

Critical Commentary

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Critical Commentary

The Student Journal of Newman University College

Newman University College
Volume 1 Number 2 (Spring 2008)

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Articles accepted for publication should not exceed 7,000 words including references. Critical Commentary will hold the copyright of the article if it is subsequently published. Articles should not have been sent to another journal for consideration.

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UNIVERSITY STATUS

This edition of *Critical Commentary* is published at an important time. Having recently gained Taught Degree Awarding Powers Newman can rightly call itself a University College. Part of the work of any university is concerned with developing high quality research and scholarship. The articles produced here reflect that important tradition. With a wide range of contributions from across a number of subject areas the work represents a considerable amount of effort on the part of all the authors. The eclectic range of articles is used to explore important topics that have a direct relevance to today's society.

The first two articles are submitted from Theology and Religious Education. The article from Cotton-Khan and Docherty presents a very forceful and engaging critique from a feminist perspective on biblical texts that are potentially problematic for women readers. In the next article Templeton analyses a research project undertaken in Birmingham focussing on how the church can more effectively reach out into the community.

Three contributions from Psychology follow. In the first Laura Blake examines the importance of self regulation in children's lives through an exploration of gender and academic success. Singleton then looks at the link between family life and work and the importance of social support networks. This set of contributions is rounded off by Daniel Blake who looks at the classroom behaviour of young adolescent males.

In the next study written by Child from the Physical Education and Sports Studies subject area the important issue of competence in PE lessons and its link to children's enjoyment is examined. This is followed by Lahert's Early Years case study investigation of Augmentative and Alternative communication in a special needs classroom.

The final contribution in this edition is written by Engerbretson. In a fascinating study of the 1925 anti-war film *The Big Parade* she considers the impact of anti-war cinema on 1920s America.

Can I close by encouraging all students to think about submitting an article for the next edition of *Critical Commentary*. We are interested in receiving theoretical, research and work placement based contributions.

Professor Stan Tucker
Editor
Newman University College
December 2007

Women and the Bible: Feminist theory and lived experience

Layla Cotton-Khan and Susan Docherty

ABSTRACT

This study engages with some of the passages in the Hebrew Bible/Christian Old Testament which are particularly problematic for women readers. Some of these have been termed by the feminist biblical scholar Phyllis Trible (1984) 'texts of terror', because of their apparent condonement of the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of women. The study begins by offering an overview of the main approaches to feminist biblical criticism, then outlines in detail Trible's method of biblical interpretation, the 'hermeneutics of remembrance', focussing on her analysis of the story of Sarai and Hagar in Genesis chapters 16 and 21. This method is applied to another passage in the Book of Genesis involving women, the narrative about Leah and Rachel, the wives of Jacob (Genesis chapters 29-30). Finally, the reactions of some contemporary women to these 'texts of terror' and to the attempt to interpret them from a feminist standpoint is gauged through a workshop, the results of which are summarised and evaluated here.

KEYWORDS

Feminist Biblical Interpretation; hermeneutics; Book of Genesis; Phyllis Trible

Introduction and Context

'It might be interesting to speculate upon the probable length of a "depatriarchalized bible". Perhaps there would be enough salvageable material to comprise an interesting pamphlet...'

(Daly, 1973: 205)

The rise of feminism in general and feminist biblical criticism in particular has highlighted the difficulties faced by Jewish and Christian women who seek to understand the bible as an inspired and still relevant sacred text. For the scriptures are clearly the product of a patriarchal culture, written entirely by men and focussing almost exclusively on male

concerns and viewpoints. Where women are represented in the bible, they are usually either passive bearers of children, or sinners and temptresses:

‘In page after page, women are simply absent from biblical texts. It has been estimated that only about one-tenth of the bible is explicitly about women or women’s lives. The majority of biblical characters are men...Even where women do appear in the texts, it is clear that their status, position and value are largely assumed to be lesser than that of men...’

