interactions.

5.1.1.1 The NASC Teachers' Characterisation of Disaffection

The NASC teachers' characterisation of disaffected pupils identified a set of behaviours and dispositions that some pupils are said to have. The defining characteristics of disaffection according to the NASC teachers are:

Constructions of Disaffection – The NASC Teachers	
1.	often requires reminding about instructions given to the whole class
2.	often does not complete the homework I set
3.	uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work
4.	is often reprimanded for talking in class
5.	does not have a study diary
6.	frequently infringes school uniform requirements
7.	presents substandard work
8.	fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book
9.	does not contribute to class discussion sensibly
10.	often forgets to bring books to the lesson
11.	takes no pride in her or his exercise book
12.	expresses little interest in his or her progress

Table 5.1 NASC Teachers' Characterisation of Disaffection (1-12)

The characterisation of disaffection in table 5.1 appears to be limited to behaviours and dispositions manifested in classroom interactions between pupils and teachers. Having to 'remind pupils of instructions given to the whole class' is perceived to be one of the characteristics of disaffection. The use of the term 'instructions', draws on a discourse which, represents learning as transmission of knowledge in a relationship where the teacher issues instructions to pupils who are expected to passively absorb what is being transmitted. The assumption is that there is something of intrinsic value in what is being imparted and that the pupils should want to learn it. There is no indication of a dialogical construction of knowledge. Pupils who are not motivated to attend to what the teacher is saying are construed as deficient due to their inability to access and process instructions given to the whole class. What pupils do or fail to do seems to fall short of teachers' expectations. Pupils' resistance or non-compliance with teachers' requests are expressed through a set of performances. For example, in School S. not wearing a tie constitutes an infringement of the uniform policy and so does wearing a tie incorrectly as in showing 2 stripes rather than four as required by the school. The point of this observation is to suggest that resistance can be exercised in different ways, including disruption, disinterest and unpreparedness for learning.

The choice of the term 'tactics', represents pupils as resistant opponents, who use different strategies to avoid learning and cause disruption, which is often met with reproof from the teachers. However, the suggestion is that they do not contribute to discussions 'sensibly'. This implies that they do make contributions, but these are not deemed 'sensible'. Teachers are in a position to constrain pupils' talk, by determining what constitutes relevant contribution and what does not. The dominant discourse in the text is that the disaffection of some pupils is due to their deficiencies or their lack of interest in their education. Their lack of engagement is blamed on their inability or unwillingness to comply with the teachers' instructions. This representation of some pupils fails to take into account the impact of the nature and structure of the curriculum and the pedagogies employed by the teachers on learner engagement. There is no reference to the influence of out of school factors, such as home circumstances.

5.1.1.2 The Teacher's Perspective

When asked what he thought about the NASC teachers' characterisation of a disaffected pupil, Mr H indicated that he concurred with it but pointed out that there were pupils who were not disaffected but manifested some of the behaviours and dispositions described. He identified two groups of disaffected pupils: those who were unable and those who were unwilling to learn. He suggested that some pupils were

unable to access the curriculum due to a variety of dyslexia and described them as 'being thrown at the deep end'. He also pointed out that the educational system failed to accommodate pupils by ability.

Mr H. appeared to, in part, share similar experiential values with the NASC teachers, revealing ideological representations that draw upon discourse types that locate the problem of disaffection in the pupils themselves. There was ambiguity in his representation of disaffected pupils since he initially stated that disaffection was not a conscious rational response by the pupils to their experiences of schooling, but later suggested that it was pupils' choice to take the 'easy option'. Mr H. characterised disaffection in more abstract terms. He described disaffected pupils as being lost and as being in a state of helplessness and uncertainty, but he also suggested that they chose not to engage actively in their learning. He described pupils as lacking a sense of direction and suggested that they were disconnected from learning as they had failed to see its relevance to their lives, yet he stated that they were obstinate.

There are those at the top end of any, let's just say a range of dyslexia. They literally can not access the information. So to put them in the system that is education, it's just like throwing them at the deep end and they can't swim. When they can't navigate their way around the system, it knocks their self-esteem and confidence in themselves. And there are those who are just not bothered. They don't see the point of education. They can't relate it to their daily lives. I think disaffection is a sense of being lost. I think, it's a case of 'I am not too sure where I am coming or going'. They are lost and what they then do, is take the easy option but it is clearly an option, It's just obstinance. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the Teacher)

Whilst suggesting that disaffection was not specific to ethnic groups, Mr. H. drew on a moral underclass discourse to explain other influences that impeded the academic success of non white groups. He cited Hip-Hop music as one of these, although he did not specify how. His argument was couched in an essentialist discourse of corruptive Hip-Hop music influence that had for sometime been subject of much discussion by politicians and in the media. To explain reasons for some black young men's lack of interest in education.

When asked if there was a typical profile of a disaffected pupil, Mr. H suggested that gender and ethnicity were not significant factors in themselves, but he asserted that there were differential outcomes for pupils based on class. To illustrate this, he gave the example of the white working class parents who knew how to play the game, and consequently were able to get their children statemented to safeguard against exclusion from school. Whereas black parents, according to Mr. H., did not know how

to 'play the system' as well. He suggested that this was due to their probable lack of trust in the fairness of the system.

Many males are disaffected. Many females, black and white are disaffected. The difference comes when an awful lot of white English, I'll start with the white English...when their children become disaffected, they know how to play the game. They get their children statemented. The black parents, don't know how to play the system. Probably because they think that they will not get very far with the procedures to get their kids statemented. Some middle class kids are disaffected, but they have a safety net of contacts. A few years down the line their dad will get them a job in the city. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the RE Teacher)

Contradictions appear to be frequent in Mr. H.'s representation, which is unsurprising given the opaque discourse of disaffection. He understated the effects of ethnicity and class on pupils' engagement with learning and academic achievement, but a closer examination of his statements revealed that his representation of class and ethnicity drew on discourses which point to the significance of these on learner engagement and achievement. He re-articulated the discourse of the impact of ethnicity and gender on academic achievement of black boys, by pointing to the respective differential outcomes of disaffection for white and black working class pupils. Referring to the statementing process, Mr H. suggested that white working class parents knew the system better than their black counterparts and that this explained the over-representation of black pupils in exclusions from secondary schools. White middle class males, according to Mr H. were no less susceptible to disaffection, but given the social networks they are assumed to have, they often achieved better life chances in his view.

5.1.1.3 The Learning Mentor's Perspective

Mr T described his approach to working with young people as person-centred and holistic. Describing his relationship with the pupils, Mr T said: *'They don't see me as a teacher...my approach is young people centred It is about the whole person, not how well they are doing at school'*.

When asked about what he thought of the NASC teachers' representation of disaffected pupils, Mr. T. explained that while he understood why some teachers labelled pupils as disaffected, he disagreed with their characterisation of disaffection, because in his view, they did not take account of the wide range of out of school factors such as family or home circumstances. He believed that disaffection manifested itself in different ways, and suggested that there were two categories of

disaffected pupils: those who were unable to keep up with their peers due to cognitive deficiencies and had low self-esteem as a result. He suggested that some pupils were less interested in formal education in school, and were more interested in life outside school, where he claimed, they received the 'street' education they needed. Mr T. referred to some of the pupils from this category as 'riders' who were given mopeds by drug dealers to push drugs. Mr T explained:

Disaffection is manifested in different ways. You have those who can't do it and have low self-esteem and poor behaviour, and those who won't do it. They are just not interested. The register of pupils referred to Learning Mentors, who could be called disaffected, always shows more boys than girls. It is hard to say in terms of ethnicity, because the majority of our kids are black, so we deal mainly with black males. Some of the kids have their mind on stuff outside the school. They feel that there are people out there who are giving them the education they need, streetwise. There are a lot of young people, eleven to seventeen who are riding. They give them mopeds and they push the drugs. Some black kids think that the system is against them. They think that they will get educated, but still won't get jobs. That is bad influence from the older people in the black community, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr T. the Learning Mentor)

When asked if there was a typical profile of a disaffected pupil, Mr. T replied that there were more boys than girls and that ethnicity was not easy to determine as a typical characteristic of disaffection, since the majority of the pupils in School S were black. Mr T. believed that some black pupils thought that the system was against them and that getting an education would not guarantee them better life chances. He believed that this was due to the negative influence of some members of the older generation of black people. When asked about how pupils responded to conformity demands such as uniform requirements, Mr. T. suggested that many pupils resisted conformity demands for fear of being labelled a 'Neek'. He described a Neek as a 'cuss word' which refers to pupils who '*do their homework... come on time...someone who wears the uniform correctly.*

5.1.2 How Do Pupils Perceive Teachers' Characterisation of Disaffection?

This section describes the experiential values in the narratives of the pupils, in response to the question: *How do pupils perceive teachers' characterisation of a disaffected pupil?* All the pupils confirmed that the descriptions given by the NASC teachers reflected performances enacted in the classroom at various times, but they argued that these were not limited to a small number of pupils, and gave reasons why they and others behaved in the manner described. Ahmed confirmed that many pupils in his class, including himself, frequently displayed the behaviours described by the NASC teachers and cited boredom as the main reason why he sometimes used

different tactics to avoid work. He said that when asked by the teacher to complete a task, such as copying text from a textbook, he used different strategies to avoid the task. These ranged from claiming not to have a pencil or pen to feigning sickness or an injured hand. He, sometimes, talked to his friends in class as he found it more enjoyable than listening to a teacher. Ahmed viewed learning as irrelevant and not motivating enough for him to engage in. He said:

Yes it is like that sometimes. Some teachers expect you to copy stuff from the text book. It is dead boring to have to write about stuff that is not very interesting. I sometimes go to the front and say...I am sharpening my pencil or am getting a pen can I go to the toilet and things like that then when I am really bored, I just say, oh I'm sick or I have hurt my hand so I can't write, to miss the lesson. Most of the stuff they teach us at school is useless. So when the teacher is talking about stuff that makes no sense, I switch off. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Ahmed)

Jonathan gave similar reasons to Ahmed to explain why pupils refused to comply with teachers' expectations. He stated:

It is like that in my class. It's cos people find the lesson boring. The stuff that they teach you is boring. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Jonathan)

Nofel also explained that boredom due to curriculum irrelevance was one of the reasons for pupils' lack of engagement with learning in school, which results in classroom disruption and work avoidance. He also suggested that some pupils were reprimanded more often than others for the same behaviour. He said:

Yeah that's how it is but some people get away with it. It's the same people that always get picked on. What the teachers talk about has no use. It's boring and it is better to turn around and talk to your friends. I think homework is a joke. No one does it. Some teachers get the p**** taken out on them, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Nofel)

Nofel suggested that no one completed homework, however, Ahmed said that when he was forced by his mother to do his homework, the teacher did not ask to see it. This appears to be in line with what the pupils' suggestion during the focus interview that homework was managed inconsistently at the school and that some teachers asked to see it regularly, while others seldom asked pupils to produce it.

When asked how he felt about the expectations that teachers had from students in terms of their behaviour and dispositions while at school, Ahmed related that conformity demands placed on pupils were often the main source of conflict with teachers and other school personnel. Resisting conformity demands began at the

school gate where teachers check if pupils are wearing the uniform correctly. Many pupils carry their school shoes in their backpack and wear trainers until told to wear their school shoes. The ritual of removing trainers and putting shoes on at the school gate is a daily occurrence, according to Ahmed.

Although Jonathan said that he liked school, he also gave boredom as the main reason why he avoided work and became disconnected from learning. His disinterest in learning is also due to repetitive tasks and the teacher's pedagogic approach. The result seems to be avoidance and disconnection through pretence to do the work, but being 'miles away' or by talking to friends in class. He said:

I like school but, the teachers are always on your case. Like Mr X, he tells us to write things down. He goes over and over the same stuff and expects you to do homework on the same boring stuff we do at school. I pretend to work, but I am usually miles away or I write notes to my friends, when the teacher is not looking. Everyone does it. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Jonathan)

5.1.3 How Significant is the Influence of Peers on Pupils' Engagement with Learning?

The pupils' accounts suggest that the influence of peers is significant on their engagement with learning. This is manifested in their behaviour in class, the decision to truant and how the uniform is worn. Boredom due to a perception of curriculum irrelevance or the teacher's inability to capture the interest of the pupils, is expressed in pupils' disruptive behaviour in class which can range from talking with friends, telling jokes and task avoidance. The NASC teachers' characterisation of disaffection relates to behaviours that pupils have described as resulting from the influence of peers. Ahmed said:

I usually hang out with my friends. We sit at the back of class and joke. Sometimes if one of us wants to bunk off school we all do it after the register. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Ahmed)

Although truancy was not cited by the NASC teachers as an indicator of disaffection, it seems from the pupils' narratives that the decision to truant is influenced by members of the peer group. This was confirmed in Nofel's statement when he said: *'Sometime if one of us wants to bunk off the lesson we all do it, but we do it after the register'*. Similarly, Sam described how peers influenced his behaviour and attendance. He said: *'Yeah friends sometime get you to skip a lesson or have fights in class'*.

However, the influence of peers is not limited to behaviour or attendance, it is also expressed in how the uniform is worn. The uniform was described by all the participants as being the main source of conflict between pupils and teachers. When asked about how pupils responded to conformity demands such as uniform requirements, Mr. H. said that compliance with uniform requirements had been a point of contention between pupils and teaching staff. However, Mr H suggested that issues with the uniform could easily be dealt with through explaining the rationality of school uniform rules. He gave the example of trainers not being as good for *deportment* as shoes. He believed that the mere explanation of the functionality of the uniform in these terms, would engender acceptance among pupils. Mr H said:

It is not rationalised or explained. I have had a problem with this for such a long time. It would be something as simple as trainers, a shoe with a heel is good for your deportment, and children growing up, wearing trainers, may suffer from particular muscle problems in their legs, everyone knows that when you don't have uniforms, it causes enormous problems. Even the historical introduction of the uniform for those poor children. My mother, aged twelve stopped going to school when my grand mother died because she didn't have a uniform and she knew she was going to be laughed at by other kids with her hand me downs. So it is very easy to explain the whys of these rules. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the RE Teacher)

Mr H explained that he saw the uniform as a way of rendering invisible differentials in pupils' social and class status while at school. He gave the example of his mother discontinuing her education aged 12, due to not having a uniform and feeling embarrassed at the prospect of having to go to school dressed in 'hand me downs'. The idea that the uniform can provide a magical solution to problems resulting from inequality and social divisions conceals the reality that the effects of disadvantage are not immediately visible. However, the pupils' motives for wearing the uniform the way they do, appears to be in response to the influence of peers. They so not wish to be labelled as Neek. Jonathan said: *'Neeks are those who get all their uniform, Blazer, tie, shirt tucked in, trousers pulled up. That's why they get cussed and bullied.'*

Ahmed explained that only 'Neeks' wore the uniform correctly. Neeks are said to *'wear long tie, trousers to the waist, shoes, shirt top button done up and stuff like*. However, Ahmed recognized that, although Neeks were subjected to ridicule and bullying for being good pupils, they were 'smart' pupils who got the highest grades and stood to have better careers and life chances. He stated:

Teachers tell you to do this and that all the time which always ends up in arguments. I usually keep my school shoes in my backpack like everyone else. I like to wear trainers cos they are comfortable to walk in as soon as

you come into school they stop you and ask you to take off your trainers, do up your tie, pull your trousers up, like a Neek. Neeks do everything right basically. They wear long tie, trousers to the waist, shoes, shirt top button done up and stuff like that'. No one likes Neeks at school, but they are the ones that will get the best jobs. They are smart. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Ahmed)

In contrast those who are considered to be 'cool' were described by Ahmed to '*wear trousers below the hips, shirt out, no blazer, trainers instead of shoes, tie undone, study diary with graffiti all over it, sit at the back of the class*'. Jonathan described how he often ended up in detention due to arguments with teachers about the uniform. He said:

The thing about the uniform is the teachers the way they talk to you is rude. I try to explain why I haven't got my tie. The teacher just keeps yelling at me. I get annoyed so I end up cussing him. Then I get sent to detention. Neeks are those who get all their uniform, blazer, tie, shirt tucked in, trousers pulled up. That's why they get cussed and bullied, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Jonathan).

The Graffiti on the cover of the exercise book appears to be a form of expression of aspects of pupils' identities through symbols on their exercise books. The construction of Neekness thus stands in opposition to how teachers represent a disaffected pupil. It is a form of indirect peer pressure which results in a re-articulation of the discourse of disaffection by constructing a counter discourse that re-structures the group norms in ways that resist conformity demands. What is deemed to be undesirable by teachers accords status and esteem among peers. For instance, wearing the tie loose so that only two stripes are showing, the trousers below the hips and unbuttoned shirt are rituals which act as defiance to teachers' authority.

5.1.4 Pedagogic and Curriculum Dimensions of Disaffection

This section considers the impact of pupils' and teachers' relationships on pupils' engagement with learning. It seeks to ascertain the importance of the 'teacher effect' and the 'subject effect' on pupils' motivation to learn. Subject effect relates to the pupils' interest in the curriculum content and their perception of its relevance to them. The teacher effect relates to the extent to which the teacher's pedagogic approach motivates pupils to learn.

5.1.4.1 The Teacher's Perspective

Mr H suggested that the curriculum was not accessible to all pupils due to overload. He argued that pupils were taking far too many subjects irrespective of their abilities and interests. Pupils attended six lessons per day, which did not allow them time and space to consolidate learning. According to Mr. H. pupils would benefit from taking 5 periods only. He stated:

Yes, I think the most constant thing about the curriculum, is that it is overloaded. It's one size fits all. Why force someone to do double science when they can barely handle single science? They do six periods a day, maybe there should only be five efficient periods, and give them more space. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the RE Teacher)

When asked if there was a subject dimension to disaffection, Mr. H. said that, his subject specialism, RE was the least favourite subject among pupils, but he felt that his pupils enjoyed how he approached teaching it. He said that the subject effect was counterbalanced by the teacher effect, meaning that if pupils liked the teacher, they engage with the subject irrespective of whether they like it or not. He also suggested that it was not the content, but the pupils' perception of it which contributed to their disaffection.

Mr H. attributed pupils' disaffection to the system of league tables. He said that the preoccupation with attainment and failure was a barrier to learning for its own sake as in his view, it did not foster intrinsic motivation among pupils to engage with the subject. However, Mr H. pointed out that much of what was taught had little relevance to the world of work and was more about developing an understanding of the social world. However, he stated that the pupils believed that education is all about work. This would suggest that some pupils have internalised the discourse of employability, so prevalent in the talk and text of the educational system.

When asked about the relationships he had with his pupils, Mr H. said that he had a good relationship with them, but he seemed to place himself in a position of power in relation to them. He derived his powerful status from the length of his experience, and perceived his status as 'top dog' who was able to 'run circles around his pupils with as much ease as 'taking a candy from a baby'. He said:

I say to them, I say look, I have been teaching longer than you have been alive. So essentially, there is very little news that they can come up with, that I haven't heard or haven't experienced. So therefore, in a certain sense, I have become top dog. It's very easy to run circles around them. It

is like taking candy away from a baby. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the RE Teacher)

Mr H explained that he felt more competent to deal with the challenges that in-school disaffection factors presented than with the 'baggage' that the pupils brought to the classroom, which he saw as exceeding his remit as a teacher and positioned him in a role of Social Worker or surrogate parent. He described the extension of his professional remit from teacher to surrogate parent or social worker as a challenge that he did not feel equipped to meet. Mr H argued:

I think there is a clear separation, as to you the teacher and the educational process and you, almost like the Social Worker or surrogate parent. I think it is worth distinguishing between the two. Educationally, you feel confident and even competent, but there are factors which are not within your immediate remit. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the RE Teacher)

There appeared to be contradictions in Mr H's representation of his role and status in relation to his pupils. On one hand he portrayed a self-image of the powerful, no non-sense teacher who was in control of his classroom, yet, he also made statements where he appeared to value humanising relationships with his pupils and where he was critical of teachers who stopped 'being human' when they became teachers. He said that he valued a dialogical approach in teaching and learning and was keen to ignite a passion for learning among his pupils, but it was not clear how this could be achieved in the context of inequitable power relations with his pupils.

5.1.4.2 The Learning Mentor's Perspective

Although in his role as a Learning Mentor, Mr. T. was not involved in teaching, he was involved in the Alternative Education Programme and had worked very closely with the pupils who took part in this study. His work was primarily aimed at engaging pupils who had difficulties meeting the curriculum and those with behavioural difficulties. When asked about the significance of the teacher effect on pupils' engagement with learning, Mr T. said:

Some pupils say that they get bored when teachers give them tasks that are repetitive. Some NQTs come to teaching with lots of creative ideas, like project and group work, they motivate the pupils to get into the topic. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr T. the Learning Mentor)

Mr T. strongly believed that the teacher effect outweighed any interest in the subject. According to him pupils would only engage with a subject if they liked the teacher. When asked to elaborate on the qualities that made some teachers more likeable than

others, Mr. T. said that 'respect' was very important. Respect was manifested in the interactions between teachers and pupils, and particularly, how teachers deal with issues of discipline in class. Shouting at pupils in the presence of their peers seems to engender hostile relations and teachers who take the time to get to know their pupils seem to get 'respect'.

Mr T reported that the pupils he had had discussions with about lack of interest in learning had told him that some teachers frequently gave them repetitive tasks to do, which led them to feeling bored. He added that pupils were more motivated to engage in learning when the teacher uses creative teaching methods, such as project work and group activities which involved interaction with their peers in productive ways.

5.1.4.3 The Pupils' Perspectives.

While Ahmed expressed preference for subjects which involved dialogue and provided space for creativity, he said that many of the curriculum subjects lacked relevance to future employment and life in general. He asserted that the teacher effect was more important than the subject effect. He stated that a 'good teacher made the subject fun'. When asked what qualities a good teacher had, he said being kind, caring and humorous were important attributes in a teacher. A teacher who shows respect in the manner and tone they use to address pupils is viewed as a nice teacher, whereas a teacher who issues instructions and reprimands pupils for not meeting his or her expectations is perceived to be a disrespectful teacher. Ahmed said:

Kids like a teacher who does fun stuff that makes the subject interesting. If the teacher is nice and kind and doesn't just get you to copy from the textbook. When the teacher lets us talk about interesting stuff everyone wants to be taught by him. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Ahmed).

Interestingly, Ahmed suggested that a teacher who consistently checked that homework was completed and who read the homework when submitted, motivated him to do his homework when set. He said that his mother at times persuaded him to do his homework, but he never handed it in to the teachers for comments as he did not wish to be thought of as a Neek.

Similarly, Jonathan highlighted the importance of the teacher effect on pupils' motivation to become actively involved in their learning. He said:

I don't like most of my teachers. They are just so dry. If I like a subject and it is taught by a nice teacher, I listen, but half the time, the teacher just expects you to listen. It doesn't do it for me. A nice teacher shows respect.

Then you respect him back. A nice teacher doesn't shout at you , is not sarcastic in front of your friends, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Jonathan).

Jonathan explained that he had a poor relationship with most of his teachers and that he found most of them uninteresting. He stated that he would normally engage with a subject of interest to him if taught by what he described as a nice teacher. A nice teacher, according to Jonathan is one who would show respect, would not shout at him a make sarcastic remarks in the presence of his friends. However, Michael expressed his dislike of RE in instrumental terms. He failed to see the relevance of RE to his employment prospects. He said:

I don't like RE. My mum stopped forcing me to go to Mass when I was 11. I am not interested in religion and all that stuff. I don't need to know about Jesus to help me get a job. (Excerpt from the transcript. Michael)

Nofel's statement confirms the importance of the teacher effect on the desirability of a subject:

My favourite subject is PE. I used to like maths I was good at it. The teacher I had last year was very nice, but my maths teacher this year is so strict. She treats us like year 7 kids. She gets us to do lots of GCSE stuff and she wants you to do things her way. If you complain, you end up in detention. (Excerpt from the transcript. Nofel)

Further probing about the reasons for Nofel's new dislike for maths, revealed that his relationship with his current maths teacher was not as good as with his previous maths teacher. This is consistent with the accounts of other participants which suggest that the teacher effect outweighs the subject effect, whereby pupils were more likely to engage with a subject when taught by a teacher who was thought to be approachable and friendly.

5.1.5 The Effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme

The Alternative Education Programme had been running at School S for three years. It was a collaboration with the local Youth Service who provided resources to support students' learning and the Learning Mentor who had a key role to play in the process as he was involved in the referral and selection of pupils who were allowed to opt out of non core curriculum subjects to attend weekly sessions at Youth Club X. The Teacher, Mr. H., the Learning Mentor and the pupils were asked about the success of the Alternative Education Programme in meeting its objectives of reintegrating disaffected pupils back into mainstream education.

5.1.5.1 The Teacher's Perspective

When asked about the effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme Mr. H reported that it was well received among pupils who were referred to it. However, commenting generally on school initiatives aimed at tackling disaffection, Mr H. believed that these were good in principle, but were difficult to implement consistently in practice due to initiative overload. He argued:

In twenty years here, to be honest with you, I haven't noticed any real change. Those initiatives are great on paper, but there are so many of them I guess you could say that the programme is working in the sense that it removes disruptive pupils who are bored from the class It also gives those pupils an opportunity to pursue activities of interest to them in an informal setting. When I visit the Youth Centre to observe what is going on, I am amazed at how their interactions are so more mature than in the classroom. They are far more motivated to do what they are interested in, but, does it really help re-integrate them back into mainstream school? I don't think so. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the RE Teacher)

Mr H commented favourably on the Alternative Education Programme, saying that the pupils on the scheme were more enthusiastic about taking part in the activities on offer at the Youth Centre, however, he did not believe that interventions aimed at re-integrating disaffected pupils were achieving their ultimate aim of reintegrating pupils back into mainstream education.

5.1.5.2 The Learning Mentor's Perspective

Mr T. believed that lack of subject relevance was a significant factor in pupils' lack of engagement, particularly those in Key Stage 4. He believed that the success of the Alternative Education Programme rested on the negotiated learning that took place outside the school setting. The Alternative Education Programme enabled pupils to select activities which deviated from the constraints of the National Curriculum and focused more on relevance to the pupils' interests. The workshops that the young people took part in involved creative writing and an accredited Multimedia course. Mr T argued that the workshops appealed to the pupils due to their relevance and their practical nature. Focus on the acquisition of accredited learning in an area of interest seemed to motivate the pupils to learn. Mr T said:

I think that the reason why the EP is successful is to do with the fact that we agree the learning goals with the young people outside the National Curriculum They do creative writing and media design. It's all practical stuff that they can relate to and they get a certificate at the end. The aim was to remove disruptive pupils from the class. I believe we have achieved that.

We have J, the PA from Connexions who meets with them one to one to help them do their CVs and prepare for interviews. The skills that the young people have learned with a certificate to back that up will serve them well when they start looking for jobs. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr T. the Learning Mentor).

Mr T. believed that the Alternative Education Programme succeeded in meeting its objectives by removing disruptive pupils from classrooms, whilst at the same time offering them educational provision that enabled them to pursue their vocational interests. Mr T. believed that the Alternative Education Programme increased pupils' employability by enabling them to gain skills. He also stated that a Connexions Advisor met with individual pupils regularly to ensure that they make informed career choices and helped them develop skills in completing a CV and interviewing skills.

5.1.5.3 The Pupils' Perspectives.

Ahmed preferred the Alternative Education Programme activities to some of the lessons he attended at school. Again, he cited 'bad' teachers as the main cause for his preference for the Alternative Education Programme. He said:

They help us and make us want to learn. The stuff we do at the youth centre is more interesting. This is better for me in the long run. I want to become a designer, like graphic design and that. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Ahmed).

Ahmed believed that he learnt far more in the activities at the Youth Centre, than he did at school. He found the activities more relevant to his future employment than curriculum subjects. Ahmed is interested in pursuing a career in Graphic Design and felt that he had acquired skills and knowledge in this area that he would not have been able to do at school.

Jonathan also commented favourably on the approach of the Learning Mentor. He said:

Mr. T is great. He is nice to us and helps us with work at the youth centre. F teach us to do design websites. I learn a lot at the youth centre. It also helps me think about what I want to do in the future. Definitely better than school. They get on with everyone. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Jonathan).

He also expressed preference for the activities organised at the Youth Centre, as he felt motivated to learn new skills for which he saw applicability to his future career. The approachability of the staff at the youth centre appears to be a key motivating factor in

developing a positive attitude to learning. Nofel described his experience at the youth centre as fun. He said:

It's good fun. The people there don't have a go at you. You can do what you want. They don't criticise you or tell you what to do, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Nofel)

The pupils derived satisfaction from the activities they undertook at the youth centre as they saw them as directly relevant to their future career. They valued the quality of teaching and learning and the relationships they had with the staff at the youth centre. D, a connexions Advisor worked closely with the pupils during the sessions. She helped them prepare CVs and gave them information about careers. She also organised mock interview sessions for the pupils, which James found very useful. He said:

I like going to the centre. T is very nice. You can talk to him about anything you're not happy about. He tells you not to get in trouble with teachers. F is good at the web design. He knows so much. D gets us to think about the future. Like getting a job. It's better than school, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, James)

The activities held at the youth centre were informal, but enabled the pupils to gain skills in media design, using professional web design software applications. Michael was particularly appreciative of the value of the skills he acquired at the youth centre. He said:

It's great here, some of the programmes they teach us here, like Dreamweaver and Flash are top. It costs £300 a day to learn those programmes. We are doing it here for free. Once I get the certificate, I'll get a part-time job in web design. This place is great and T and F are the best (Excerpt from the interview transcript, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Michael)

The flexibility and informality of the staff at the youth centre motivated the pupils to learn. The positive relationships that they had with the pupils were clearly a key factor in the pupils' desire to learn.

5.1.6 Metaphors in the Text

In the course of examining the narratives of the teachers, the learning mentor and the pupils I have identified experiential values in the text, which show ideological differences between the participants in their characterisation of disaffection. As discussed above, the NASC teachers defined disaffection, primarily in relation to behavioural and cognitive deficiencies that the pupils are supposed to have.

A close examination of the respondents' narratives of disaffection reveal metaphorical representations which provide insights into how disaffection is constructed and understood by the pupils and school staff. Fairclough (2001) suggests that metaphors are:

a means of representing one aspect of experience in terms of another, and is by no means restricted to the sort of discourse it tends to be stereotypically associated with – poetry and literary discourse. But any aspect of experience can be represented in terms of any number of metaphors, and it is the relationship between alternative metaphors that is of particular interest here, for different metaphors have different ideological attachments' (2001: 99).

Metaphors are also related to Schemata, Frames and Scripts (Fairclough (2001). Schemata constitute a representation of the sequence of events in any given situation. For example, both teachers and pupils have a clear idea, one hopes, of what is expected to take place in classrooms, within normative assumptions about the types of activities that take place in a classroom. Frames relate to representations of people, animals, objects (such as a classroom), processes (such as doing things e.g teaching and learning) or abstract concepts (such as disaffection). Scripts represent subjects in relationships with others through the roles that they occupy or are ascribed. For instance, there is a script for a teacher, whose role is associated with teaching, assessing, envigilating, marking and so on.

When social actors engage in meaning making about the world around them, they use Schemata, Frames and Scripts to describe, interpret and explain the social world. The teacher, the Learning Mentor and the pupils had distinct scripts, which entailed the roles, subject positions and identities ascribed to them in the school context. Three metaphors appear to dominate in the narratives of the teachers and the Learning Mentor.

Firstly, teaching as transmission seems to characterise the NASC teachers' conception of knowledge as fixed and perennial and teaching as 'delivery, in a relationship where the teacher is the source of knowledge. In other words, the teacher as a 'jug' and the pupils as 'mugs'. The pupils are viewed as empty vessels to be filled with propositional knowledge, in what Freire (1973) described as the banking system, where deposits are made for later retrieval through assessments. The negative effects of the 'banking' system in education are well documented in the writings of many progressive educators in the field of critical pedagogy (McLaren, 2003; Apple, 2006; Giroux, 2003).

The transmissive approach to teaching and learning is concerned with the transmission of knowledge and the ability of teachers to foster dispositions of compliance and reverence. Under this approach education is not viewed as providing a potential for raising awareness and contributing to the 'education of social formations' (Whitehead, 2004). A commitment to the 'education of social formations' would lead to an inquiry into forms of pedagogy that do not simply focus on the most effective modes of transmission of propositional knowledge, but those that engage students in a critical engagement with the knowledge being imparted, by submitting it to interrogation and providing the historical context within which the specific knowledge was created in the first place, by asking simple questions such as: Why was this said? What does it mean? In what context was this said? This is particularly important in the field of education since it continues to be used as a site for the maintenance of the *status quo* and the reproduction of social divisions through validating certain kinds of social and cultural capital (Giroux, 2005; Apple, 2006). A view of learning as instrumental appears to have been internalised by the pupils. Mr H. commented on the negative effects of viewing learning as the medium for fostering didactic teaching and a consumerist form of learning, where education is regarded as a means to specific ends, such as the preparation for the world of work. Smith suggests that 'the dominant modes of describing and managing education are today couched in the productive form. Education is most often seen as a technical exercise. Objectives are set, a plan drawn up, then applied, and the outcomes (products) measured' (2000: 3).

The metaphor of teaching as transmission, with its instrumentalist approach to teaching and learning at School S. has contributed to some pupils' sense of loss as a result of being 'thrown at the deep end' according to the RE teacher. Mr H. used this metaphor to represent some of the young people whom he described as disaffected. He said:

They literally can not access the information. So to put them in the system that is education, it's just like throwing them at the deep end and they can't swim. (Excerpt from the interview transcript. Mr. H, the Teacher).

The educational system is represented as a sea and the pupils concerned as not being able to stay afloat due to their inability to swim. The passive construction of the sentence obfuscates causality and responsibility. This is because the grammatical process and participant used in the sentence places the attribution in the direction of the pupils, not the educational system. '*They literally can not access the information*' shifts the responsibility onto the pupils and not the '*system of education*'. Their inability to '*navigate their way around the system*' leads to loss of self-confidence and self-esteem and their consequent drowning.

The attribution of responsibility is also directed at the pupils in a related metaphor used by the teacher. He was confident in his ability to deal with teaching and learning related issues, but felt unable to fulfil the role of 'surrogate parent' that was foisted upon him. Mr H. described how the 'broken world' in which many of the pupils he taught found themselves, spilled into the school arena. However, the shattered lives and fractured transitions that some young people experienced could not be bracketed from their school experience. The emotional state in response to the difficult circumstances in the personal lives of some pupils are bound to affect their cognition and behaviour in school. However, some teachers might feel ill equipped to provide adequate pastoral support to pupils in difficult circumstances. This is evident in what Mr H said:

I think there is a clear separation, as to you the teacher and the educational process and you...almost like the Social Worker or surrogate parent. I think it is worth distinguishing between the two. Educationally, you feel confident and even competent, but there are factors which are not within your immediate remit. (Excerpt from the interview transcript. Mr. H, the Teacher).

In what follows, the key themes identified in the narratives of all the respondents, will be examined identifying creativity and struggle in the discourse of disaffection. The discussion will consider factors in the institutional context which contribute to the construction and reification of disaffection.

5.2 Interpretation

The relationship between text and social structures is an indirect, mediated one. It is mediated first of all by the discourse which the text is a part of, because the values of textual features only become real, socially operative, if they are embedded in social interactions (part of MR) [Members Resources] which give textual features their values. These discourse processes, and their dependence on background assumptions, are the concern of the second stage of the procedure, *interpretation*, (Fairclough, 1989: 117).

As discussed in Chapter 3, according to Fairclough (2001) the social order, or societal context determines the institutional setting, which in turn determines the situational setting. To better understand the context, it is necessary to identify the resources that the members or participants draw on in the interpretation of discourse. Fairclough refers to background knowledge as Members' Resources (MR) and suggests a set of questions for interpreting how this knowledge is expressed in the discourse types invoked by participants to make sense of the situational context. These include: What's going on? Who's involved? In what relations? In asking these questions I seek to develop a nuanced interpretation of the intratextual context of the school and the Alternative Education Programme, in relation to the narratives of the adults in the school and counter narratives of the young people about the factors that contribute to disaffection from education.

The adults' explanations oscillated widely between, attributing disaffection to the individual young people themselves, to curriculum relevance and its organisation, as well as to a range of other out of school factors. On the other hand, the young people's narratives pointed to the significance of the influence of peers as a contributory factor to their disconnection from learning but more importantly, the extent of their engagement with curriculum subjects emerged as contingent on the quality of the relationships they had with their teachers. The significance of the influence of peers will be examined in Section 5.4.3 but in this section, I want to focus on the impact of teachers' attitudes on young people's engagement with the curriculum. I argue that perceived disrespectful teachers' attitudes compound the difficult relations that some young people have with schooling and that their high level of engagement with the Alternative Education Programme shows that the respectful relationships they had with the Learning Mentor and the youth centre staff were crucial to its success. In the process, I examine critically the contradictions in the discourses of disaffection in the shared narratives of the young people and the adults in the school and analyse the complex set of negotiations they made to resolve the mismatch between their MRs and their analysis of the situation (Fairclough, 1989).

5.2.1 Ambiguity and Contradictions in the Discourse of Disaffection

The representations of disaffection, implicit in the NASC teachers' characterisation of disaffected young people resonate with the narratives of the Teacher and the Learning Mentor at the school where the research took place. The commonalities in their discourses were centred around descriptions of cognitive and behavioural deficiencies that the young people who were labelled as disaffected were assumed to have. As outlined in the previous section, they cited a range of factors that they believed contributed to their disconnection from education, all of which were consistent with the claims made in research on the causes of disaffection. These were family breakdown (Steer, 2000; Reid, 2002; Wilson et al., 2008), low self-esteem (Andrews and Andrews, 2003; Reid, 2002; Humphrey et al, 2004), drug abuse (Goodman, 1999; Witt and Crompton, 1996) to involvement in crime (Witt and Crompton, 1996; Martinek, 1997; Reid, 2002; Blanden, Hansen and Machin, 2008). I must add that the usefulness of these claims is contested as they failed to establish the direction of causality between disaffection and its claimed causes, (Piper and Piper, 2000; Hayes, 2004; Osler and Starkey, 2005; Ecclestone and Hayes, 2008; Wilson et al., 2008).

Whilst dividing disaffected young people into two categories, the 'unable' and the 'unwilling', the Learning Mentor and the Teacher also suggested that the prevalent deficit interpretations of disaffection were reductive in their narrow focus on the individual characteristics of the young people as they did not take into account other factors that characterise the difficult relations that some young people had with education. Furthermore, the definitions given by the teacher and the Learning Mentor added to the ambiguity of disaffection and failed to adequately address the question: Why do some young people lose interest in education?

However, the descriptions given by the young people for their lack of motivation to engage with curriculum subjects were boredom due to a perceived lack of relevance of curriculum content, poor relationships with teachers, and the influence of peers. Their views were consistent with numerous reports that have cited boredom as one of the main reasons for disconnection from learning, (Hesketh, 1987; Kinder et al., 1996; Tolor, 2009). Other studies identified curriculum relevance as a key factor in learner engagement, particularly in Years 10 and 11 (Stoll and O'Keefe, 1993; DfES, 2004; Elliott et al. 2002; Morgan, 2003; DfES, 2004 and Miller, 2005). The importance of respectful relations with teachers was also found to be crucial in how young people experienced schooling, (Elliott et al., 2002), particularly among African Caribbean young men, (Warren, 2005).

Interestingly, some of the young people represented lack of curriculum relevance in utilitarian terms. They appeared to have internalised the dominant view that the primary aim of learning was the acquisition of skills and competencies that were perceived to be useful to their future careers. For example, Michael could not see the usefulness of RE to his future employment prospects and James could not see the utility of learning Spanish, owing to the internationalisation of the English language. He saw language in strategic terms, as a means for facilitating interactions rather than for its cultural value. He stated:

I don't see the point of doing Spanish. I don't need to learn it. I have been to Spain loads of times and I have never needed to speak it. Everyone speaks English over there. (Excerpt from the transcript. James).