(Slee, 2003: 15-16)

Worse, in some biblical texts, sexual and physical violence against women appears to be condoned, or at least accepted as part of the natural course of events. In those passages termed by Phyllis Trible (1984) ‘texts of terror’, women are offered as rape victims to spare the lives of men (Genesis 19), slaughtered as human sacrifices (Judges 11), or tortured and dismembered with no help from their male ‘protectors’ (Judges 19). This study sets out to explore the response to these terribly difficult scriptural passages of leading feminist biblical critics and of some contemporary women, both believers and those with no religious commitment. It begins by providing an overview of the main approaches which characterise contemporary feminist biblical scholarship, concentrating particularly on the work of Trible, whose literary-feminist method calls for these biblical stories of violence against women to be retold so that their female victims can be ‘re-membered’. Trible’s reading of one such narrative, the story of Hagar (Genesis chapters 16 and 21), will be outlined in detail, and then her approach will be applied to another biblical text about Leah, one of Jacob’s wives (Genesis 29-30). Finally, a group of women are invited to respond in their own way to the story of Hagar and to Trible’s interpretation of it. It seems to the authors of this study essential to deal directly with religious texts which have helped to create, and which may continue to reinforce, the attitudes which make possible the violence against women in their own homes which continues to be a fact of life in our society.

Overview of Feminist Biblical Criticism

The publication of Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s *The Woman’s Bible* in 1895 was instrumental in encouraging women to examine scripture for themselves and to see the subordinating effect it had had on them (see Hayes, 2004: 372). For Cady Stanton employed a hermeneutic of suspicion, a conscience raising activity which reads both the bible itself, and its interpretative tradition, in full acknowledgement of

its androcentric, and at times misogynistic, nature (Clifford, 2001: 55). As Schussler Fiorenza explains:

A feminist hermeneutics cannot trust or accept Bible and tradition simply as divine revelation. Rather it must critically evaluate them as patriarchal articulations, since even in the last century...[women] recognized that biblical texts are not the words of God but the words of men...

(Schussler Fiorenza, 1990: x)

Women commentators in the twentieth century have made use of a variety of methods to interpret the bible in ways that will make it meaningful and liberating for women. Some focus on religious language, suggesting alternatives for the male language and imagery used throughout the bible to describe God and God’s characteristics. Sallie McFague’s work (1987), for example, pictures God as ‘friend’ and ‘body’ rather than ‘father’ or ‘warlord’. She has also sought to reclaim for God some of the feminine language employed in the bible but obscured in translation, for example, the occasions when God is said to endure labour pains in bringing something about. Other scholars choose to accentuate the stories about women which have been neglected in traditional interpretation, highlighting in particular those who enjoyed some success in opposing patriarchal culture, for example the Hebrew midwives who refused to co-operate with the demands of the Egyptian Pharaoh to kill the babies they helped to deliver (Genesis 2). Others have focussed on reinterpreting biblical narratives in which women appear negatively, particularly the story of Eve and the serpent (Genesis 3), but also, for example, Bathsheba, object of the lust of King David (2 Samuel 11). Some writers, like Mary Daly (1973) and Daphne Hampson (1990), feel that the task of rehabilitating the bible from a feminist perspective is useless, as it is so unredeemably sexist. Tempting though that conclusion may seem, it does not offer a positive way forward for Jewish and Christian women, who seek to reconcile the ‘texts of terror’ with their trust in scripture as inspired revelation. Trible’s work may provide a solution to this dilemma, as she clearly acknowledges the patriarchal bias and misogyny inherent in the scriptures, but then goes on to offer a way of reading them which attempts to ensure that the stories about women are not forgotten. She calls her interpretative method the hermeneutics of remembrance, and her approach is outlined in some detail in the following section.

Phyllis Trible's 'Texts of Terror': the Hagar Narrative (Genesis 16)

In her book *Texts of Terror* (1984), Trible employs the hermeneutics of remembrance to analyse four biblical stories in which women have been abused, rejected, raped or murdered. One of these women is Hagar, the Egyptian slave of Abram and Sarai, whose story appears in Genesis chapters 16 and 21.

Biblical commentators have traditionally read these chapters as part of the great story of Abram, the recipient of the divine promises and founder of Israel. Whilst accepting the role of the patriarch within the narrative, feminist critics have sought to focus more on the part played in it by the women characters, Sarai, Abram's wife, and Hagar their servant, with whom Abram fathers a child. Their interpretations have also focussed on recognising the patriarchal nature of society which made possible the abuse Hagar suffered:

Part of the mission of feminist interpreters has been to read the Hagar stories at greater depth and with greater care, paying attention to the margins and posing the uncomfortable question as to why we have so blithely passed over Hagar's contribution to the biblical narrative, ignoring the wrongs done to her...