However, James also talked about the curriculum in non-utilitarian terms when he described the good rapports he had with some of his teachers and how this motivated his active involvement in his education. James's account is consistent with the views expressed by other young people in the one to one and focus group interviews, which suggested that the level of their engagement with the curriculum was dependent on the teachers' attitudes towards them and pointed to the detrimental effects of the disrespectful teachers on their academic achievement. The young people's descriptions also resonate with Warren's accounts of how the young men in his study negotiated what he called '*asymmetrical economies of respect*' (2005:249) in their relations with teachers whose inconsistent and disproportionate enforcement of discipline led to differential treatments of individual young men by different teachers. Warren used the concept of 'resilience' to describe young people's adaptation to the 'fluctuations' in teachers' attitudes (2005: 250) through style. Warren reconceptualised the idea of 'cool pose' originally used by Majors and Billson (1993), quoted in Warren (2005), to explain the distinctive style of some young black men as adaptation to racial hostility, and a way of commanding respect. Like the young men in Warren's study, the group of young people I interviewed did not reject the goals of education, but had to use creative ways to adapt to the volatility of its means (Sewell, 1998). The concept of '*Cool pose*' speaks to the performances displayed by the young men in my study through the distinctive styles they adopted in opposition to institutional conformity demands, which I discuss at the end of the explanation stage. However, in this section, I want to consider the significance of the economy of respect on the young men's relations with teachers and their level of engagement with education.

5.2.2 The Economy of Respect

The respectful relationships that the young people had with the Learning Mentor and the staff at the youth centre were cited by the young people as an important factor in their engagement with the Alternative Education Programme. In the focus group and one to one interviews young people used words such as *friendliness, respect, humour and an easy going attitude* to describe the qualities of a 'nice' teacher. On the other hand, *disrespect, sarcasm and rudeness* were used to describe a teacher who was not considered to be 'nice'. Their descriptions suggested that while subject preference was a motivating factor in their level of enthusiasm for learning, their perception of a 'nice' teacher determined the extent of their participation in classroom activity and their commitment to the completion of in class tasks and homework set by the teacher. Some of the young people pointed out that some teachers were able to make a subject of least interest to them, more interesting. Jonathan said:

I don't like most of my teachers. They are just so dry. If I like a subject and it is taught by a nice teacher I listen. But half the time, the teacher just expects you to listen. It doesn't do it for me. A nice teacher shows respect. Then you respect him back. A nice teacher doesn't shout at you, is not sarcastic in front of your friends. (Excerpt from the transcript. Jonathan).

Another young man, Sam, described one of his teachers' disrespectful and confrontational manner of invading his personal space. He said:

If I don't like the teacher, that's it, I just don't do any work. I hate Ms J, she shows no respect whatsoever. She's always having a go at me and she stands so close when she shouts at me. I say to her you are so close I can feel your spit on my face. Then she gives me detention. (Excerpt from the transcript, Sam).

The young people's descriptions match the Learning Mentor's views on the significance of respect to fostering positive relations with young people. He said:

young people say, plain and simple, if they don't like the teacher, they don't do the work. As far as young people are concerned, a nice teacher is someone who shows them respect (Excerpt from the transcript. Mr T the Learning Mentor).

These descriptions are consistent with evidence found in other research, (Elliott et al., 2002; Warren, 2005). Respect is tied to power relations between young people and their teachers, mediated through school discourse conventions and expressed in a set of rules that permeate all aspects of teaching and learning. The teachers are involved in regulating and monitoring young people's adherence to conventions relating to a wide range of school activities, from assessment to the management of space and young people's presentation and behaviour in school. Black young men are often

subjected to 'greater surveillance and control' (Youdell, 2003:97). This engenders a sense of unfairness and creates an atmosphere of disrespect and withdrawal, as a young man, Michael described:

My teachers put me off school. They think they can treat you like a kid. Some of the teachers are alright. But many of them start arguments for nothing. They think they can disrespect you in front of everyone and get away with it. I don't care, I just tell them to get lost, (Excerpt from the transcript, Michael).

There was a consensus among the participants in the focus group that being reprimanded in the presence of peers led them to react disproportionately, often leading to their detention and sometimes internal exclusion and the involvement of their parents in formal meetings with the Headteacher. The teachers knew that most of the young people avoided the involvement of their parents at all cost and frequently used threats to contact them as a means of controlling their behaviour. Nofel who described his mother as being 'strict' said that one of his teachers contacted his mother frequently knowing that he would get into trouble at home. He said:

I told Miss K not to phone my mum. She knows that when she does it causes lots of aggro at home. My mum took my phone away once because she called her saying stuff about me that wasn't even true. I came to Miss K and said thanks a lot, I have no phone now, and she just said, you better behave in the future then, (Excerpt from the transcript, Nofel).

Whilst he recognised the positive and life enhancing value of education, Nofel rejected the pedagogies employed by some of his teachers. This is consistent with Sewell's typology of the 'Innovators' who 'accepted the goals of education but rejected its means. The origins of their pro-school values are mostly parental', (1998:107). There was evidence in the young people's descriptions of the importance of parental influence on their attempts to adapt to the school *means*. James said:

I don't always follow my friends. I don't want to get in trouble with my mum, (Excerpt from the transcript, James).

Echoing James' desire to appease his mother, Ahmed said:

Some teachers ask you to do homework and, like if my mum forces me to do it at home, some teachers don't ask to see it. So after all the hard work you do, they are not bothered to even look at it, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Ahmed)

When asked how he felt about the teachers' inconsistent approach to marking homework after he had completed it, Ahmed said that he was in fact relieved as he did not wish to be called a 'Neek' by his peers. Ahmed's mother's pro-school values

presented him with further challenges to negotiate in order to reconcile between his teachers' expectations as well as those of his peers. On one hand, he was envious of the young people he referred to as 'Neeks' as he also described them as 'smart' and said that they were more likely to get 'the best jobs' in the future. On the other hand, he was trapped by his reluctance to be identified as a 'Neek'. In describing subjection as being simultaneously formative and regulative, Youdell suggested that the 'subcultural privilege of students' black identities may become a discursive trap' (2003: 96). Ahmed was trapped in an identity that was defined by his peers in opposition to the characterisation of a 'Neek'. Negotiating the dual identities constituted by his peers' resistance to the school 'means' and his mother's pro-school 'goals' and 'means' placed him in a difficult position. Compliance with his teachers' demands for conformity could jeopardise his status within his peer group and could lead to him being subjected to derision and potentially verbal and physical abuse, while resistance to teachers' expectations was viewed positively by his peers. This perpetuated a cycle of mutual disrespect between some young people and their teachers and prevented authentic communication from taking place. O'Donnell and Sharpe described the challenges faced by many schools in their attempts to engage learners as a 'losing battle to counterbalance the collective influence of the peer group with what schools hope to achieve' (2000:89).

By their own admission, young people used a range of strategies to avoid work, including, feigning sickness, an injured hand and wanting to go to the toilets. There was a consensus that this was less frequent during lessons taught by a friendly teacher. Indeed the respectful relations that the young people had with the Youth Worker and the Learning Mentor demonstrated the importance of fostering positive relationships with young people to encourage their active involvement in learning. The inconsistent and disproportionate use of discipline and behaviour management by some teachers determined the kind of experiences that some black young men had in the school. Some of the teachers viewed them as a challenge (Sewell, 1998) and interacted with them accordingly.

Like the young men in Warren's (2004) study, the young men I interviewed did not reject what the school had to offer them and had good relations with some of the adults in the school. Indeed, common themes in their descriptions of the Alternative Education Programme related to the good relations they had with the staff at the youth centre. Ahmed said:

I like working with T better than doing the stuff they teach us at school. Because some of the teachers are bad. They have a bad attitude. I get on

very well with T and F. They listen to us and respect us. (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Ahmed).

Involvement in decision-making about how the sessions were structured was a key characteristic of the pedagogic approach of the Youth Worker and the Learning Mentor. Listening to young people and treating them with respect created a positive informal atmosphere within which learning took place. The Learning Mentor attributed the success of the Alternative Education Programme to its flexibility and the special relationships that he had with young people. However, unlike the group-based mentoring project in Warren's study (2005), the Alternative Education Programme did not take the young people beyond resilience and adaptation. It could be seen as serving the purpose it was intended to fulfil, using the 'special' relationships they had with the Learning Mentor and the Youth Worker to re-engage them in education. Indeed, one of the young men said:

T is very nice. You can talk to him about anything you're not happy about. He tells you not to get in trouble with teachers, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, James).

As outlined in Section 5.1, there is some evidence that the Alternative Education Programme led to improvement in the young people's attendance and behaviour during lessons held at school S., however, the extent of their engagement with these subjects remained low. This is because their continued involvement with the Alternative Education Programme was conditional on meeting targets agreed with the Learning mentor at the beginning of the referral to the programme. Furthermore, a Connexions Advisor met with the young people regularly on a one to one basis to explore their career interests. It is difficult to say to what extent these encounters with the Connexions Advisor influenced the young people's thoughts about their prospective careers, but the Alternative Education Programme was strongly linked to the discourse of employability in the narratives of all the participants. Indeed, this was cited by the Learning Mentor as an aspect of its success along with the removal of disruptive young people from classrooms to enable the learning of others.

5.3 Intertextuality in the Discourse of Disaffection

Discourses and the texts which occur within them have histories, they belong to historical series, and the interpretation of intertextual context is a matter of deciding which series a text belongs to, and therefore what can be taken as common ground for participants, or *presupposed*. As in the case of situational context, discourse participants may arrive at roughly the same interpretation or different ones, and the interpretation of the more powerful participant may be imposed upon others. So having power may mean being able to determine presuppositions, (Fairclough, 1989:127).

Of particular significance in the above epigraph to what I want to discuss in this section is the privileging of certain aspects of social reality by powerful individuals and institutions to legitimise presuppositions as valid claims to knowledge. As discussed in Section 5.2, what makes discourses of disaffection ambiguous and contradictory, are the multiple perspectives on its causes in academic research, policy debates and education practitioners' narratives.

However, far from being objective and neutral, conceptualisations of disaffection are tied to ideologies about the role of education in society. As Ball suggests 'any discourse concerns itself with certain objects and puts forward certain concepts at the expense of others' (1986: 3). Dominant representations of young people in policy discourses suggest that they are viewed as either victims or perpetrators. Christine Griffin eloquently captured this when she said:

Youth is ...treated as a key indicator of the state of the nation... it is expected to reflect the cycle of booms and troughs in the economy, shifts in cultural values over sexuality, morality and family life; and changes in class relations, concepts of nationhood, and in occupational structures. Young people are assumed to hold the key to the nation's future, and the treatment and management of 'youth' is expected to provide the solution to the nation's 'problems' from 'drug abuse', 'hooliganism' and 'teenage pregnancy' to inner city 'riots' (Griffin, 1993:10).

Intertextuality in the shared narratives of the adults in the school had strong echoes of the key themes in the above quote woven into their descriptions and interpretations of disaffection. In many respects, their narratives resonated with and contradicted dominant policy discourses about the self-exclusion of a large number of young people from black and working class communities. It is important to contextualise the political climate within which tackling social exclusion and disaffection became key government priorities from late 1990s onwards.

5.3.1 The Policy Context of Social Exclusion and Youth Disaffection

The policy context, within which renewed focus on youth disaffection has taken place, is marked by sweeping social reforms at the beginning of the New Labour Government in 1997. In pursuit of a Third Way approach to policy making, combining, arguably antithetical, Old Labour social intergrationist values with New Right ideologies, Blair counterbalanced toughness on crime and anti-social behaviour with an emphatic pledge to focus on 'Education, Education, Education' and safeguarding the welfare of children through the introduction of a raft of policies and Acts, such as Every Child Matters (2003), Children's Act (2004), Youth Matters (2006) and the Aiming High: Ten Year Strategy (2007). Levitas (1998) has argued that New Labour's approach to social exclusion, moved away from Old Labour's commitments to the redistribution of social resources to a combination of, on one hand a moral underclass discourse (MUD) and on the other, a social integrationist discourse (SID).

The term disaffection was already part of the pedagogic discourse in the mid-80s (Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin, 1996), however the publication of two key reports, Learning to Succeed (1999) and Bridging the Gap (1999) by the Social Exclusion Unit (1998), brought the attention of policy makers to the impact that disconnection from learning has on the long term prospects of employability of large numbers of young people. Evidence presented to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment (1998) estimated that 8% of all 14–16 year olds predominantly male from African Caribbean backgrounds were disaffected.

The recommendations of the Committee included greater support for schools; target setting; more powers to the police to deal with anti-social behaviour; parental sanctions and stringent strategies for dealing with excluded young people. Indeed, new criminal justice legislation was introduced, including the Crime and Disorder Act (1998), Powers of the Criminal Courts Act (2000), Criminal Justice and Police Act (2001), Criminal Justice Act (2003) and Anti-Social Behaviour Order Act (2003). Pupils and their parents were brought to account for allowing themselves to become socially excluded and parents were penalised for their children's lack of commitment to their schooling and their anti-social behaviour. The House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment (1998) also made an explicit link between disaffected young people of African Caribbean descent and criminality. In this respect Osler and Starkey found that 'Young people from minority ethnic communities, refugees and other newly-arrived students are more likely to be characterised as disaffected and are often poorly served by their schools' (2005: 196). The term 'disaffection' thus became naturalized in

discourses relating lack of engagement and underachievement of young people in schools, particularly by working class and black males, to the propensity to commit crime, abuse drugs and to become socially excluded.

It has been argued that policy responses to disaffection are based on a deficit model that represents young people as victims or perpetrators (Jefferies and Smith 1999; Griffin, 1993). Although both Mr H's and Mr T's narratives suggested that they could not see any justification in 'race' being a useful criterion in profiling a disaffected young person, their descriptions were fraught with stereotypical generalizations about the negative influences that black young men were exposed to. For example, the teacher blamed rap music for the negative influence it had on them due to its glorification of anti-social behaviour. Reference was also made by the Learning Mentor to a conception of education being irrelevant due to a supposed belief amongst young men that social divisions were such that gaining qualifications did not guarantee better career prospects. He attributed this to the influence of disillusioned older members of the black community whose experiences of institutional racism alienated them from social life, confirming research on the cumulative effects of racism on attitudes towards the education system (Sewell, 1998; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Youdell, 2003; Warren, 2005).

The Learning Mentor also made a link between disaffection and criminality by suggesting that some young people were seduced by the immediate gratification that drug dealing provided those who were willing to truant and act as mules on mopeds between drug dealers and their clients. Such sweeping characterisation embodies discourse types that ascribe social identities to young people based on a deficit model and echo the policy makers' discourses on the vulnerabilities of black young men to succumb to deviance, for example, the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment (1998) and Blair's depiction of a 'distinctive black culture' (Wintour and Vikram, 2007) as being the source of the problems of British youth.

Despite a raft of policy interventions aimed at re-engaging black young men in education, eg. Key Stage 3 National Strategy: Ensuring the Attainment of Black Caribbean Boys (DfES, 2004), the Priority Review: Exclusion of Black Pupils 'Getting it. Getting it right' (DfES, 2006) and the Curriculum Review: Diversity and Citizenship (DfES, 2007), only a third of African-Caribbean boys on Free School Meals achieved 5 A* – C in the GCSE examinations in 2008. This raises questions about the arguments that curriculum reforms can provide adequate solutions to disengagement from education. However, there is evidence that curriculum relevance is a contributory

factor to disaffection (Stoll and O’Keefe, 1993; Elliott et al., 2002; Morgan, 2003; DfES, 2004; Miller, 2005; Haynes, 2008) and that greater flexibility combining vocational and academic routes can lead to greater participation in employment, training, further and higher education, (Golden et al., 2005 and Lynch et al., 2010).

5.3.2 Curriculum Irrelevance

Curriculum relevance has been cited by the young people as one of the factors that prevented their engagement with learning. Mr H argued that much of what was taught in school had little relevance to the world of work. He rejected the prevalent utilitarian view of learning held by some of the young people that chimed with the dominant instrumental ideology in educational policy discourse (Kelly, 2004, Smith, 2004). He contended that the utilitarian view promoted the uncritical adoption of teaching approaches that valorise the acquisition of knowledge and skills to prepare students for the world of work over the development of autonomy and critical inquiry (Ball, 2001; Gerwitz, 2002; McLaren, 2003, Kelly, 2004, Giroux, 2003, 2009).

The language of performativity seems to have also extended to the work of the Learning Mentor, whose role involved the improvement of young people’s attendance, behaviour and achievement. Focus on tangible outcomes is part of what Ball (2001) calls ‘performativity’. Ball states that: ‘The performances of individual subjects or organisations serve as a measure of productivity or output, or displays of “quality”, or “moments” of promotion or inspection’ (2001: 143). Mr T said:

We have to use targets that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound. The reason why we do smart plans is that in the past some mentors used to just throw action plans together. With the smart plans, it is more measurable, (Excerpt from the transcript. Mr T. the Learning Mentor).

On the other hand, Mr H had a different view on the usefulness of the prevalent utilitarian approach in education. He said:

What we don’t have is the beauty of knowledge, that intrinsic idea of knowledge. It seems that knowledge must lead to somewhere, So I say to the kids, 99% of what you learn, you will not use in your world of work, but they still believe that education is all about work, but if, there is not an exam, they see the experience in terms of education as pointless, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the Teacher).

Mr H’s beliefs about the curriculum do not cohere well with the Headteacher’s determination to raise standards following the poor Ofsted inspection report in year

2007, which led to greater focus on attainment targets and the adoption of more didactic teaching approaches. He attributed young people's disconnection from learning to curriculum overload, which he saw as counter-productive as it placed immense pressure on him by multiplying his workload and attendant targets, with the consequence of limiting his scope to exercise his professional judgement. Curriculum relevance according to Mr H was not the barrier to learning, but what he saw as a major factor in young people's disconnection from education were on one hand, their perception of the curriculum and on the other the structure and organisation of schooling. Mr H said:

I say to them, quite frequently, if what I am teaching you has no relevance to your life, put your hand up and debate with me. If I can't convince you, we'll scrap the lesson. I say to them, who in here can show me Martin Luther King, and they all start pointing at the pictures of King excitedly, it is about the joy that they knew what they were looking for. It is that knowledge and there are so many pictures, by year eleven they become familiar with all the pictures on the wall with their historical context and it is that knowing that gives you joy and power (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the Teacher).

Mr H's account of the intrinsic value of knowledge contradicts the prevalent utilitarian view of education, expressed in debates about the relevance of the 14-19 curriculum. The Final Report of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform (2004) attributed disaffection and low academic achievement to lack of curriculum relevance and called for greater focus on 'getting the basics right' (2004: 4) to ensure that young people are 'equipped with the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to succeed in adult life, further learning and employment' (ibid). Among its recommendations was to 'strengthen vocational routes' (ibid) through 'identifying a clear role for employers' (ibid) in the delivery of the curriculum. Haynes (2008) found some evidence that the broader alternative curriculum for KS4 succeeded in re-engaging young people who were previously identified as disaffected in KS3, with marked improvement in attendance at non-school sites (Haynes, 2008). This would suggest that there is something about schools that some young people find less alluring than alternative venues. As discussed in the previous section, a critical factor in the enthusiasm shown by young people for Creative Writing and Multi-media design, related to the relationships they had with the staff at the youth centre. The Youth Worker and the Learning Mentor had greater flexibility in how they facilitated the workshops. They were not tied to the National Curriculum in the same way that Mr H was. In this respect, Mr H expressed his frustration at his inability to use his time effectively due to institutional accountability requirements. He stated:

A couple of things they want me to do is they want me to produce lesson plans. That is to do with accountability. Now I have been through the Ofsted experience four times, on which occasions I didn't produce lesson plans. Now, when we go through Ofsted the next time, I am going to produce lesson plans. I will play the game, but it is going to be time consuming. It is going to take my energy away from something else that it is going to be better put to, (Excerpt from the interview transcript, Mr H. the Teacher).

Mr H. negotiated the apparent mismatch between his resources and his analysis of the situation by generating the discourse type of 'game playing' to resolve the situation. He explained his intention to produce lesson plans in the future in order to conform to Ofsted requirements as 'playing the game'. He was swift to also point out the futility of the exercise and the impact it would have on his ability to respond to the daily demands of his work more effectively.

I want to argue that both Mr H and Mr T are engaged in making a complex set of negotiations in their attempts to reconcile their experiential values with the constraints imposed on them by the structure and organisation of schooling. Discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour results in what social psychologists have described as 'cognitive dissonance', (Festinger, 1957; Aronson, 1968; Steele, 1988; Elliot and Devine, 1994). Cognitive Dissonance theory posits that when people find themselves in situations where their behaviour conflicts with their attitudes, they either change the behaviour or change the attitude in question to ensure that the former is in alignment with the latter. However, changing behaviours, eg. by refusing to comply with legitimate employer demands or teachers' instructions for that matter, may constitute insubordination and culminate in disciplinary action or detention. On the other hand, following the path of least resistance by changing one's perceptions to accommodate attitude discrepant practices will necessarily involve a degree of rationalisation. For example, to negotiate the dissonance between the procedures he had to follow and his professional values, Mr T reconceptualised targeting as a valuable tool for systematising his work. Nonetheless, Mr T's apparent enthusiasm for the instrumental way of working does not cohere well with his avowed holistic and person centred approach to working with young people. He described his pedagogic approach with young people as holistic. He said:

They don't see me as a teacher, my approach is young people centred. It is about the whole person, not how well they are doing at school, (Excerpt from the transcript. Mr T. the Learning Mentor).

A holistic approach in formal learning is said to contribute to re-engaging disaffected young people (Miller, 2005) but the extent to which Mr T's interactions with the young people could be described as holistic is questionable. He works in line with the

school's agenda, which operates within a wider educational policy context that is not always in alignment with a person centred approach. Colley posits that prevalent approaches in *engagement mentoring* claim to be holistic, but 'represent everything that is antithetical to the original concept of holism' (Colley, 2003: 82). Mr T said that the Alternative Education Programme had succeeded in meeting its aim '*to remove disruptive students from the class*'. This statement hardly reflects a holistic young person centred pedagogic approach and shows that the interest of young people is not the priority here. Their removal from the classroom is borne out of a concern for the learning of others and an attempt to distract and contain them.

Like many practitioners working within institutional accountability constraints, Mr T and Mr H could be described as 'living contradictions' as their values are not realised in their professional practice (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006). Ball (2001) quotes Jeffrey and Woods (1998) to give the example of a teacher, Diane, who had previously enjoyed her creative approach to teaching the curriculum to her young people, but her focus on the process did not yield the type of tangible outcomes on which her young people were formally assessed through the SATs. Ball reported:

She was the only year 6 teacher at Trafflon and after criticism of their SATs results she resolved to go down the path of 'improvement of results'. She changed her curriculum, and achieved her aim by getting the second best results the following year in her IEA. She justified this by saying that she was 'now just doing a job'; and had withdrawn her total involvement to preserve her 'sanity'. 'the results were better because I acted like a function machine', (Jeffrey and Woods, cited in Ball, 2001:147).

Diane's story is not too dissimilar to Mr H's who is a highly respected member of the school teaching staff, by his young people and his colleagues, but his descriptions suggest that he was ill at ease with the value conflicts he was experiencing. Ball describes the tension that arises when professional values give way to the imperative of performativity as 'structural and individual schizophrenia' (2001:147) and suggests that it leads to 'alienation of the self' (ibid). Mr H's account of his experience of the Ofsted inspection and his plan to comply with the requirements denote disillusionment and withdrawal. What is ironic about this situation is that Mr H's detachment or what Ball calls 'splitting' (2001:147) can also lead to positive rewards within institutions that thrive on a 'tick box' work culture. It is evident from the shared narratives of the adults and the young people that instrumentality is a key theme in the debate about the disaffection and given its salience its determinants and effects will be discussed further under the explanation stage.

5.4 Explanation

Reproduction is for participants a generally unintended and unconscious side-effect, so to speak, of production and interpretation. Reproduction connects the stages of interpretation and explanation, because where as the former is concerned with how Members Resources (MRs) are drawn upon in processing discourse, the latter is concerned with the social constitution and change of MR, including of course their reproduction in discourse practice, (Fairclough, 1989: 135).

In what follows, I seek to bring into sharp focus the relationship between discursive practices within the situational setting to the wider institutional and societal context of disaffection from learning in schools. In doing this, I identify deterministic relationships between the discourse of disaffection and social structures. As noted in Chapter 2, the relationship between discourse and the social world is a circular one, (Richardson, 2007), in the sense that discourse shapes the social world and is in turn shaped by it. Fairclough points out that the objective of the stage of explanation is to 'portray a discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them' (2001, 135).

The NASC teachers' characterisation of disaffection in conjunction with interviews with the pupils, the Learning Mentor and the teacher have elicited a corpus of data about discourses and counter discourses of disaffection within the situational context of the school. Additionally, the critical review of the literature detailed in Chapter 2, on related theory, policy and practice issues, enabled me to engage in an informed analysis of the discourse of disaffection. This stage of the analysis will link the determinants and effects of disaffection along these three levels. Fairclough posits that

there are different ways of seeing the same discourse according to whether we are focusing upon it as situational, institutional, or societal practice. We are not necessarily or even normally looking at different features of the discourse at these three levels; rather, we are often looking at the same features from different perspectives, as if we were changing the filters of a camera lens, (2001, 136).

To extend Fairclough's metaphor of 'changing the filters of a camera lens' I conceive the critical analysis of the discourse of disaffection as a process of 'zooming in' on the particularities of the micro and immediate context of the school to identify patterns in discursive practices and institutional processes in relation to learner engagement and

achievement, then 'zooming out' to consider how these shape and are shaped by the wider economic, political and social matrix.

The key themes identified in this study as social determinants of disaffection were chosen due to their salience in the respondents' narratives in line with the key questions of this inquiry and the subject positions, both assumed and ascribed, of the pupils and their teachers within the institutional and wider societal contexts. The instrumentality of the curriculum in terms of its focus on tangible outcomes is a key determinant of the discourse of disaffection.

As discussed in the interpretation stage of the analysis, the pupils' narratives suggest that curriculum relevance, relationships with teachers and the influence of peers were major barriers to their engagement with learning. The instrumentality of the curriculum shapes what teachers teach and to some extent how they teach it. Pupils respond by displaying oppositional behaviours and attitudes which are resistant to learning and to the school as an institution. Given that five of the six pupils who took part in this study were from African Caribbean descent, their oppositional performances in the school are conceived in this analysis through the lens of 'race' resistance and are linked to the wider discourse of black boys academic under-achievement.

5.4.1 The impact of Instrumentality on Learner Engagement

Ball suggests that 'any discourse concerns itself with certain objects and puts forward certain concepts at the expense of others' (1986, 3). Education is a source of major contestability due to rival conceptions of what it means and what its aims ought to be (Peters, 1966, Kemmis, 1995, Carr, 2004). This is partly due to teachers, pupils, parents and policy makers holding different views about what constitutes a good education. However, teachers have to demonstrate their accountability by working within institutional constraints, such as the National Curriculum and their performance is measured by the achievement of specified targets. The success of the school is measured by, among other indicators, the number of GCSE results from A - C* and its status is predicated on its position on the league table.

Pupils who fail to comply with teachers' expectations pose a threat to the attainment of educational goals and achievement targets set by the institution. The causes of disaffection are blamed on the individual pupils themselves. This means that the structure of teaching and the nature of the curriculum are not to blame. The dominant discourse in this configuration is couched in an instrumentalist ideology that has

pervaded educational policy for at least three decades and finds expression in all aspects of curriculum design, teaching and assessment. The teachers, as the enforcers of the instrumentalist discourse conventions, appear to be in an ongoing battle with pupils who are unable or unwilling to comply with the demands and expectations that the school places on them.

The Headteacher of School S.' determination to improve standards was communicated to all school personnel through stringent targets in relation to attendance, behaviour and attainment targets. A key theme identified in the configuration of discourses examined in the respondents' narratives is concerned with the instrumentality of the curriculum in terms of its focus on tangible outcomes, which is aligned with the wider discourse of employability and the needs of industry.

The debates about disaffection are linked to national concerns about the economic position of Britain in comparison to other nations. These are not new concerns, since the late 1980s, the instrumentalist view of curriculum holds that education must lead to the development of competencies and dispositions, which would ultimately contribute to the prosperity of the nation. Indeed it was the perception that education was failing to do this that prompted James Callaghan (1976) to call for a 'Great Debate' in his Ruskin Speech. Callaghan believed that the purpose of education was to increase employability, and this view was amplified more forcefully during the conservative rein under Margaret Thatcher and it continues in different guises today under the Labour Government. Goodson (2005: 92) points out that Callaghan expressed dissatisfaction with comprehensive education as he regarded it as 'not contributing to employment and economic prosperity' and producing low academic standards'. According to Callaghan what was taught at schools had to respond to the needs of industry. He stated that 'teachers may have the expertise and the knowledge but that this must meet the requirements of the industry' (Matheson, 2000:43).

Matheson suggests that the Education Reform Act 1988 'introduced more than 300 new powers for the Secretary of State for Education as well as a market-derived terminology (accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, value for money, cost control, customer satisfaction, service delivery, planning unit, quality assurance)', (Matheson, 2000: 67). The power behind this 'order of discourse' has diminished the autonomy of teachers who have become increasingly circumscribed as they became entangled in the maze of pre-configured procedures and 'quality assurance mechanisms' in pursuit of elusive 'efficiency', 'effectiveness' and high 'standards'.

The disaffection of pupils and, arguably, their teachers' is the result of, on one hand, the rigidity and centralisation of the curriculum (Riley, 1998) and on the other, managerialist approaches to education based on efficiency in the pursuit of measurable outputs which, have constrained the teachers' capacity to provide adequate pastoral support to all pupils (Vulliamy and Webb, 2003).

Increased teachers' workloads in an increasingly target driven educational system constrains their ability to deviate from tightly configured curricula, where the prevalent focus on tangible outcomes within the wider employability discourse leaves little space for teachers to exercise their autonomy. Mr H. cited curriculum overload and administrative tasks as key deterrents to meaningful engagement in teaching and learning. He said:

There are so many tick boxes. I say, identify my weaknesses and give me credit for my strengths. But the system, again, doesn't worry about the educational value of something it worries about whether it is going to go through Ofsted. And that takes away your ability to better address individual needs. There are other things...I religiously mark books. I think, maybe I shouldn't. Maybe, I should say, that work is just for you to reflect on. There is always a huge pile to get through. These are the things that get in the way of meeting individual pupils' needs, (Excerpt from the transcript. Mr H. the Teacher).

The constraints imposed by the National Curriculum narrow the scope for Mr H to be creative and to exercise his professional judgments in his teaching practice. Since the introduction of the National Curriculum under the Education Reform Act (1988) teachers have become open to public scrutiny following a shift of control of education from local authorities to central government by making schools directly accountable to the state through control mechanisms permeating all aspects of school activity. These include the monitoring of quality through various outputs, from pupils' grades to Ofsted inspections and the school's position on the league table. The pupils consume and simultaneously reproduce and resist the dominant conception of education as instrumental. Referring to pupils' attainment, Mr H. said:

If they [pupils] can't get grade C or above, they say, oh what's the point? And so the main driver now is league tables. There are obviously other factors before that. But now it's league tables, (Excerpt from the transcript. Mr H. the Teacher).

Increasing accountability to central government, whose policies are guided by the interests of the industry and economy rather than those of teachers, parents and pupils, has had a negative impact on education. The marketisation of education has had a 'transformational' effect 'not only for work practices, organisational methods and

social relationships but also for values of schooling' (Gerwitz and Ball, 2000: 253). Robertson described the shift in values in education as 'transformation of cultural assets: from trusteeship to entrepreneurship, procedural to market bureaucracy, and collective to individual association' (2000: 35). The marketisation of education has changed relationships into business transactions whereby education became a commodity to be 'delivered' to 'customers' who are persuaded that they have a right to choose and demand the highest possible standards from teachers, (Gerwitz, 2002).

It is assumed that the application of free market principles to educational provision leads to 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness' but there is little evidence to support such assumption. If anything, the application of market principles to public services has led to the fragmentation and deterioration of educational provision and the creation of an inequitable system with a widening gap between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. Tomlinson (2001: 72) commenting on the effects of market forces argues that 'by the mid-1990s inequalities in income had accelerated and it had become a commonplace to speak of a widening gap between rich and poor families.' There is strong evidence that the gap in income by class, gender and ethnicity has widened further in the 21st century (National Equality Panel, 2010) and this is reflected in the extent of engagement with learning and corresponding academic achievement, as will be discussed in the next section.

5.4.2 'Race', Gender and Class Inequality in Education

The impact of class, ethnicity and gender on engagement with learning and corresponding academic achievement was discussed in the interviews with the teacher and the Learning Mentor. The pupils' were also asked basic questions relating to their socio-economic backgrounds. Whilst both Mr H and Mr T claimed that the link between ethnicity and disaffection were not clear-cut due to the demographic profile of the school where black pupils were in the majority, a disproportionate number of black males were frequently referred to the Learning Mentor. Mr T. said

The register of pupils referred to Learning Mentors, who could be called disaffected, always shows more boys than girls. It is hard to say in terms of ethnicity, because the majority of our kids are black, so we deal mainly with black males. Although, increasingly we have Polish, Lithuanians and other Eastern European pupils. (Excerpt from interview transcript. The Learning Mentor, Mr. T)

Black boys were also overrepresented in the group of pupils who were excluded from school. Mr H pointed out that white working class parents were more likely than black

parents to 'play the system' by getting their children statemented as a protection against permanent exclusion. They were reported by the teacher to 'know the system' more than their black counterparts and this is why Mr H felt that disaffection was experienced in the same way by all pupils, irrespective of background, but that the outcomes of disaffection were more devastating for black pupils than any other group.

Mr H stated:

So all the groups become disaffected. Many females become disaffected. Many males, black, white, Asian and Afro-caribbean, right across the board, so I find no difference there. The difference comes when an awful lot of white English, I'll start with the white English..when their children become disaffected, they know how to play the game. They get their children statemented. Where as an awful lot of black parents don't...and so they fall through, because they don't have the backup.

Knowledge of the system consisted of assumed familiarity with the lengthy and at times cumbersome application procedures for statementing pupils. This required assessments by the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and referrals to the Educational Psychologist, where pupils and to some extent, their parents became subject to examinations to ascertain whether the label SEN could be ascribed to the pupil.

Statementing was represented by Mr H as a sought after status that required knowledge of procedures on the part of parents to be able to negotiate the bureaucratic challenges in the process of getting their children statemented. When probed to explain why he thought that black parents did not 'know the system', Mr H. inferred that this was due to lack of trust in the fairness of the system.

Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualisation of forms of social and cultural capital could help explain how some black pupils are disadvantaged in schools compared to their white counterparts. Knowledge of the system that Mr H attributes to white working class parents could be construed as a form of cultural capital that gives white parents the ability to understand and operate more successfully within the cultural norms and expectations of the school than their black counterparts. Once a certificate of statementing is issued to a pupil, it becomes a defining status that confers special attention from professionals and characterises the relationships that statemented pupils have with teachers and school staff. Mr H. argued that black parents' failure to get their children statemented was due to lack of trust in the system, the relatively low number of statemented black pupils could also be attributed to the fact that a large number of pupils at School S come from first generation Black and Minority Ethnic groups, whose parents might have limited familiarity with the British educational

system. This would also explain the disproportionately higher number of statemented white boys compared to black boys in School S. SEN register. Indeed Mr H. stated:

What happens is that, say for instance, it is not always the case, but disaffection can become a problem. A problem child causing trouble, and there was a time, when people started asking, wait a minute, aren't we expelling the black children more than the white children. But the reason is, because some of the white children were statemented, it was almost impossible to expel them. Oh we wanted to get rid of them, they were a pain. It was clear that the black parents weren't accessing that option. (Excerpt from interview transcript. Mr. H.)

Although white middle class males according to Mr. H were no less susceptible to disaffection, the distinctive advantage that they have was conceptualised by the teacher as resulting from the solid network of relationships that their parents had in the labour market which served to absolve them from the negative effects of disaffection, leading to differential outcomes along class lines in later life. Mr H said:

you would get that group from a middle class strata who are disaffected, but because of their background and because of a network, 5 years later they find their feet and they make their way through...so they are disaffected but...we've had cases where that particular boy, has thrown his hands up in the air and given up, but because his dad works in the city, he can get him a job in the city. He makes it through, and that's really the key difference. (Excerpt from interview transcript. Mr. H.)

The cultural and social capital at the disposal of many middle class children evidently confers an unfair advantage skewed against working class and black boys and there is strong evidence that correlates 'race', gender and class with academic underachievement, eg. in research on class and gender and underachievement (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Ball, 1981; Blanden, Hansen and Machin, 2008), underachievement and 'race' (Connolly, 1998; Blyth and Milner, 1996; Gillborn, 2000; Gilborn and Youdell, 2000; Osler and Starkey, 2005, Blanden, Hansen and Machin, 2008), underachievement 'race' and gender (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2004; Sewell, 1998; Warren, 2005; Blanden, Hansen and Machin, 2008). However, ethnicity seems to add to the layering of disadvantage whereby black boys from disadvantaged communities are even more likely to be characterised as disaffected than their white working class counterparts (Sewell, 1998; Gilborn, 2000; Youdell, 2003; Osler and Starkey, 2005).

Blanden, Hansen and Machin, (2008) found clear links between children and young people receiving Free School Meals and academic under-achievement. This is particularly evident in African-Caribbean boys on free school meals only a third of

whom achieved 5 A* – C, DCSF (2009). Black African and Black Caribbean boys are also more likely than other groups to live in areas of high deprivation with half living in the 20% most deprived areas and to receive Free School Meals.

It is clear from what has been discussed so far that class, 'race' and gender are highly significant determinants of the academic underachievement of the pupils who took part in this study and that the dominant discourse of disaffection fails to locate the debate about learner engagement and achievement in the wider context of social inequality. It is also evident from the teacher's and the Learning Mentor's narratives that the discourse of disaffection is fraught with ambiguity and contradictions. These are in part due to the dialectical relationship between the determinative effects of societal and institutional structures on the pupils' experiences of schooling and the pupils' agencies which in turn shape the context of schooling.

I have already discussed salient themes in the pupils' narratives on disaffection, which primarily related to the impact of pedagogic and curriculum dimensions of teaching on learning and on relationships with teachers and peers. The next section will extend my discussion about the collective influence of peer group members in resisting the demands for conformity in the school through semiotic oppositional performances as an expression of agency that represent a powerful counter-discourse to teachers' characterizations of disaffection.

5.4.3 Oppositional Performances in the Classroom

I have chosen to develop an understanding of the oppositional performances that pupils display in classrooms through theories of subcultural resistance. As a group, some young people have developed distinctive genres and styles, which deviate from the accepted norms of School S. Subcultural theory offers a useful lens through which to understand what is going on in School S. Thornton describes subcultures as 'groups of people that have something in common with each other (i.e they share a problem, an interest, a practice) which distinguishes them in a significant way from other social groups' (Thornton, 1997: 13). The group of young people who took part in this study had many characteristics in common. They were all boys and with the exception of one participant, they were all of African Caribbean descent. They were all referred to the Alternative Education Programme due to either poor attendance or disruptive behaviour. In theorising 'race' in education through the lens of subcultural theory, I am mindful of the risk of essentialising black young people as a homogenous 'lump of rebellious, phallogocentric underachievers' (Sewell, 1998:103), who are passive

victims of institutionalised racism in their schools and in society at large. On the other hand, an analysis of style is an integral part of critical discourse analysis as it semiotically captures how young people interact with the authority of teachers and with the school as an institution.

Subcultures are also said to have distinctive values and norms, (Eadie and Morley, 2003) that are oppositional to the dominant culture. Whilst complex and ambiguous, the values and norms expressed in the pupils' narratives reflect the importance of the mutuality of respect and solidarity in relationships between pupils and adults. As discussed under the interpretation stage, respect was cited by pupils as an important element in their characterization of a good teacher and not only led to reciprocation on their part, it also determined their level of engagement with a subject. Equally, the respectful relationships that the pupils had with the Learning Mentor and the staff at the youth centre were cited as an important factor in the pupils' engagement with the Alternative Education Programme.

Solidarity was evident in the pupils' adherence to group norms, which deviated from the expectations of the school. Young people who are deemed to be disaffected have a social identity in common that has been ascribed to them by the school, based on their supposed deviance from accepted norms, which not only regulate conduct, but also place restrictions on presentation styles. For instance, one of the characteristics used by the NASC teachers to describe a disaffected pupil related to the incorrect use of the uniform. The conformity demands placed on pupils are a major source of conflict, usually around the expectation to wear the uniform correctly. However, Mr H. argued that conflict between school staff and pupils about the uniform are caused by miscommunication. He believed in the rationality of uniform rules and stated that explaining the reasons for wearing the uniform could solve the problem. His arguments suggest that if the pupils were made aware of the health benefits of wearing shoes instead of trainers, they would accept this reasoning and would comply with the uniform rules. He said:

It is not rationalised or explained. I have had a problem with this for such a long time. It would be something as simple as trainers. a shoe with a heel is good for your department, and children growing up, wearing trainers, may suffer from particular muscle problems in their legs, everyone knows that when you don't have uniforms, it causes enormous problems. Even the historical introduction of the uniform for those poor children. (Excerpt from the transcript. Mr H. the Teacher)

However, the pupils' motives for presenting themselves the way they do is not a result of lack of awareness, but could be understood as an expression of their positioning

within the school, both by themselves and by others. Indeed, both the Teacher and Learning Mentor recognised that pupils often infringed the uniform policy due to peer pressure. According to the Learning Mentor, some of the pupils refused to wear the uniform correctly for fear of being called Neeks. He described a Neek as a derisory label which referred to pupils who conformed to the Teachers' expectations.