(Thompson, 2001: 18)

Thus Schussler Fiorenza (2001:156) notes that 'focussing on Hagar...has brought to the fore the prejudices and power relations that exist between wo/men. It also shows how the text endorses the kyriarchal value system and wo/men's second class citizenship and status in patriarchal societies...' .These comments raise questions about the wisdom of concentrating on retelling such passages which could alienate women from the bible. Trible, (1984:3) however, insists that it is vitally important for women to: '...interpret these stories of outrage on behalf of their female victims in order to recover a neglected history, to remember a past that the present embodies, and to pray that these terrors shall not come to pass again...' Writing more recently, Slee wholeheartedly concurs:

Indeed, we must protest against the values which they portray. But we may read these texts 'in memory of' the biblical women whose sorry stories they tell, mourning their suffering and making a determined commitment to end such treatment of women in our own time...

(Slee, 2003: 20)

It is perhaps especially important to retell these stories, in view of the way many modern women all over the world can relate directly to the experiences they describe. For example:

As a symbol of the oppressed, Hagar becomes many things to many people...She is the faithful maid exploited, the black woman used by the male and abused by the female of the ruling classes...the runaway youth...the expelled wife, the divorced mother with child, the homeless woman...the welfare mother, and the self-effacing female whose own identity shrinks in service to others...

(Trible, 1984: 28)

Trible's method of using literary and rhetorical criticism to read these passages in memoriam has brought a new perspective to bear on the biblical women whom previous commentators often ignored. In the case of Hagar, for example, the barely noticed fact that she is said to have encountered God directly in the wilderness, even before other prominent male biblical characters such as Moses did so, can be foregrounded.

Trible begins her close analysis of the language of the Hagar story right at the beginning of the first verse of Genesis chapter 16, in which the usual placing of verb and subject have been reversed in the sentence: 'Now Sarai, wife of Abram, did not bear a child to him...' (Genesis 16:1). The subtle alteration of the normal Hebrew word order throws emphasis on to the role and importance of Sarai (Trible, 1984: 10). In the second half of the sentence, by contrast, 'But to her [was] an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar...' (Genesis 16:1), the presence of the noun 'maid' before her name turns the focus on to Hagar's status as Sarai's servant. Thus: 'Power belongs to Sarai, the subject of action; powerlessness marks Hagar, the object...' (Trible, 1984: 10). This could perhaps seem an insignificant detail, but these kinds of subtle changes in sentence structure play an important role in the subordination of the character of Hagar throughout the narrative.

In her analysis of Genesis chapters 16 and 21, Trible omits any reference to the justification of Abram's act of adultery provided in the ancient Nuzi legal texts, '...where it is specified in marriage contracts that if a wife is childless she must provide her husband with a slave wife...' (Fritsch, 1960: 62). Fritsch, and other commentators like Davidson (1979), seem to want to explain away the actions of Abram and Sarai, and their effects on Hagar, as simply being the 'done thing' of the time: 'Their course of action...enjoyed the sanction of custom, and from a moral point of view was totally

acceptable within the context of their culture..' (Maher, 1982: 105). It seems probable that such references to the prescriptions of the Nuzi texts do not appear in Trible's analysis because her role as 'story teller' (Trible, 1984: 1) does not include the need to justify Abram's and Sarai's actions; it simply involves the telling of Hagar's story.

Trible's interpretation of verse 4 of Genesis chapter 16 is an interesting take on the translation of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and other leading English translations: '...when she saw that she conceived, she looked with contempt (qll in Hebrew) on her mistress...' (Genesis 16: 4). Trible argues that although the interpretation in the RSV is legitimate, it is also possible to translate the original Hebrew verb qll as '...her mistress was lowered in her esteem' (Trible, 1984: 12), as the New Jewish Version does. This gives new insight into Hagar's character, as she does not have to be portrayed as a woman who has contempt for her mistress/abuser. This is a contrast to the view put forward by many other commentators who suggest, for example, that the verse indicates that '...Hagar...proud and spitefully tactless...oversteps the mark...' (Davidson, 1979: 50-51). Morton (1964) goes even further than Davidson, leaving the reader in no doubt about Hagar's character flaws and ideas above her station:

The humble maidservant began to look down upon her mistress. She flaunted her triumph before Sarah...Women...and childless wives, must sympathise with the righteous rage of Sarah, who, already humiliated in the very core of her heart, was forced to suffer the sneering triumph of a younger woman...