In addition to the strategies used by the pupils to challenge teachers' authority through overt and covert means in class, the uniform offers a visible site of collective resistance. In the focus group interview, there was heated discussion on the issue of the uniform code as it seemed to be a central point of contention between pupils and school staff. The pupils explained that the teachers often stopped them at the school gate to check if they were wearing the correct uniform. They commented that teachers wanted them to wear the uniform to a specification. For example, it is expected that pupils' ties are done up in such a way that four stripes are visible, rather than the preferred two stripes among pupils. When asked why they did not comply with the uniform requirements, a few pupils said that they did not wish to look like Neeks. Both in the focus group and one to one interviews, young people frequently referred to pupils who conform to teachers' expectations as 'Neeks'. Neeks were subjected to taunts and bullying, echoing what Collins described as 'derisive comments about teachers and kids who conform to teacher expectations' (Collins, 1998: 7). The ascription of the label 'Neek' creates a counter-discourse to the teachers' discourse of disaffection, and represents pupils who comply with school expectations as undesirable. As a category, Neek stands in opposition to teachers' definitions of a disaffected pupil.

However, pupils are required to wear school uniforms while at school, but many young people wear the trousers far below the hips 'busting a low batty', as young people describe it, or wear shoes with the laces undone and ties almost undone so that only two stripes are revealed rather than four, as the school uniform code requires them to do. What is deemed to be undesirable by teachers accords status and esteem among peers. For instance, wearing the tie loose so that only two stripes are showing, the trousers below the hips and unbuttoned shirt are rituals which act as defiance to teachers' authority, whilst according social status among peers. Hebdidge argues that the spectacular oppositional performances displayed by young people are attempts to gain independence from the dominant adult culture. He said that youth subcultures 'represent creative attempts to try to win autonomy or space from dominant cultures' (2005: 55). In a similar vein, Willis' (1977) seminal ethnographic studies on classroom resistance, developed new perspectives on subcultural resistance as positive

opposition against the structures of schooling, the overt and hidden curriculum, which are said to maintain and reproduce social divisions. Willis' work mainly focused on how white working class 'lads' oppositional behaviour in school represented resistance against cultural domination and mirrored class struggles in the factory and in wider society. Warren (2005) observed that while Willis' theoretical perspective on subcultural resistance has had major influence on much of the earlier research on black resistance in education, its adequacy and usefulness to explain the gendered nature of resistance in education has been critiqued (McRobbie, 1978; Skeggs, 1993) and its application to 'race' is under theorised. Warren (2005) recognised the transformative possibility that resistance theory accords to young people, while pointing out the problems associated with conflating resistance with oppressive masculine performances. Indeed the young people interviewed reported that Neeks were bullied and taunted when they resisted the peer pressure to conform to group norms.

The struggle between the teachers and pupils over the correct way to wear the uniform is relentless. The enforcement of the school uniform code begins at the school gate each morning. It is a ritual that involves teachers making pupils take off their trainers, put on their school shoes which are normally kept in the school bag, pull up their trousers and do their ties up to a specification. Hall et al. (1978) argue that youth oppositional performances embody 'interventions' against cultural domination. The pupils are simultaneously challenging the authority of teachers, whilst exerting pressure on peers to not conform to the school's normative expectations. In this respect, O'Donnell and Sharpe stated that: 'Schools engage in what is sometimes a losing battle to counterbalance the collective influence of the peer group, particularly the male peer group' (2000: 89). However, as Warren (2005) pointed out, this would suggest that oppositional performances are motivated by 'intentional rationality' or a collective consciousness of structural determinants on the part of the young people and imposes upon them the imperative to challenge the cultural domination they experience in schools and in society at large. Indeed, none of the young people interviewed rationalised their opposition to school in terms of cultural politics of resistance. The young people's grievances were focused on relationships with teachers, their perceptions of the curriculum being irrelevant and the influences that they, as a group, exerted on each other. The oppositional performances expressed in the way the uniform is worn are ambiguous, but nevertheless, a means of communication with the adults in the school as well as with peers. They communicate style preference as well as opposition to authority. They also provide means of reciprocating the disrespect that the pupils receive from teachers.

6. CONCLUSION

There is a high, hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the use of research based theory and technique. In the swampy lowlands, problems are messy and confusing and incapable of technical solutions. The irony of this situation is that problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or to society at large, however great their interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern. (Schon 1991:28)

The swampy, messy problems in Schon's metaphor poignantly resonate with the multi-layered and multi-faceted web of social determinants and effects of the discourse of disaffection at the situational, institutional and societal levels that I have attempted to critically examine as part of this study. This study revealed that disaffection is a complex phenomenon that requires a multi-dimensional investigation to develop a critical understanding of its causes and effects. Not only are studies that attempt to locate explanations to disaffection in pupils' affective, behavioural and cognitive dispositions, incomplete, they also have the effect of constructing deviant identities, with marginalising consequences for young people. The structure of schooling and the impact of ethnicity, gender and class are not in question, despite evidence which consistently shows differential academic outcomes and life chances along class, gender and 'race' lines (Hargreaves, 1967; Willis, 1977; Corrigan, 1979, Blackman, Connolly, 1998; Blyth and Milner, 1996; Gillborn, 2000; Gilborn and Youdell, 2000; O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2004; Sewell, 1998; Osler and Starkey, 2005, Warren, 2005; Blanden, Hansen and Machin, 2008; DfCSF, 2009).

However, as the narratives captured in this study suggest, the teachers and pupils are not merely constituted passive products of macro social orders and dominant discursive practices in institutions, on the contrary, they are actively involved in shaping the orders of discourse through creativity and struggle in the process of re-structuring the discourse of disaffection. The struggles expressed in teachers' attempts to negotiate the competing demands of their employers, the ethical principles of their profession and the inability or unwillingness of pupils to engage with learning, have led to greater flexibility in the curriculum and a recognition that as young people become more independent in late adolescence, they begin to pose a challenge to authority in their demand for greater autonomy and more respect from teachers and the school as an institution.

The pupils' disconnection from learning emerged as a rational response to a perception of the curriculum being irrelevant, but most of all, conflictual relationships with teachers

as a result of inequitable power relations in classrooms and in other areas of school life. A perception of disrespectful teachers engenders a mutual culture of disrespect. The pupils' respond through resistance manifested in the construction of 'Neeks' as undesirable pupils who comply with the school demands for conformity. Neekness is expressed through ways of interacting, ways of representing and ways of being which are oppositional to the dominant school culture.

In what follows, I shall summarise the answers to the questions that I posed at the beginning of this study in an attempt to develop a better understanding of pupils' disaffection. I sought answers to the following questions:

- How do some pupils acquire the label 'disaffected'?
- How do pupils perceive teachers' characterisation of a disaffected pupil?
- How significant is the quality of pupils' and teachers' relationships on pupils' engagement with learning?
- How significant is curriculum relevance to pupils' engagement with learning?
- How significant is the influence of peers on pupils' engagement with learning?
- How effective is the Alternative Education Programme in engaging disaffected pupils?

In answering the above questions, I organised the review of literature and categorised the corpus of data generated under the lenses or domains below, which will also be used to present the conclusions to this study:

- Constructions of disaffection;
- Pedagogical and curriculum dimensions of disaffection;
- The effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme in promoting students' engagement with learning.

6.1 Constructions of Disaffection:

6.1.1 How do some pupils acquire the label 'disaffected'?

The NASC teachers' characterisation of disaffection sought to define disaffected pupils based on a set of behaviours and dispositions which are thought to hinder pupils' engagement with what they are learning. These representations locate explanations of pupils' disengagement from learning in their cognitive and behavioural deficiencies and are consistent with similar representations of so-called disaffected pupils in the

literature (e.g. Sanders and Hendry, 1997, Merton, 1998, Heathcote-Elliott and Walters, 2000). Disaffected pupils are said to display disinterest in education and resistance to conformity demands due to their unpreparedness for learning, their unresponsiveness to teachers' legitimate requests which, hinder their learning and the learning of others. The NASC teachers' discourses of disaffection embody a view of education as transmission and learning as the product of disciplined compliance with instructions given by the teacher. The portrayal of a disaffected pupil fails to take into account the nature of the curriculum and structure of schooling and neither does it consider out of school factors, such as family background and socio economic status of pupils, which this study found to be crucial to academic success.

The teacher and Learning Mentor at School S were in agreement with the NASC teachers' characterisation of disaffection, but their explanations went beyond in school factors to include out of school influences. Difficult home circumstances were described by the teacher and Learning Mentor as highly significant and so was the influence of peers. Both the teacher and the Learning Mentor identified two categories of disaffected pupils: those who were unable to learn due to a range of unmet Special Educational Needs and those who were unwilling to learn due to lack of motivation compounded by a perception of lack of relevance of the curriculum. This categorisation of disaffected pupils is in line with the distinction made by Crisp et al. (1997) between 'active' and 'passive' disaffection.

Pupils who were deemed to be 'passive' disaffected were represented by the teacher as being unable to negotiate their way through a rigid and demanding educational system that failed to respond to their educational needs. Both the teacher and Learning Mentor described this group of pupils as lacking in self-esteem, echoing perspectives in the literature reviewed which correlated poor self-esteem with academic underachievement (Andrews and Andrews, 2003; Humphrey et al, 2004). Neither the Learning Mentor nor the teacher were able to explain precisely how they arrived at the conclusion that pupils' poor self-esteem was the cause or result of lack of engagement with learning. In agreement with Ecclestone and Hayes (2008) I argued that the discourse of self-esteem was part of a 'therapeutic turn' in education that served to reify a common sense category of affectively deficient pupils' whose deficiencies are naturalised as 'only human'.

The teacher cited curriculum overload as a barrier to the engagement of academically weaker pupils with their learning. He questioned the relevance of certain non core subjects to all pupils and argued for fewer periods per day, giving the example of five

periods per day as opposed to seven to allow time and space for pupils to consolidate learning.

The pupils who were categorised by the teacher and Learning Mentor as unwilling to learn or 'not bothered' were those who were described in the 'passive' category (Chrisp et al, 1997). There was ambiguity in the teacher's characterisation of the latter group of pupils as he described them as lacking direction and purpose, but he also suggested that their disconnection from learning was intentional. He attributed the lack of interest of some black pupils in education to a moral underclass counter school culture, citing Hip-hop music as a negative influence on the academic achievement of black boys. The Learning Mentor also suggested that some black pupils internalised the disillusionment of older members of the black community, whose experiences of racism in the labour market gave them little confidence in the usefulness of gaining academic qualifications. He suggested that some of the black boys were more interested in the 'street education' they were able to get out of school which better equipped them for life. It would seem from the Learning Mentor's narrative that some young people were lured into lucrative drug dealing in return for having access to money and a 'moped'. Whilst there are claimed links in the literature surveyed between disconnection from school and criminality (Witt and Crompton, 1996; Martinek, 1997; Reid, 2002; Blanden, Hansen and Machin, 2008), the direction of causality is under theorised. It remains unknown, therefore, whether young people become involved in crime due to disconnection from school or whether their disconnection from school is due to involvement with crime.

Nevertheless, the discourse of pupils' disaffection has for sometime linked disaffection, truancy and school exclusion to crime, particularly among young people of African Caribbean descent eg. in the Audit Commission, (1996); the Select Committee on Education and Employment fifth report, (1998) and Tony Blair's remark, reported in the Guardian (12th July, 2007), that the rise in the incidence of youth crime was due to a 'distinctive black culture'. Drawing on Cicourel's (1995) study on delinquency in California and what is known about deviance (Lemert, 1962; Becker, 1963; Goffman 1968; Best and Kellner, 1997, 2001; Best, 2004), I was able to interpret the construction of disaffection as the result of the school as an agency of social control and how black boys who become disconnected from learning in schools could be viewed as the product of a school system that creates conditions which fail to engage them. What is equally damaging about negative stereotyping is that it leads to the construction of deviant subjects and the demonisation of young people. The reification of such common sense categories has an impact on the relationships black pupils' in

schools have with their teachers. The assumptions made by some teachers about black pupils serve to ascribe fixed characteristics to black boys as a homogenous group of anti-school rebels (Sewell, 1998). This has the effect of a self-fulfilling prophecy on some black young people who become trapped in the social identity of the hyper-masculine that is ascribed to them in schools, (Youdell, 2003).

Discussions with the Learning Mentor and the Teacher about the impact of class, ethnicity and gender on academic achievement revealed that while it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which the pupils' ethnic identity was a determinant factor on learner engagement, the differential outcomes of disaffection were skewed against black boys. All the pupils interviewed were male, one was white and five were of African Caribbean descent. They all lived in single parent families with the caring parent of two of the respondents being unemployed, while three were in semi-skilled part-time employment and one in domestic full-time employment. They were all on free School Meals and were all selected for the Alternative Education Programme as they were deemed to be disaffected due to poor attendance or challenging behaviour.

The reason why the teacher and the Learning Mentor were ambiguous about the impact of 'race' on disaffection from learning was partly to do with the fact that the majority of pupils at School S. were black. Furthermore, they both claimed that many pupils could be described as disaffected, irrespective of gender, class or 'race'. However, their narratives suggest that black boys were more likely than white boys to be excluded from school.

The teacher's explanation for this pointed to white working class parents having a better knowledge of the statementing system than black parents. Statementing was, in his view, a way of safeguarding against permanent exclusion from school. This is reflected in the disproportionately higher number of white pupils on School S. SEN register of statemented pupils, but does not explain black parents lack of knowledge of the statementing process.

The Teacher attributed black parents' reluctance to engage the statementing procedure to lack of confidence in the fairness of the system. However, many of the black pupils at School S. come from newly arrived and refugee communities to Britain, who are less likely to be familiar with the educational system. Mr H also explained that white middle class pupils were no less susceptible to disconnection from education, but he argued that the social networks their parents are assumed to have, give them an unfair advantage when seeking employment in later life.

The ascription of negative stereotypes to black pupils implicit in conceptualisations that demonise and pathologise them, adds very little to our understanding as to why some young people become disconnected from what schools have to offer. However, the pupils' narratives suggested that their attitudes to learning could be understood as a rational response to irrelevant curriculum, disrespectful teachers and the impact of peer pressure in engendering a counter school culture. Under my next question, *how do pupils perceive teachers' characterisation of a disaffected pupil?* I summarise the responses given by young people to Teachers' characterisation of disaffection.

6.2 Pedagogic and Curriculum Dimensions of Disaffection

The question, 'How do pupils respond to teachers' characterisation of disaffection?' comprises three questions relating to the curriculum, relationships between teachers and pupils and the influence of peers. The summary of responses to each question are listed below:

6.2.1 How significant is Curriculum Relevance to Pupils' Engagement with Learning?

The pupils' responses to the NASC teachers' discourses of disaffection suggest that the set of behaviours and dispositions identified as indicators of disaffection were not limited to a few disaffected pupils, but were routinely displayed by most pupils. They pointed out that some teachers were inconsistent in their responses to individual pupils, whereby those who were perceived by the teachers to be disruptive received disproportionate reactions from teachers.

Boredom, as a result of lack of curriculum relevance, transmissive teaching pedagogies, poor relationships with teachers and the influence of peers, were cited by pupils as the main sources of their disconnection from learning. Repetitive in class tasks such as copying text from a textbook and exercises involving reading long passages of text were reported to be de-motivating. Pupils explained that when they felt bored, they often used a range of avoidance tactics to avoid completing the task at hand. These tactics ranged from feigning sickness to avoid writing, to needing to sharpen a pencil or visit the toilets.

The pupils' narratives about reasons for their disengagement from learning echo the views of the pupils on disaffection in a study conducted by Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin (1996) which concluded that among the key factors which lead to 'misbehaviour'

in class or truancy are the influence of friends, relationships with teachers, the content and delivery of the curriculum, family factors, classroom context, and problems arising from pupils' personalities and abilities. Furthermore, having consulted other studies which sought to elicit the views of young people on disaffection, (eg Hesketh, Stoll and O'Keefe, 1993; Morgan, 2003; Miller, 2005; Wilson et. al, 2008), the three common reasons for disaffection were cited as: influence of friends and peers; relationships with teachers and the content and delivery of the curriculum. Truancy was also found to be a rational choice due to lack of relevance of certain subjects, particularly in Key Stage 4 (Stoll and O'Keefe, 1994; DfES, 2004).

Common themes in the young pupils' narratives about curriculum relevance in the one to one interviews and in the focus group interview echo representations of certain subjects as pointless and lacking relevance to their future careers. The RE teacher expressed concerns at the pupils' instrumental view of learning. He lamented the lack of passion for learning among his pupils and suggested that the problem with the curriculum was not the content, but the overload. He argued that overload was due to targets and league tables, which he represented as standing in the way of productive learning. It has long been argued that focus on the transmission of skills and competencies in education leads to the adoption of uncritical instrumental pedagogies (Kelly, 2004, Smith, 2004; Ball, 2001; Gerwitz, 2002; McLaren, 2003; Giroux, 2003).

Mr H. suggested questioned the relevance of some subjects to certain pupils. He could not see the merits of teaching pupils modern foreign languages, when, he argued, many had not mastered English. However, the respondents in this study have indicated that while subject relevance determined their level of engagement with subjects, the teacher effect by far outweighed the subject effect. This is discussed below under the question: How significant is the quality of pupils' and teachers' relationships on pupils' engagement with learning?

6.2.2 How Significant are Pupils' and Teachers' Relationships on Pupils' Engagement with Learning?

Relationships between teachers and pupils were cited by pupils as a determining factor in their level of engagement with subjects. In the focus group and one to one interviews with the pupils, there was a consensus that the extent of engagement with subjects depended on the approach and attitude of the teacher. Pupils' accounts revealed that the teacher effect outweighed the subject effect. A teacher who was perceived to be a

'nice' teacher was able to capture the interest of pupils in subjects irrespective of their initial interest in it.

The experiential, relational and expressive values in the narratives of the participants suggest that the subject positions, both ascribed and assumed, of the teacher, the Learning Mentor and the pupils were simultaneously maintained and resisted through the exercise of power. Power was exercised both in and behind the discourse (Fairclough, 2001).

Power in the discourse was evident in how teachers interacted with pupils on a daily basis and confirms Elliott et al.'s assertion that one of the barriers to pupils' engagement in learning is teachers' '*control and authority exercised without respect for them as individuals*' (2002:48).

There was a consensus among the pupils that the qualities of good teacher included respectfulness, friendliness and good humour. Conversely, a bad teacher was thought by pupils to be disrespectful, sarcastic and rude. Respect seems to be an important ingredient in establishing good rapport with pupils.

Power behind the discourse was evident in the culture of performativity at School S., which pervaded all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment (Ball, 2001). Mr H. expressed his frustration at the instrumental approach to teaching and learning and the Learning Mentor's narrative suggests that pastoral care, was no exception. Their work was constrained by institutional targets in relation to improvement in pupils' behaviour, attendance and academic achievement. The drive to improve standards was engendered by the unsatisfactory school Ofsted report (2007) and the Headteacher's determination to turn the school around.

However, irrespective of how the school staff felt about the targets driven approach to teaching and learning, they had to enforce its conventions in their educational practice. It is evident that the frustration of the teacher and the Learning Mentor and the disaffection of their pupils, was the result of the rigidity and centralisation of the curriculum and the managerialist approach of the Headteacher which, have constrained their capacity to provide adequate pastoral support to all pupils (Vulliamy and Webb, 2003). Focus on raising the GCSE A – C results became the focus of all teaching sessions in Key Stage 4. This necessitated drills through homework and regular in class revision, which was met with resistance from many pupils and a deterioration of relationships between teachers and pupils. Some young people were

unwilling to tolerate the uninteresting and disengaging formal learning environment. Elliot et al. study findings suggest that disaffection was:

a rational response on the part of students to particular conditions in classrooms rather than simply a general disposition to deviate from acceptable norms of behaviour (2002: 49)

However, the pupils' narratives in this study suggest otherwise. The acceptable norms of behaviour were subverted by the pupils and replaced by group norms, thereby exerting significant pressure on peers to conform to these, and by implication, infringe the institutional rules. The next section summarises the perspectives of the pupils, the Learning Mentor and the Teacher in relation to the significance of the influence of peers on pupils' engagement with learning.

6.2.2 How Significant is the Influence of Peers on Pupils' Engagement with Learning?

The influence of peers was reported to be an important factor in pupils' disconnection from learning. This was expressed in talking in class, being disruptive and on occasion truanting. An important manifestation of peer pressure was the representation of Neeks. A Neek is a derisory label given to pupils who comply with teachers' instructions. It is an undesirable label which poses resistance to teachers' control and authority.

I examined the oppositional performances that pupils displayed in the classroom through theories of subcultural resistance. My argument was that as a group, some young people have developed distinctive genres and styles, which deviated from the accepted norms of School S. Thornton describes subcultures as 'groups of people that have something in common with each other (i.e they share a problem, an interest, a practice) which distinguishes them in a significant way from other social groups' (Thornton, 1997: 13).

The pupils on the Alternative Education programme had many characteristics in common. They were all male, five were of African Caribbean descent and one was white. They were all referred to the Alternative Education Programme due to either poor attendance or disruptive behaviour. Subcultural groups have distinctive values and norms, (Eadie and Morley, 2003) that are oppositional to the dominant culture.

It is evident from the views expressed by the pupils in the focus group and one to one interviews that conformity demands placed on in school around the correct way to wear

the uniform are a major source of conflict. Furthermore, the NASC Teachers identified not wearing the uniform correctly as one of the indicators of disaffection. The teacher and the Learning Mentor both reported that enforcing the uniform code was a source of contention. The teacher suggested that disagreements about the uniform were due to miscommunication and that the mere explanation of the rationality of correct attire in school would resolve disagreements. He argued that wearing shoes instead of trainers was good for deportment and that the uniform offered the benefit of rendering social class differences between pupils invisible.

However, the pupils' reasons for not wearing the uniform correctly were primarily to ensure alignment with the group norms, which stand in opposition to the school's uniform code, which specifies that pupils must wear a shirt tucked in trousers, with a blazer, shoes and that the tie must be done up in such a way that four stripes are visible, rather than the preferred two stripes among pupils. One of the reasons given by pupils for not complying with these rules was reluctance to be thought of as a Neek by peers. Neeks are said to *'have their trousers high, shirt tucked in, long tie. They always sit at the front, always do their homework. They raise their hands to speak and always want to please the teacher'*. (Extract from transcript, James.). Neeks are frequently bullied and derided by their peers and are under immense pressure to conform to the peer group norms. This creates a counter-discourse to the teachers' discourse of disaffection, as it stands in opposition to teachers' definitions of a disaffected pupil.

The preferred style for wearing the uniform among peers is: trousers far below the hips, shoes with the laces undone and ties almost undone so that only two stripes are revealed rather than four, as the school uniform code requires them to do. What is deemed to be undesirable by teachers accords status and esteem among peers. These rituals act as defiance to teachers' authority, whilst according social status among peers. Hebdidge (2005) argues that the spectacular oppositional performances displayed by youth subcultures are attempts to gain independence from the dominant adult culture. The participants did not express their motives for infringing uniform policy in terms that pointed to an 'intentional rationality' (Warren, 2005) to gain independence from the teachers, but the relentlessness of the daily rituals performed by the pupils and the teachers around the correct wear of the uniform, renders the notion of resistance compelling. Indeed, Willis' (1977) ethnographic study on classroom resistance led him to view such performances as positive opposition against school, as it supports and maintains social divisions in the wider social matrix.

Whilst complex and ambiguous, the values and norms expressed in the pupils' narratives reflect the importance of the mutuality of respect and solidarity in relationships between pupils and teachers.

6.3 The Effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme in Promoting Pupils' Engagement with Learning.

The narratives of all the pupils, the teacher and learning mentor, suggest that the Alternative Education Programme was a success. The pupils valued the learning that was taking place at the youth centre. They were given opportunities to gain skills in multimedia design and creative writing. They could see the benefit of these skills to their future careers and the presence of a Connexions Advisor at the youth centre made them think about career prospects and design a CV and conduct mock interviews.

Although the teacher had some reservations about the disconnection between policy making and implementation, he recognised the value of the Alternative Education Programme in motivating pupils to engage with learning. He particularly commented on the positive interactions that the pupils had with the staff at the youth centre. This highlights the importance of the pedagogic dimension in capturing and sustaining the interest of pupils in learning.

The pupils responded well to the pedagogic approach of the youth centre staff and their ability to choose how to approach their creative writing and multimedia project work gave them a sense of ownership of their learning. They were motivated by the practical nature of the project work and the accredited multimedia course was an added incentive that gave them something to aim for. The pupils were clearly motivated by the relevance of what they were learning to their interests, but they were also motivated by the potential benefits that the skills and knowledge gained in multimedia were likely to have on their career destinations.

The involvement of a Connexions Advisor in the Alternative Education Programme has given it a strong focus on employability. The Connexions Advisor met with the pupils regularly on a one to one basis to explore their career interests. These sessions included simulated job interviews and completion of personal CVs. It is difficult to say to what extent these encounters with the Connexions Advisor influenced the pupils' thoughts about their prospective careers, but the Alternative Education Programme appears to be linked to the discourse of employability in the narratives of all the participants. Indeed, this was cited by the Learning Mentor as an aspect of its success

along with the removal of disruptive pupils from their classrooms to enable the learning of others. There is some evidence that the Alternative Education Programme has led to improvement in the pupils' attendance and behaviour during lessons held at school S. However, the extent of their engagement with these subjects remains low. This is because their continued involvement with the Alternative Programme is conditional on meeting targets agreed with the Learning mentor at the beginning of the referral to the Alternative Education Programme.

6.4 Reflections on the Research Process

Completing this research has been much more challenging than I had expected. On a personal front, I have changed jobs twice and moved homes four times. During this time I also developed and saw an MA in Youth Studies through academic and professional validation at the University of East London, where I currently work. Inevitably, this resulted in frequent starts and stops along the way. My reflections on the research process are related to what I have learned from the research process and a realisation of what I could have done differently.

Being a Parent Governor at the school where the research was conducted made it possible for me to sustain dialogue with the school staff and the governing body in relation to my area of study. I was part of a working group within the school that focused on pupils' attendance and behaviour improvement. This enabled me to develop good context knowledge as well as form informal relationships with the young people, the Learning Mentor and staff involved in out of school projects. However, as pointed out in the introduction, whilst my role as Parent Governor put me in a privileged position in terms of ease of access to participants and relevant data, for this very reason, it also imposed greater need for personal and epistemological reflexivity throughout the research process. My reflections consisted of a series of questions in post interview memos and observations about the extent to which my values, commitments and preconceptions influenced the research process. The questions were: What's going on? Who's involved? In what relations? What's the role of language in what's going on? These questions enabled me to consider the extent to which my role as Parent Governor may have influenced the responses given by the Teacher and Learning Mentor to the questions I asked them. Although the interview transcripts suggest that the participants spoke openly about their individual and collective experiences, their background knowledge or 'Members Resources' inevitably influenced the descriptions and interpretations they provided in the process of meaning making and conveying, as did mine.

The Alternative Education project presented a convenient site to explore issues relating to the construction of disaffection with the pupils and the staff involved in attendance and behaviour improvement. It was made clear to the pupils that they did not have to take part in the research. However, given that I had taken part in the workshops held at the youth centre, I developed rapport with them in an informal setting, which served to minimise the effects of my formal role in the school and prepared the ground for the initial focus group interview with the young people.

The sample for this study was small as it was made up of six young people and two practitioners. I was happy with a small sample given that I was not seeking to generalise, but wanted to gain in-depth understanding of the context. However, whilst I felt that it was important to capture the views of the young people and the teacher and Learning Mentor, the multiple perspectives, albeit relating to similar issues, had meant that I had to categorise the data separately for different participants, then merge it in subsequent discussions.

The original intention was to conduct a series of focus groups, but due to dynamics within the group which led me to conclude that the participants influenced as well as inhibited the contributions of some of the young people, I felt that one to one interviews would yield more detailed responses. Indeed the one to one interviews provided rich narratives as well as the scope to probe respondents for further clarification and elaboration on issues discussed, however, in hindsight, I should have conducted a further focus group interview involving both the young people and staff from the school. I say this for two reasons. Firstly, dialogue among participants would have enabled me to conduct more detailed analysis of textual features. For example, it would have allowed me to examine thematic structure of the text, information focus, cohesion devices, wording, politeness conventions and turn taking. These would have provided further insights into how participants position each other through language.

Although I have considered how ideological representations are coded in the vocabulary and metaphors used by participants, as illustrated in Philips and Hardy's (2002) diagram shown as Figure 3.1 in page 55 of this thesis, the focus of my analysis was on the broader context within which language is produced, consumed and reproduced, rather than on textual features such as grammar, punctuation and turn-taking.

I found writing the first four chapters fairly unproblematic, but the discussion and analysis took me considerable time to complete. Although in the process of writing up the Methodology and Research Design Chapters I conducted a reasonably extensive survey of the literature on discourse / critical discourse analysis, the diversity of orientations suggested that there was no single blue print for CDA, but different approaches with varying foci. For example, Whetterell and Potter (1992) have a social psychological bent while Weiss and Wodak (2003) adopt a more discourse-historical approach; the work of Van Dijk (2001) has a cognitive focus, whilst Fairclough (1991, 2003) is strongly influenced by Systemic Functional Linguistics of Halliday (1985).

I drew on Fairclough's approach which entails examining language in use, discursive practices and the social context. I found Fairclough's suggested questions for understanding these domains illuminating in my attempts to develop an understanding of disaffection. For example, identifying different elements of discourse including *Genre*, *Discourse* and *Style* enabled me to consider linguistic and semiotic forms of communication, which proved very useful in examining how the pupils communicated resistance through the way they wore the uniform. However, I am aware that my analysis of how resistance is enacted by pupils through *style* is an area where a more sophisticated argument could have been presented to capture nuanced and sometimes contradictory displays of creativity and struggle. What I struggled with most, which is a common criticism of resistance theory, is the extent to which elements of discourse are borne out of a conscious collective response to the exercise of power or differentiated behaviours and attitudes by actors in response to the immediate context of schooling. The young people described how the lack of relevance of the curriculum, peer pressure and the quality of relationships with some teachers contributed to their withdrawal. Similarly, the teacher described how focus on targets prevented him from dedicating more time to addressing the individual concerns of learners. I have shown that the critical analysis of the discourses of disaffection revealed continuities in struggle across the situational, institutional and societal contexts within which the school operates. I intend to develop my analysis further and to share my developing understanding through the publication of an article on disaffection and school exclusion in a journal in the very near future.

6.5 Implications for Personal Development and Professional Practice

Completing a Doctorate in Education at the University of Exeter has had significant implications for my personal development and my professional practice. It has enabled me to engage critically with theoretical perspectives and debates on policy and practice issues relating to teaching and learning and gave me the impetus to ground my analysis of the discourse of disaffection within the wider social context. However, the implications for my personal development were realized in more significant ways in my professional practice as a parent governor at the school where the research took place and as a University Lecturer. I continue to encourage my students to interrogate the taken for granted negative representations of young people in society. I have also disseminated my developing understanding of the discourses of disaffection with colleagues. I recently presented a paper based on this research at the Society of Educational Studies conference at the University of East London on the 6th October 2010.

During the research process at School S, I contributed to discussions about the issues relating to pupils' behaviour, their attendance and their levels of academic achievement. I was able to make informed contributions to the debates and to take part in the planning of extended school activities. In this respect I drew on my earlier experience as a Youth Worker in developing a shared understanding of the context and establishing good rapport with the young people and the youth centre staff. I also shared, with the teachers and other parent governors, my developing understanding of alternative approaches to promoting pupils' engagement with learning, whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the research participants. The recommendations to the school were as follows:

- To develop strategies for involving young people in decision-making processes relating to the management and organization of the school. The rationale behind this idea is to give pupils a sense of ownership of the school and to enable them to feel valued members of the school community. Pupils' involvement in planning school events or attendance at selected school meetings to discuss issues relating to pupils' experience are examples of strategies that could be used to encourage pupils' participation.
- To develop more collaboration with the Children and young People's Services in the Borough through the extended schools initiative. A pool of peripatetic young people's services staff are already working with many schools in the Borough on projects which range from Arts Development, International Youth Exchanges to Poetry and Rap. The school could tap into the expertise of staff from Children and Young People's Services to widen extracurricular activities.
- To provide mechanisms for eliciting pupils' voice about the issues which affect them in the school. For example, setting up a pupils' forum to include representatives from each Year Group who could meet with the headteacher and other staff on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to teaching and learning.
- To consider including training on conflict resolution between teachers and pupils in the school INSET programme. Leap organization in London offer training for schools on managing conflict between professionals and young people.
- To consider ways of encouraging more BME teaching staff to apply for vacant teaching posts in order to better reflect the profile of pupils on the school roll in the school staff.
- To encourage the girls and young women who are on the Alternative Education Programme to become actively involved in the workshops.
- To ensure that homework policy is clarified and consistently implemented to enable pupils who complete their homework to receive feedback from teachers.

LIST OF APPENDICES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

The Appendices are presented in chronological order in line with the development of the research.

Appendix	Content
Appendix 1 Letter to the Headteacher of School S.	Headteacher's consent to gain access to School S. to conduct interviews with staff and young people
Appendix 2 Letter to Mr H.	A letter to confirm interview arrangements with Mr. H.
Appendix 3 Parental Consent form for young people	A letter with tear-off slip to request the consent of parents / guardians for young people to take part in the research
Appendix 4 Young People interview Proforma – Focus group interview	Focus group interview schedule – young people
Appendix 5 Young People interview Proforma – one to one interviews	One to one interview schedule – young people
Appendix 6 The Teacher's Interview Proforma	One to one interview schedule – Mr. H.
Appendix 7 The Learning Mentor's Interview Proforma	One to one interview schedule – Mr. T.
Appendix 8 Excerpts from Mr H's and Mr T's interview transcripts with codes	Coded excerpts from the interview transcripts (Mr T and Mr H)
Appendix 9 Pupils' transcripts with codes	Pupils' transcripts with codes across domains
Appendix 10 Notes from the Focus Group Interview	Notes and reflections completed immediately after the focus group interview
Appendix 11 CDA Chart	Chart used in the coding for Genre, Style and Discourse

Appendix 1

	Mohamed Moustakim Tel. E-mail: 6 th May 2007
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Dear Mr Smith, (not the Headteacher's real name)

As discussed with you last week, this is to formally ask your permission to conduct a series of interviews with pupils from Key Stage 4 who are currently on the Alternative Education Programme, the Learning Mentor and one of the Key Stage 4 teachers.

The aim of the research is to find out the views of pupils and teachers on disaffection from learning. The research is in connection with my own academic study and will not be used in any other context without the consent of all the people who will take part.

I will be issuing parental consent forms to all the pupils who agree to take part in the interviews and observations

Yours sincerely,

Mohamed Moustakim

Appendix 2 (Letter to Mr H. the RE teacher)

	Mohamed Moustakim Tel. E-mail: 12 th March 2007
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Dear Mr Henry (Not the Teacher's real name)

Further to our conversation last week about my research on, I write to confirm that I would like to interview you at a mutually agreeable date / time.

May I assure you that any information given by you during the interview will be strictly confidential and none of the names of any of the research participants taking part in the research or their schools will be included in any material published.

I would appreciate it if you could let me know when it would be possible for you to take part in the interview.

Yours sincerely,

Mohamed Moustakim

Appendix 3

	Mohamed Moustakim Tel. E-mail: 12 th March 2008
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Dear Parent / Guardian

I am doing research on how young people of secondary school age experience school and would like to interview your son for this purpose. Could I ask for your consent for your son to take part in interviews and group discussions after School at the Training and Resource Centre, St Faith's, Alma Road, London SW18 1AA.

Any information given by your son will be strictly confidential and none of the names of young people taking part in the research or their school will be included in any material published.

If I may have your permission, please sign the tear-off slip below and return to me in the attached self addressed and stamped envelope. For your information, Freddie, the Youth Worker at the TRC, will be involved in the interviews and group discussions. Once you return the consent form, I will send you details of when the interviews and group discussions will take place. Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 07950273312.

Yours sincerely,

Mohamed Moustakim

Please sign and return the tear-off slip below to Mohamed Moustakim in the attached self-addressed and stamped envelope.

✂-----

I hereby give consent to: (Insert your son's name below) to be interviewed by Mohamed Moustakim.

Signature:----- Date:-----

Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this consent form.

Appendix 4

Focus group interview questions
Young people

1. What do you like most and least about school?
2. What does 'disaffection' mean to you?After their replies: This term is generally used to describe young people who are not interested in education. Some teachers have described a disaffected young person as one who regularly does the following: (An OHP of the following will be shown) What do you think about these views?

- Needs reminding about instructions given to the whole class
- often does not complete the homework
- uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work
- is often reprimanded for talking in class
- does not have a study diary
- frequently infringes school uniform requirements
- presents substandard work
- fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book
- does not contribute to class discussion sensibly
- often forgets to bring books to the lesson
- takes no pride in her or his exercise book
- expresses little interest in his or her progress

Further questions will be asked in response to the participants' replies, including:

1. How would you describe your relationships with your teachers?
2. What is your favourite subject and why?
3. What would you say motivates you most to learn, your interest in a subject itself, or the teacher who is teaching it?
4. Do you think that your friends have an influence on how seriously you take school and how you get on with teachers? How?
5. Could you tell me how you ended up on the Alternative Education project?
6. How are you finding it?
7. Could you describe a typical session at the youth centre?
8. Would you say that your attendance and general attitude to school has changed since you joined the programme?
9. What is your relationship with the staff at the youth centre like?
10. Has being on this project changed how you feel about school?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 5

Semi-structured interview questions (One to one)

Young people (KS 4)

1. After explaining what the research is for and what it is about generally, the first question will ask the participant to briefly say something about himself (all participants are boys), his background, eg, schools attended, any brothers, sisters, type of neighbourhood etc.
2. What do you like most / least about School S? and why?
3. What would you like to do when you are older?

4. Some teachers have described a 'disaffected' young person as one who regularly does the following: (I will stop at the end of each statement so that you can comment on it)
 - Needs reminding about instructions given to the whole class
 - often does not complete the homework
 - uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work
 - is often reprimanded for talking in class
 - does not have a study diary
 - frequently infringes school uniform requirements
 - presents substandard work
 - fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book
 - does not contribute to class discussion sensibly
 - often forgets to bring books to the lesson
 - takes no pride in her or his exercise book
 - expresses little interest in his or her progress

1. How would you describe your relationships with your teachers?
2. What is your favourite subject and why?
3. What would you say motivates you most to learn, your interest in a subject itself, or the teacher who is teaching it?
4. Do you think that your friends have an influence on how seriously you take school and how you get on with teachers? How?
5. Could you tell me how you ended up on the Alternative Education project?
6. How are you finding it?
7. Could you describe a typical session at the youth centre?
8. Would you say that your attendance and general attitude to school has changed since you joined the programme?
9. What is your relationship with the staff at the youth centre like?
10. Has being on this project changed how you feel about school?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 6 (Mr H interview questions)

Interview questions (The Teacher)

- Could you tell me about your role in this school / organisation.
- How do you find working with young people KS3 and 4 ?
- What does disaffection mean to you?
- How would you tell a disaffected young person?
- Is there a typical profile of a disaffected young person? With respect to gender, class, ethnicity etc?

Some teachers have described a disaffected young person as one who regularly does the following:

- Needs reminding about instructions given to the whole class
 - often does not complete the homework
 - uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work
 - is often reprimanded for talking in class
 - does not have a study diary
 - frequently infringes school uniform requirements
 - presents substandard work
 - fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book
 - does not contribute to class discussion sensibly
 - often forgets to bring books to the lesson
 - takes no pride in her or his exercise book
 - expresses little interest in his or her progress
- Why do you think some young people (14 to 16) are not interested in school?
 - Curriculum?
 - Relationship with teachers?
 - Conformity demands?
 - Are there aspects of teaching that get in the way of dedicating more time to meeting the needs of disaffected pupils?
 - What strategies would you say, do students use to resist teachers demands for compliance?
 - What do you think determines a pupil's interest in a subject, the teacher or the subject itself?
 - To what extent, do you think, do pupils influence each other in school?
 - Could you tell me about the Alternative education Programme. Do you think it is working? In what respect?
 - Black boys can?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for taking part in this interview.