(Morton, 1964: 22; see also Maher, 1982: 106)

It is clear, then, that Hagar's character has been tarnished by commentators who see her as a mere vessel to be used by Abram and Sarai for the birth of Ishmael. Feminist commentators are, however, tending to follow Trible in their understanding of this term qll. So Jeanson (1990:19), for example, explains that: 'The word for "became contemptible" or "became lightly esteemed" expresses disdain for human beings when they do something significantly wrong...' thus in using Hagar as a surrogate for their child, Abram and Sarai have done Hagar an injustice. This is another example of how Trible's close reading of the original Hebrew of a biblical text can challenge traditional patriarchal views of female characters.

Interestingly, and unlike Thompson (2001), Trible does not spend as much time as might be expected in discussing the fact that Hagar is the first woman in the Bible to receive a visit from a divine messenger in Genesis 16: 7ff. This incident is important

for her standing, as she receives divine revelation in her time of need, just as Moses did in the Book of Exodus. However, the angel addresses Hagar as 'maid of Sarai', and instructs her to return to her abuser and 'submit to her' (Genesis 16: 9). Thus Trible concludes: 'Inexplicably...God...here identifies with the oppressor and orders a servant to return not only to bondage but also affliction...' (Trible, 1984: 16).

Trible's insights into the Hagar narrative are due partly to her ability as a literary critic to pick up on changes in language, repetition and sentence structure which deliberately function to persuade the readers of the story of the narrator's opinion of the unfolding events. A good example of this comes at the end of Genesis chapter 16:

And Hagar bore to Abram a son,
and Abram called the name of his son,
whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.
Now Abram was eighty-six years old
when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram...

(Genesis 16: 15-16)

Trible firstly compares these verses with Genesis 16: 1, where, as already noted, Hagar's status as an Egyptian maid is revealed before her name. Here, the naming of Hagar before Abram, together with the omission of any reference to her slavery, emphasises the esteem in which she is now held as the mother of Abram's son. Trible further points to the almost unnecessary repetition of the phrase 'whom Hagar bore', which is presumably intended to leave the reader in no doubt as to Hagar's status as a vessel for Abram's child, whom Abram names, even though it is to Hagar that God first reveals Ishmael's name: '...You will call his name Ishmael, for Yahweh has paid heed to your affliction...' (Genesis 16: 11-12). The narrator of this story has also done an injustice to Hagar, then, by returning her to the shadows and focussing the spotlight back on Abram.

Other feminist and literary critics have followed Trible in seeking to retell the narrative of Genesis chapters 16 and 21 from the point of view of Hagar, attempting to recover some of the bible's neglected traditions. Danna Fewell (1998), for example, provides an accessible new version of the Hagar narrative which includes reference to her possible thoughts and feelings about her circumstances. These examples of the hermeneutics of remembrance enable contemporary readers to look at biblical texts from a new angle, seeing, for example, Hagar as a character who was not full of contempt for

her mistress, but was saddened at her mistreatment by Sarai and Abram. Trible also sought to demonstrate not merely the oppression suffered by Hagar, but also the liberating and empowering moments in her life. Thus Clifford explains the aims of the hermeneutics of remembrance as follows:

For many biblical scholars, a hermeneutics of remembrance applied to biblical passages is an activity comparable to that of the woman in the parable in Luke's Gospel who sweeps the whole house in search of a lost coin and shares her joy with her neighbours when she finds it (Luke 15: 8-10). Encompassing two related activities, a feminist hermeneutics of remembrance engages in (1) sweeping the house of biblical history in the search for the "lost coins" of a "useable past" for women in the Bible, and (2) celebrating the recovery of the "coins" that are liberating for women and other oppressed persons...

(Clifford, 2001: 64)

Clifford's description describes Trible's work on Hagar very aptly. Thus, she first searches the underlying Hebrew of the text to be able to give an account of the woman's character different from previous, largely androcentric, biblical scholarship. She then goes on to demonstrate how Hagar takes the brave step of seeking to escape her oppressor in Genesis chapter 16, and then in Genesis 21: 21 goes out and finds an Egyptian wife for her son Ishmael, the only woman in scripture to actively take control of the important task of choosing a future partner for her son. The readers of Trible's work are therefore liberated by her close reading of the story of Hagar, so long passed over by biblical commentators in favour of tales of the bible's male figures.