Appendix 7 (Mr T interview question)

Interview questions (Learning Mentor)

- Could you tell me about your role in this school – describe a typical day?
- How do you find working with young people KS3 and 4?
- What does disaffection mean to you?
- How would you tell a disaffected young person?
- Is there a typical profile of a disaffected young person? With respect to gender, class, ethnicity etc?

Some teachers have described a disaffected young person as one who regularly does the following:

- Needs reminding about instructions given to the whole class
 - often does not complete the homework
 - uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work
 - is often reprimanded for talking in class
 - does not have a study diary
 - frequently infringes school uniform requirements
 - presents substandard work
 - fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book
 - does not contribute to class discussion sensibly
 - often forgets to bring books to the lesson
 - takes no pride in her or his exercise book
 - expresses little interest in his or her progress
- Why do you think some young people (14 to 16) are not interested in school?
- Curriculum?
 - Relationship with teachers?
 - Peer pressure?
- Are there aspects of your work that get in the way of dedicating more time to meeting the needs of disaffected pupils?
 - What strategies would you say, do students use to resist teachers demands for compliance?
 - Tell me a bit more about the Alternative Education Programme?
 - What do you do in a typical session?
 - What other services are available at the youth centre?
 - Is it working as far as re-engaging disaffected pupils?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for taking part

Appendix 8 Excerpts from Mr H and Mr T interview transcripts with codes Coded Transcript for Mr H.

1. Constructions of Disaffection

Constructions of Disaffection – The Teacher	Orders of Discourse
<p>1. <i>There are those at the top end of any ...let's just say a range of dyslexia.</i></p> <p>2. <i>They literally can not access the information.</i></p> <p>3. <i>So to put them in the system that is education,</i></p> <p>4. <i>it's just like throwing them at the deep end</i></p> <p>5. <i>and they can't swim.</i></p> <p>6. <i>When they can't navigate their way around the system,</i></p> <p>7. <i>it knocks their self-esteem and confidence in themselves</i></p> <p>8. <i>And there are those who are just not bothered</i></p> <p>9. <i>They don't see the point of education</i></p> <p>10. <i>They can't relate it to their daily lives</i></p> <p>11. <i>I think disaffection is a sense of being lost.</i></p> <p>12. <i>I think, it's a case of ' I am not too sure</i></p> <p>13. <i>where I am coming or going'.</i></p> <p>14. <i>They are lost and what they then do, is take the easy option</i></p> <p>15. <i>but it is clearly an option,</i></p> <p>16. <i>It's just an obstinancy.</i></p> <p>17. <i>Clearly one factor is no morals.</i></p> <p>18. <i>It is not a factor to be denied.</i></p> <p>19. <i>Clearly the influence of Hip Hop music.</i></p> <p>20. <i>Those factors do impinge on the success of particular groups.</i></p>	<p>SEN (D)</p> <p>Cognitive deficiency (D)</p> <p>Education as a system (D)</p> <p>Mismatch (D)</p> <p>Drowning (D)</p> <p>Unwillingness to learn (D)</p> <p>Education as irrelevant (D)</p> <p>Disconnection (D)</p> <p>Being lost (D)</p> <p>Helplessness (D)</p> <p>Uncertainty (D)</p> <p>Opting out (D), (G)</p> <p>Agency (D)</p> <p>Resistance (D), (S)</p> <p>Moral Underclass (D)</p> <p>Determinance (G)</p> <p>Subculture (D)</p> <p>Failure (D)</p>

Constructions of Disaffection – The Teacher	Orders of Discourse
<p>21. <i>Many males are disaffected,</i></p> <p>22. <i>many females black and white are disaffected</i></p> <p>23. <i>The difference comes when an awful lot of white English,</i></p> <p>24. <i>I'll start with the white English...when their children become disaffected,</i></p> <p>25. <i>they know how to play the game.</i></p> <p>26. <i>They get their children statemented</i></p> <p>27. <i>The black parents, don't know how to play the system.</i></p> <p>28. <i>Probably because they think that they will not get very far with the</i></p> <p>29. <i>procedures to get their kids statemented</i></p> <p>30. <i>some middle class kids are disaffected</i></p> <p>31. <i>but they have a safety net of contacts</i></p> <p>32. <i>A few years down the line their dad will get them a job in the city</i></p>	<p>Gender (D)</p> <p>Ethnicity (D)</p> <p>Difference in outcome (D)</p> <p>knowledge of the game (G), (D)</p> <p>Statementing (G), (S), (D)</p> <p>Not Playing the game (D), (G)</p> <p>Lack of confidence in procedures (D)</p> <p>Middle class disaffection (D)</p> <p>Social network (D)</p> <p>Better life chances (D)</p>

Constructions of Disaffection – The Teacher	Orders of Discourse
<p>32. <i>It is not rationalised or explained.</i></p> <p>33. <i>I have had a problem with this for such a long time.</i></p> <p>34. <i>It would be something as simple as trainers.</i></p> <p>35. <i>a shoe with a heal is good for your department,</i></p> <p>36. <i>and children growing up, wearing trainers, may suffer from</i></p> <p>37. <i>particular muscle problems in their legs,</i></p> <p>38. <i>everyone knows that when you don't have uniforms, it causes enormous</i></p> <p>39. <i>problems.</i></p> <p>40. <i>Even the historical introduction of the uniform for those poor children</i></p> <p>41. <i>My mother, aged twelve stopped going to school when my grand mother</i></p> <p>42. <i>died because she didn't have a uniform</i></p> <p>43. <i>and she knew she was going to be laughed at by other kids with her hand</i></p> <p>44. <i>me downs.</i></p> <p>45. <i>So it is very easy to explain the whys of these rules.</i></p>	<p>Rationality of rules (D)</p> <p>Conflict (S)</p> <p>Functionality (D)</p> <p>Rationality of rules (D)</p> <p>Wellbeing (D)</p> <p>Uniform as a solution (S)</p> <p>Uniform serves the interests of poor children (D)</p> <p>Uniform renders class differences invisible (D)</p> <p>Neek is Source of derision (D)</p> <p>Rationality of rules (D)</p>

2. Curriculum and Pedagogic dimensions of Disaffection (Mr. H)

Constructions of Disaffection – The Teacher	Discourse Type
<p>40. <i>Yes, I think the most constant thing about the curriculum, is that it is</i></p> <p>41. <i>overloaded.</i></p> <p>42. <i>It's one size fits all.</i></p> <p>43. <i>Why force someone to do double science when they can barely handle single</i></p> <p>44. <i>science?</i></p> <p>45. <i>They do six periods a day, maybe there should only be five efficient periods,</i></p> <p>46. <i>and give them more space.</i></p> <p>47. <i>It is not the content, it is the perception of it</i></p> <p>48. <i>The problem with the content is the system that backs up.</i></p> <p>49. <i>the targets, league tables and so on</i></p> <p>50. <i>What we don't have is the beauty of knowledge.</i></p> <p>51. <i>That intrinsic idea of knowledge.</i></p> <p>52. <i>It seems that knowledge must lead to somewhere,</i></p> <p>53. <i>So I say to the kids, 99% of what you learn, you will not use in your world of</i></p> <p>54. <i>work,</i></p> <p>55. <i>but they still believe that education is all about work.</i></p> <p>56. <i>But if, there is not an exam, they see the experience in terms of education as</i></p> <p>57. <i>pointless.</i></p>	<p>Curriculum overload (D)</p> <p>Curriculum as rigid (D)</p> <p>Ability (D)</p> <p>Relevance (D)</p> <p>Value in content (D)</p> <p>Education as instrumental (D)</p> <p>Intrinsic motivation (S)</p> <p>Education as instrumental (D)</p> <p>Learning for its sake (D)</p> <p>Learning as process (D)</p> <p>Employability (D)</p> <p>Value in education (D)</p> <p>Learning as irrelevant (D)</p>

Constructions of Disaffection – The Teacher	Discourse Type
53. <i>I say to them, I say look, I have been teaching longer than you have been alive.</i>	Experience as power (D)
54. <i>So essentially, there is very little news that they can come up with, that I haven't heard or haven't experienced.</i>	
55. <i>So therefore, in a certain sense, I have become top dog.</i>	Teacher as powerful (D)
56. <i>It's very easy to run circles around them.</i>	Manipulation (G)
57. <i>It is like taking candy away from a baby.</i>	Infantilising (G)

Constructions of Disaffection – The Teacher	Discourse Type
58. some teachers stop being human beings when they become teachers.	Teachers as inhuman (D)
59. And they teach accordingly.	Teaching as dehumanising (D)
60. <i>I think there is a clear separation,</i>	Extended role of teacher (D)
61. <i>as to you the teacher</i>	Educational role (G)
62. <i>and the educational process and you,</i>	Procedural role (G)
63. <i>almost like the Social Worker or surrogate parent.</i>	Teacher as Social Worker (D)
64. <i>I think it is worth distinguishing between the two.</i>	Teacher as surrogate parent (D)
65. <i>Educationally, you feel confident and even competent,</i>	Professional competence (S)
66. but there are factors which are not within your immediate remit.	

3. The Effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme (Mr. H)

Constructions of Disaffection – The Teacher	Discourse Type
67. In twenty years here, to be honest with you, I haven't noticed any real change.	Ineffective (D)
68. Those initiatives are great on paper, but there are so many of them	Overload (D)
69. I guess you could say that the programme is working in the sense that	Impact (D)
70. It removes disruptive pupils who are bored from the class	Disruption (G)
71. It also gives those pupils an opportunity to pursue activities of interest to them in an informal setting.	Relevance (D)
72. When I visit the Youth Centre to observe what is going on, I am amazed at how their interactions are so more mature than in the classroom.	Maturity (S)
73. They are far more motivated to do what they are interested in.	Informality (S)
74. But, does it really help re-integrate them back into mainstream school?	Motivation (S)
75. I don't think so	Interest (S)
	Re-integration (G)
	Negative statement (S)

Coded Transcript for Mr T, the Learning Mentor

1. Constructions of Disaffection

Constructions of Disaffection – The Learning Mentor	Orders of Discourse
1. I can see why a teacher can turn around and say that this kid is disaffected.	Rational construction (G)
2. As a Learning Mentor, I wouldn't call it disaffection.	Contestability (G)
3. Because there could be many reasons why that kid is acting like that.	
4. His home situation could be dysfunctional.	Out of school factors (D)
5. Disaffection is manifested in different ways	
6. you have those who can't do it	Dysfunctional home (D)
7. and have low self-esteem and poor behaviour	Variety of disaffection (D)
8. and those who won't do it. They are just not interested	Cognitive deficiency (D)
9. the register of pupils referred to Learning Mentors, who could be called disaffected,	Self-esteem (D), Challenging behaviour (D)
10. always shows more boys than girls.	Choice (D)
11. It is hard to say in terms of ethnicity, because the majority of our kids are black, so we deal mainly with black males.	Disinterest (D)
12. some of the kids have their mind on stuff outside the school.	Referral to LM (G)
13. They feel that there are people out there who are giving them the education they need, streetwise..	Over-representation of black boys (D)
14. There are a lot of young people eleven to seventeen who are riding.	Negative influence (D)
15. They give them mopeds and they push the drugs.	alternative street education (D)
16. some black kids think that the system is against them.	Riding (D), (G), (S)
17. They think that they will get educated, but still won't get jobs.	Black Males (D)
18. That is bad influence from the older people in the black community.	Corruption (D)
	Dealing (G), (D)
	Struggle (D), (G)
	Education as purposeless (D)
	Negative influence (D)
	Black community (D)

Constructions of Disaffection – The Learning Mentor	Orders of Discourse
19. Neek is a 'cuss word'	Negative labelling (D)
20. <i>Neeks do their homework</i>	Homework (G)
21. <i>come on time .</i>	Punctuality (G)
22. <i>listen to what the teachers say</i>	Conformity (D), (G)

2. Curriculum and Pedagogic dimensions of Disaffection (Mr. T)

Constructions of Disaffection – The Learning Mentor	Discourse Type
23. some of the disaffected young people are bright	ability (D)
24. but they don't feel that the curriculum stretches them .	
25. they get bored and play up	Boredom (D)
26. young people say, plain and simple, if they don't like the teacher,	Teacher effect (S)
27. they don't do the work'.	
28. As far as young people are concerned, a nice teacher is someone who shows them respect	Resistance (S)
	Respect (G)

29. They don't like being shouted at, picked on or ridiculed in front of the class	Disrespect (G) Mutuality (G) Boredom (D) Creativity in teaching (S) Motivation (S) Teacher effect (S)
30. Teachers who show them respect, are respected.	
31. some pupils say that they get bored when teachers give them tasks that are repetitive	
32. Some NQTs come to teaching with lots of creative ideas, like project and group work	
33. they motivate the pupils to get into the topic	
34. because they use interactive teaching methods	

3. **The Effectiveness of the Alternative Education Programme (Mr. T)**

Constructions of Disaffection – The Learning Mentor	Discourse Type
35 think that the reason why the EP is successful is to do with the fact that we agree the learning goals with the young people	Negotiated learning (G), (S)
1. Outside the National Curriculum They do creative writing and media design	Motivation (S) Creativity (S)
2. It's all practical stuff	Practical knowledge (G)
3. That they can relate to	Relevance (D)
4. And they get a certificate at the end.	Certification (G)
5. The aim was to remove disruptive pupils from the class	Motivation (S)
6. I believe we have achieved that.	Success (S)
7. We have J, the PA from Connexions who meets with them one to one	Disruption (G)
8. To help them do their CVs and	Skills acquisition (G)
9. Prepare for interviews.	Relevance (D)
10. The skills that the young people have learned	Targets (D)
11. With a certificate to back that up	Career guidance (G)
12. Will serve them well when they start looking for jobs	Employability (D) Learning as instruction (G), (D) Employability (D)

Appendix 9 (Data Analysis – Pupils transcripts with codes across domains)

Selected Excerpts from the Pupils' Transcripts with Codes

1. How do pupils respond to teachers' characterisation of a disaffected pupil?

Ahmed	Orders of Discourse
13. Yes it is like that sometimes	Agreement with characterisation (D)
14. Some teachers expect you to copy stuff from the text book.	Learning as instruction (D), (G)
15. It is dead boring to have to write about stuff that is not very interesting.	Boredom (S), disinterest (S)
16. I sometimes go to the front and say...I am sharpening my pencil or am getting a pen...	Avoidance (G), (S)
17. can I go to the toilet and things like that then when I am really bored,	Avoidance (G)Boredom (S)
18. I just say, oh I'm sick or I have hurt my hand so I can't write, to miss the lesson.	Avoidance (G)
19. Most of the stuff they teach us at school is useless	Learning as irrelevant (D)
20. So when the teacher is talking about stuff that makes no sense	Learning as senseless (D)
21. I switch off	Disconnection (D), (G)

Ahmed - A pupil's response to Teachers' characterisation of Disaffection

Jonathan	Orders of Discourse
22. It is like that in my class	Agreement with characterisation (D)
23. It's cos people find the lesson boring	Boredom (S)
24. The stuff that they teach you is boring	Boredom (S)
25. The teacher goes over and over the same stuff	Learning as repetitive (G)
26. And expects you to do homework on the same boring stuff we do at school	Learning as repetitive (G)
27. I pretend to work, but I am usually miles away	Pretence (S), Disconnection (S)
28. Or I write notes to my friends	Distraction (S)
29. When the teacher is not looking	Disconnection (S)

Jonathan - A pupil's response to Teachers' characterisation of Disaffection

Nofel	Orders of Discourse
30. That happens everyday.	Agreement with characterisation (S)
31. The teachers always complain about people not listening.	Boredom (D), disinterest (D)
32. Everyone talks in class	Disruption
33. People get bored and play up	Avoidance (G), (S)
34. Some teachers don't mind	Inconsistency (S)
35. Some teachers are strict.	Strict teachers (S)
36. And want you to do homework for them	Homework (D)
37. If you don't they send you to referral	Referral (G)
38. If you pretend you are working	Pretence to work (G), (S)
39. You get away with it sometime.	Disconnection (S)

Nofel - A pupil's response to Teachers' characterisation of Disaffection

James	Orders of Discourse
40. Yeah that's how it is	Agreement with characterisation (S)
41. But some people get away with it	Teachers' inconsistency (G)
42. It's the same people that always get picked on	Unfairness (G)
43. What the teachers talk about has no use	Learning as irrelevant (D)
44. It's boring	Boredom (S)
45. And it is better to turn around and talk to your friends	Distraction (G)
46. I think homework is a joke	Negative statement about homework (S)
47. No one does it	Deriding teachers (G)
48. Some teachers get the p**** taken out on them	

James - A pupil's response to Teachers' characterisation of Disaffection

Michael	Orders of Discourse
49. Some of that stuff goes on	Agreement with characterisation (S)
50. When it's a teacher who is annoying	Annoyance (Pupils) (S)
51. We talk in class	Talking in class (S)
52. Some people chuck stuff at each other	Disruption (G)
53. The teacher gets annoyed	Annoyance (Teacher)
54. Everyone is at it though	Common behaviour (G)
55. People make excuses why they can't work	Avoidance (G)
56. Its because it's the teachers that teach us don't realise that half the class don't listen when they teach random stuff	Learning as irrelevant (D)
57. It's boring	Disconnection (D), (G)
	Boredom (D), (G), (S)

Michael - A pupil's response to Teachers' characterisation of Disaffection

Sam	Orders of Discourse
58. It depends on the teacher	Teacher effect (S)
59. Some teachers are strict	Strictness (S)
60. Like Mr H, no one dares do that in class	
61. But a lot of the teachers tear their hair out	Despair (teacher) (S)
62. Cos no one wants to do the work	Avoidance (G), (S)
63. It takes them a long time to get everyone to settle	Engagement as hard work (G)
64. I reckon it's cos people don't think that there is any point in what they teach us	Learning as irrelevant (D)
65. Most people come to school to hang out with their friends	Peers (D)
66. They don't want to learn anything	Refusal to learn (D), (G)

Sam - A pupil's response to Teachers' characterisation of Disaffection

2 How significant is the quality of pupils' and teachers' relationships on pupils' engagement with learning?

Ahmed	Orders of Discourse
2. Kids like a teacher who does fun stuff 3. that makes the subject interesting. 4. If the teacher is nice and kind and doesn't just get you to copy from the textbook. 5. When the teacher lets us talk about interesting stuff everyone wants to be taught by him. 6. A nice teacher doesn't intimidate you by shouting at you and picking on you all the time. 7. The way they speak to you is kind and caring and gives you respect. 8. They also smile a lot and tell jokes sometimes. 9. Some teachers ask you to do homework 10. and, like if my mum forces me to do it at home... 11. some teachers don't ask to see it. 12. So after all the hard work you do, 13. they are not bothered to even look at it.	Positive teacher effect (S) Positive teacher effect (S) Learning as instruction (G), (D) Positive teacher effect (S) Nice teacher (S) Caring (S) Humour (S) Homework (G) Parent intervention (G) Inconsistency (S)

Ahmed - Relationships

Jonathan	Orders of Discourse
14. I don't like most of my teachers. 15. They are just so dry. 16. If I like a subject and it is taught by a nice teacher, I listen, 17. but half the time, the teacher just expects you to listen. 18. It doesn't do it for me. 19. A nice teacher shows respect. 20. Then you respect him back. 21. A nice teacher doesn't shout at you , 22. is not sarcastic in front of your friends	Negative statement about teachers (S) Boring (D) Positive teacher effect (S) Learning as instruction (D), (S) Respect (S) Mutuality of respect (S) Shouting (S) Sarcasm (S)

Jonathan - Relationships

Nofel	Orders of Discourse
23. My favourite subject is PE. 24. I used to like maths I was good at it. 25. The teacher I had last year was very nice, 26. but my maths teacher this year is so strict. 27. She treats us like year 7 kids. She gets us to do lots of GCSE stuff 28. and she wants you to do things her way. 29. If you complain, you end up in detention.	Routine (D), (G) Favourite subject (PE) (S) Teacher effect (S) Not subject effect (G) Curriculum as product (negative) (D) Detention (G)

Nofel - Relationships

James	Orders of Discourse
30. I think it is the teacher that can make you like a subject or hate it 31. If you get on with the teacher and like the subject you're lucky 32. If the teacher don't get it and keep getting you to write things down all the time 33. It's a turn off	Teacher effect (S) Subject effect (G) Learning as instruction (D) Disconnection (S)

James - Relationships

Michael	Orders of Discourse
34. My teachers put me off school 35. They think they can treat you like a kid 36. Some of the teachers are alright 37. But many of them start arguments for nothing 38. They think they can disrespect you in front of everyone and get away with it 39. I don't care, I just tell them to get lost	Negative teacher effect (S) Disrespect (S) Positive teacher effect (S) Conflict (G) Disrespect (S) Mutual disrespect (D)

Michael - Relationships

Sam	Orders of Discourse
40. If I don't like the teacher 41. That's it, I just don't do any work 42. I hate Ms J 43. She shows no respect whatsoever 44. She's always having a go at me 45. And she stands so close when she shouts at me 46. I say to her you are so close I can feel your spit on my face 47. Then she gives me detention	Negative statement about teachers (S) Negative teacher effect (S) Disrespect (S) Respect (S) Space (S), (G) Shouting (S) Sarcasm (S) Punishment (G)

Sam - Relationships

3. How significant is curriculum relevance to pupils' engagement with learning?

Ahmed	Orders of Discourse
48. My favourite subject is art	Favourite subject (Art) (S)
49. All the other subjects are a waste of time	Curriculum irrelevance (D)
50. It's not the subject	Not subject effect (G)
51. It is what the teacher gets you to do	Teacher effect (S)
52. When we talk about interesting things in class	positive statement about dialogue (S)
53. It gets everyone interested if it is about life	Boredom (S)
54. But the stuff they try to get us to do is boring	

Ahmed - Curriculum Relevance

Jonathan	Orders of Discourse
55. I like stuff we do at the youth centre	Positive statement about AEP (S)
56. I don't like any subject at school	Negative statement about school subjects (S)
57. I don't see the point	Curriculum irrelevance (D)
58. If the teacher is alright	Positive teacher effect (S)
59. He gets you into the subject	Negative statement about teachers (S)
60. But none of my teachers this year is any good	

Jonathan - Curriculum Relevance

Nofel	Orders of Discourse
61. My favourite subject is PE.	Routine (D), (G)
62. I used to like maths I was good at it.	Favourite subject (PE) (S)
63. The teacher I had last year was very nice,	Teacher effect (S)
64. but my maths teacher this year is so strict.	Not subject effect (G)
65. She treats us like year 7 kids. She gets us to do lots of GCSE stuff	Curriculum as product (negative) (D)
66. and she wants you to do things her way.	Detention (G)
67. If you complain, you end up in detention.	

Nofel - Curriculum Relevance

James	Orders of Discourse
68. I don't see the point of doing Spanish.	Curriculum irrelevance (D)
69. I don't need to learn it.	Learning as unnecessary (D)
70. I have been to Spain loads of times and I have never needed to speak it.	Instrumental view of Learning (D)
71. Everyone speaks English over there.	English as international (D)
72. My Spanish teacher keeps giving us homework that I have never done.	Learning as irrelevant (D)
73. It's just a waste of time.	

James - Curriculum Relevance

Michael	Orders of Discourse
74. I don't like RE.	Negative statement about (RE) (S)
75. My mum stopped forcing me to go to Mass when I was 11.	Curriculum irrelevance (D)
76. I am not interested in religion and all that stuff.	Disinterest (S)
77. I don't need to know about Jesus to help me get a job.	Employability (D)

Michael - Curriculum Relevance

Sam	Orders of Discourse
78. I like creative writing and web design	Favourite subject (CW/WD) (S)
79. That's why I like going to the youth centre	Positive statement about AEP (S)
80. I don't like any subject at school	Negative statement about curriculum (S)
81. It's all hard work trying to do stuff for GCSE	Learning as hard work (D)
82. It puts you off	Disinterest (S)

Sam - Curriculum Relevance

4. How significant is the influence of peers on pupils' engagement with learning?

Ahmed	Orders of Discourse
67. I usually hang out with my friends	Peer influence (G), (S)
68. We sit at the back of class and joke	Disruption (G)
69. Sometimes if one of us wants to bunk off school we all do it after the register	Resistance (S)
70. I usually keep my school shoes in my backpack	Conformity demands (D)
71. like everyone else	Annoyance (D)
72. I like to wear trainers cos they are comfortable to walk in	Compliance (D), (G), (S)
73. As soon as you come into school they stop you	Compliance as 'Neekness' (S)
74. And ask you to take off your trainers	
75. Do up your tie	
76. Pull your trousers up, like a Neek	Neeks as deviants (D)
77. Neeks are those who do everything right basically.	Learning as instrumental (D)
78. They wear long tie, trousers to the waist, shoes, shirt top button done up and stuff like that'.	Smartness(D), (S)
79. No one likes Neeks at school	Resistance (D), (S)
80. But they are the ones that will get the best jobs	
81. They are smart	
82. The cool kids wear trousers below the hips, shirt out, no blazer, trainers, tie undone, study diary with graffiti all over it, sits at the back of the class.	

Ahmed - Influence of Peers

Jonathan	Orders of Discourse
1. We all wear the uniform the same way	Conformity to group norms (S), (G)
2. The teachers split us up in class	Talking in class (G)
3. But we still talk in a lesson	Being picked on (G)
4. The teachers pick on us	Disrespect (G)
5. the way they talk is rude	Conflict (S)
6. Like sometime I try to explain why I haven't got my tie	Disrespect (G)
7. The teacher just keeps yelling at me	Resistance (S)
8. I get annoyed	
9. So I end up cussing him	Neeks as compliant (G)
10. Then I get sent to detention.	
11. Neeks are those who get all their uniform	Derision (G)
12. Blazer, tie, shirt tucked in, trousers pulled up	Bullying (G)
13. That's why they get cussed and bullied	

Jonathan - Influence of Peers

Nofel	Orders of Discourse
4. Sometime if one of us wants to bunk off the lesson we all do it	Peer influence (S), (G)
5. But we do it after the register	Avoidance (G), (S)
6. Some teachers don't say anything	
7. It's not just us that wear trainers in school	Resistance (S)
8. Everyone does it	

Nofel - Influence of Peers

James	Orders of Discourse
9. I don't always follow my friends	Resisting peer influence (S)
10. I don't want to get in trouble with my mum	Avoiding trouble (G)
11. Yes everyone likes to wear trainers and have the tie showing two notches	Resistance (G), (S)
12. cos no one wants to be called Neek	Neeks as undesirable (D)
13. the teachers don't like it though	Annoyance (teachers) (S)

James - Influence of Peers

Michael	Orders of Discourse
14. Yeah friends sometime get you to skip a lesson	Peer influence (S), (G)
15. Or have fights in class	Disruption (G)
16. The trainers everyone does that	Resistance (S)
17. You keep them in your backpack	
18. And if they are black like the school shoes	Avoidance (G), (S)
19. No one notice	
20. Some teachers see you wearing trainers and turn the blind eye	Inconsistence (G)
21. But other times if they have it for you	
22. They stop you and send you home or to referral	

Michael - Influence of Peers

Sam	Orders of Discourse
23. I always get in trouble with my mates	Peer influence (S), (G)
24. Because we do stuff that annoys the teacher	Con-compliance (S)
25. Like not having the blazer or not wearing the tie	
26. Sometime we're all sent to detention together	Resistance (S)
27. The teachers want us to wear the uniform like Neeks	Neeks as undesirable (S)
28. And do the homework and listen in class, but we don't	Resistance (S), (G)

Sam - Influence of Peers

5. How effective is the Alternative Education Programme in engaging disaffected pupils?

Ahmed	Orders of Discourse
5. I like working with T better than doing the stuff they teach us at school.	Positive statement about LM (S)
6. Because some of the teachers are bad. They have a bad attitude.	Disinterest (S)
7. I get on very well with T and F.	
8. They listen to us and respect us.	Positive relationship with staff (S)
9. They help us and make us want to learn.	Listening (G)
10. The stuff we do at the youth centre is more interesting.	Motivation (G)
11. This is better for me in the long run.	Relevance (D)
12. I want to become a designer, like graphic design and that.	Aspiration (S)
	Employability (D)

Ahmed - A pupil's Views on the Alternative Education Programme

Jonathan	Orders of Discourse
13. Mr. T is great.	Positive statement about LM (S)
14. He is nice to us and helps us with work at the youth centre.	Helpfulness (S)
15. F teach us to do design websites.	Relevance (G)
16. I learn a lot at the youth centre.	Value in learning (S)
17. It also helps me think about what I want to do in the future.	Employability (D)
18. Definitely better than school.	Positive statement about AEP (S)
19. They get on with everyone.	Positive relationship with staff (S)

Jonathan - A pupil's Views on the Alternative Education Programme

Nofel	Orders of Discourse
1. It's good fun	Learning as fun (D)
2. The people there don't have a go at you	Positive relationship with staff (S)
3. You can do what you want	Freedom (S)
4. They don't criticise you	Value in learning at YC (D)
5. Or tell you what to do	Positive relationships (G)

Nofel - A pupil's Views on the Alternative Education Programme

James	Orders of Discourse
20. I like going to the centre	Positive statement about AEP (S)
21. T is very nice	Positive relationship with staff (S)
22. You can talk to him about anything you're not happy about	approachability (S)
23. He tells you not to get in trouble with teachers	Guidance (G)
24. F is good at the web design	Expertise (S)
25. He knows so much	Positive cognitive statement (S)
26. D gets us to think about the future	Employability (D)
27. Like getting a job	Positive statement about AEP (S)
28. It's better than school	Disconnection (D), (G)

James - A pupil's Views on the Alternative Education Programme

Michael	Orders of Discourse
29. It's great here, some of the programmes they teach us here, like Dreamweaver and Flash are top.	Positive statement about AEP (S)
30. It costs £300 a day to learn those programmes.	Value in learning at YC (D)
31. We are doing it here for free.	Instrumental value (D)
32. Once I get the certificate, I'll get a part-time job in web design.	Employability (D)
33. This place is great	Accreditation (D)
34. And T and F are the best	Employability (D)
	Positive statement about AEP (S)
	Positive relationship with staff (S)

A pupil's Views on the Alternative Education Programme

Sam	Orders of Discourse
35. It's very good	Positive statement about AEP (S)
36. I like the media design	
37. and creative writing	Value in learning at YC (D)
38. They let us write about anything we want	Freedom (D)
39. I write rap lyrics	Creativity (S)
40. The people at the youth centre are good	Positive statement about AEP (S)
41. They don't act like our teachers	
42. They are friendly	Positive relationship with staff (S)

Sam - A pupil's response to Teachers' characterisation of Disaffection

Appendix 10 (Notes and reflections from focus group)

up interview
3rd July 2008, 4pm

The Focus group interview was held at a youth centre with a group of young people who were involved in the Alternative Education Programme organised by the school in partnership with the local Youth Service. F, the senior Youth Worker agreed to be involved in facilitating the focus group.

It was important to create an informal atmosphere, so the initial conversation revolved around questions relating to how long the young people knew each other and whether they had always been at the same school. The purpose of the focus group interview was then explained to the young people, with a statement about confidentiality. Given my role as a Parent Governor at the school, it was important for the young people to understand that the research was not organised by the school, but related to my own research interest in teaching and learning. I assured the young people of complete confidentiality and that no names would be attached to any specific comments that any of them made.

The first question related to what young people liked most and what they liked least about being at school. Their responses suggested that being with friends / peers was the most appealing aspect of being at school. Their preferences for subjects varied, but the order of preferences by the highest number of respondents were PE, English, Drama, ICT and History. However, there was a consensus among the respondents that the extent of engagement with subjects depended on the approach and attitude of the teacher. Friendliness, respect, humour, easy going were used to describe the qualities that the young people thought a good teacher had. On the other hand, disrespect, sarcasm and rudeness were used to describe a teacher who was not considered to be nice.

I wanted to find out how significant the 'teacher effect' was on engagement in the subject by posing different scenarios:

- a subject of most preference taught by a teacher not considered to be 'nice'
- a subject of least preference taught by a teacher not considered to be 'nice'
- a subject of most preference taught by a teacher considered to be 'nice'
- a subject of least preference taught by a teacher considered to be 'nice'

The responses overall suggested that while subject preference was a motivating factor in learner engagement, the perception of a 'nice' teacher determined the extent to which pupils enjoyed learning about the subject and in consequence their level of participation in discussions and commitment to the completion of in class tasks and homework set by the teacher. Some of the pupils pointed out that some teachers were able to make a subject of least interest to them, more interesting. Having probed further on this particular point, the pupils suggested that in view of the positive relationship they have with some teachers, they felt obliged to make an effort and did not mind doing so. It felt as though they did this in appreciation to the teacher's approachable pedagogic style.

The 2nd question was: What does 'disaffection' mean to you? Only two of the young people said that they understood what it meant, but both of their responses associated disaffection with negative pupils' attributes, such as. 'trouble makers' and 'kids who give teachers a hard time'. After their replies, I explained that the term meant different things to different people and that definitions given by the young people could apply. I then explained that the term is generally used to describe young people who are supposedly not interested in education. I also explained that some teachers have described a disaffected young person as one who regularly does the following: (I

projected this using an OHP).

- Needs reminding about instructions given to the whole class
- often does not complete the homework
- uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work
- is often reprimanded for talking in class
- does not have a study diary
- frequently infringes school uniform requirements
- presents substandard work
- fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book
- does not contribute to class discussion sensibly
- often forgets to bring books to the lesson
- takes no pride in her or his exercise book
- expresses little interest in his or her progress

I asked them to go through the statements one by one and share their views with the group. A summary of their responses is shown below under each of the characteristics suggested by the NASC teachers:

1. Needs reminding about instructions given to the whole class

A discussion issued about how some teachers picked on certain pupils and not others. There was a sense among the pupils interviewed that they were often unfairly reprimanded by some teachers, while other pupils who did not always pay attention to what the teachers said, were not reprimanded as much. There was a sense that the level of pupils' engagement with the topic depended on interest in it, but more importantly, the teacher's ability to keep them motivated by making the topic interesting. In many ways, the pupils reiterated what they had already said above about the importance of the teacher effect to the level of engagement of the pupils with the subjects taken. It also seems that needing to remind pupils about instructions given to the whole class, was not specific to any particular group of pupils, but at various times different pupils were not able to maintain their attention and focus on what was being talked about in class.

2. often does not complete the homework

The participants resented having to complete homework during their home time. They said they rarely completed homework and the rare occasions that they did it was for Mr. X, who was described as being strict but whom they respected. The reasons for not completing the homework ranged from:

- Repetitive tasks from what had already been covered in class.
- Being too busy with social events and other commitments.
- The teachers did not consistently check that homework was completed.
- Did not wish to be seen as a NEEK by peers.
- Very few peers do homework.

When asked what could make them do homework, they said that interesting project work that they can complete with friends out of school might encourage them to meet outside and work on it, but the project had to be related to areas of particular interest. Some of the participants explained that they objected to the idea of doing homework, as they felt that often the material was already covered during the day and there was no reason to revisit it at home.

3. uses delaying tactics in class to avoid work

The participants explained that they used all kinds of strategies to avoid work, but pointed out that it depended on the teacher. Again the teacher-affect appears to be important. Their accounts suggest that the strategies used include:

- I am feeling sick
- I am thirsty
- I need to go to the toilet
- I have a cramp
- I need to sharpen my pencil
- Picking a fight with a friend in class

Some explained that in some chaotic classrooms, it can take a teacher up to fifteen or twenty minutes to restore calm and get the pupils to focus on the task at hand. Twenty minutes out of the usual 50 minutes period only leave 30 minutes!

4. is often reprimanded for talking in class

The participants explained that it was difficult to sit next to their friends and not talk to them. They explained that the teachers always reprimanded the same pupils and ignored others who were involved in talking to their friends just as much.

5. does not have a study diary

The participants explained that they tended to lose their study diaries often or forget it at home. They, at times have it but do not show it to teachers as many of them draw Graffiti on the front cover. When asked why they did this, they explained that it was a 'cool' thing to do and that they drew Graffiti on most school books and paperwork .

6. frequently infringes school uniform requirements

There was heated discussion on the issue of uniform requirements as it seemed to be a central point of contention between pupils and school staff. The pupils explained that the teachers often stopped them at the school gate to check if they were wearing the correct uniform.

7. presents substandard work

There were reiterations of comments made earlier in the discussion about this particular characteristic of disaffection. The young people said that they like working in groups on projects that are of interest to them. A few of the young people said that they avoided writing whenever possible, but did not mind doing work on the computer. Some of them said that they had illegible hand writing and even when they put in the effort to make it neater, they said that the teachers were often unimpressed. Comments were made about girls being able to present work better than boys, followed by Neeks!

8. fails to respond to written comments in his or her exercise book

The comments in the exercise book were at times intended for the parents to see. This is why some of the pupils said that they got rid of their exercise books or lost them. There was a sense that most of the notes left in the exercise book by the teacher were reprimands or reminders to complete homework, so not many responded to the comments.

9. does not contribute to class discussion sensibly

A long discussion ensued about incidents in the classroom, when some pupils got into arguments with the teacher. Some of the pupils seemed to enjoy making fun of supply teachers and not many dared disrupt the classrooms of teachers known to be strict.

Often, it seems that when the topic of conversation is tightly constrained by the teacher, whereby pupils are not allowed to talk about it freely, the pupils lost interest and when they got frustrated, some said that they disrupted the class.

10. often forgets to bring books to the lesson

Here again, pupils reiterated what they had already said about their exercise books. One of the pupils said that he hid his exercise book as it had Graffiti on it which could land him in detention. Although it appears that some teachers did not take this too seriously, while others did.

11. takes no pride in her or his exercise book

The discussion revolved around graffiti on the exercise book. Some of the pupils, who had their exercise books with them took them out to show their Graffiti Art off. One of the pupils explained that the books usually get squashed in the bag, particularly when carrying trainers and PE kit.

12. expresses little interest in his or her progress

The pupils did not seem to understand what the teachers meant by this. One said that he was pleased when he got good marks as he would show his mum and she would be proud of him. Most of the pupils said that they were keen to get good exam results and were hoping to go to College.

Further questions were asked in response to the participants' replies, including:

What would make school more interesting?

The pupils commented mainly on teachers attitudes. What would make school interesting in the views expressed by most pupils are teachers who do not shout and denigrate pupils. Curriculum that is interesting such as project work and discussions about issues of interest to the young people. They suggested that if they could choose aspects of the curriculum, they would take it more seriously and have a sense of direction and ownership of what they are learning. They all suggested that if they would be very happy if they were allowed to spend all taught sessions at the youth centre.

Tell us about your experience of the Alternative Education Programme?

There was a consensus among the group that the Alternative Education project was successful in providing them with opportunities to learn new skills and the presence of the Connexions Advisor was seen as positive as it made them think about future careers. However, the most significant factor in the participants' positive feedback about the AEP were the good relationships they had with the youth workers and the learning mentor. They repeatedly stated that the staff at the youth centre showed them more respect and that they reciprocated by being friendly and co-operative.

How were most people selected for the programme?

All the young people were selected for the AEP due to their poor school attendance and behaviour. They were initially referred to the Learning Mentor to discuss ways of improving their behaviour and attendance. Their parents were involved in the discussion about attending the AEP weekly.

Can you describe the type of activities you do on the programme?

The young people reported that they preferred the Multi-media workshops to creative writing as they gained skills in the use of advanced Multi-media programmes. They accepted however that they have to take subjects that involve writing as they recognized the importance of communication to their future careers.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

No further comments were made.

Thank you for taking part in this group interview. I am going to write down what we have discussed and I will send it to you to read and confirm whether it is a true record of what has been said. At that point, I will ask you to let me know if there is anything that you think should be changed.

Appendix 11

CDA CHART

In coding for Genre, Discourse and Style, I have used Rogers (2004) CDA Chart to guide the questions asked in each and across the domains of analysis. These were:

Genres

The aim of this domain of analysis is to describe the organisational properties of interactions.

Microlinguistic analysis:

Thematic structure of the text
Information focus
Cohesion devices
Wording
Metaphors
Politeness Conventions
Turn taking

Discourses / interpersonal

What perspectives are represented (experiential values)
What are the possible interpretations of This text?
What are the possible audiences?
What resistant readings are possible?

Style / ideational

Active and passive voice
Modality
Patterns of transitivity

Adapted from Rogers (2004:76-77).

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