Applying the Hermeneutics of Remembrance to Leah's Story (Genesis Chapters 29 and 30)

In order to evaluate more fully the usefulness of the hermeneutics of remembrance as a tool for feminist critics to approach biblical texts and, perhaps more importantly, for contemporary women to better understand the bible, it will now be applied to another narrative involving women which has often been undervalued in the patriarchal discourse about the scriptures. In this section, then, Leah's story in Genesis chapter 29 will be subject to a close literary-feminist reading of the kind practised by Trible.

The first mention of Leah is an unfavourable comparison of her beauty with that of her younger sister Rachel: 'Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful and lovely...'

(Genesis 29: 17). This introduction of Leah is interesting, as the narrator tells the reader nothing of her initial formal meeting with her future husband Jacob, but by means of this comment leaves no room for doubt about the beauty of Rachel and therefore the well-foundedness of Jacob's love for her. Commentators continue to speculate about the real meaning of the phrase 'Leah's eyes were weak'. Traditionally it was assumed that Leah's vision was somewhat impaired, or that she had pale eyes, so was considered less than perfect (see, for example, Maher, 1982: 168). However, some modern critics argue that the Hebrew phrase is better translated as meaning that Leah's eyes were 'tender' or 'delicate' (see, for example, Alter, 1996: 152). Even if the phrase should be taken as a compliment, however, it is outweighed by the praise given to Rachel: only one facet of Leah's appearance is deemed remarkable enough to justify a mention by the narrator in comparison to Rachel, who was thoroughly 'beautiful and lovely' (Genesis 29: 17).

The story goes that, following Jacob's seven years of service as his bride-price for Rachel, he is tricked by her father Laban into marrying her sister Leah. Commentators usually see this as retribution for Jacob's earlier tricking of Esau, his elder brother: 'Thus "the cheater" has been cheated!' (McCurley, 1979: 51). Feminist critics, however, tend to focus on the way in which Laban used his daughters in order to trick Jacob, seeing this as yet another example of the treatment of women as pawns of men in the patriarchal world of the bible. For example, Gerhard von Rad (1972) comments: 'That Laban secretly gave the unloved Leah to the man in love was, to be sure, a monstrous blow, a masterpiece of shameless treachery...' (von Rad, 1972: 291). For von Rad, however, the treachery is all directed against Jacob, and there is no thought given to the damaged honour of one or both of Laban's daughters. Similarly, Laban is not presented by von Rad as abusing his daughters' trust, but only Jacob's trust. The narrator, as well as later commentators, chooses to stay silent on the question of Leah's feelings about being used by her father in cheating her sister out of a husband, because all the attention is directed to the male characters, in this case Laban and Jacob.

Laban's reference to his eldest daughter as 'this one' and to his youngest daughter as 'the other' in Genesis 29: 27 clearly indicates that the two sisters were not seen as women in their own right by their father, or by the narrator, but as property for Laban to sell to Jacob in return for his labour: '...in Israel, still it was the common notion that daughters were a possession, an item of property that could be transferred from one owner to the other without further ado...' (von Rad, 1972: 290). The wording of

the narrative thus contributes to the sense that Leah is not a person in her own right, merely a means of adding to the drama and tension of the plot, an 'extra' in this scene of Jacob's life, who is not meant to come to the forefront of the narrative.

The next reference to Leah concerns her role as mother of Jacob's children. It is said that God deemed her worthy of bearing children because she 'was hated' by Jacob, but that Rachel was barren (Genesis 29: 31). God's decision to allow Leah to have children who may love and honour her as a substitute for her unloving husband could be seen as an insult to her person. It suggests that a woman does not have worth in her own right, but only in relation to her husband and/or children. Worse still, the narrative reveals a God who will not intervene to stop a loveless marriage, but will dictate who may conceive children, as if Leah's ability to bear children should make up for her father's trickery and her husband's lack of feelings towards her. As Milne, cited in Tribble (1984) has noted: 'The desire to control women's sexuality and fertility seems to be one of the central underlying goals of patriarchal society...' (Tribble, 1984: 48).

Leah's first-born child is a son, an event which causes her to hope that Jacob will now start to love her (Genesis 29: 33), a further demonstration of the power of patriarchal culture to persuade women to seek validation for themselves only through their position as mothers or wives. Modern women readers of this narrative are likely to feel considerable empathy for Leah, trapped in a loveless marriage and hoping that the birth of a child will alleviate her unhappiness, and also anger at the way in which her patriarchal culture only places value upon a woman as a commodity or bearer of sons: '...the...woman's role as a mother symbolize the appropriate behaviour for all Israelite...women...' (Brenner, 1998: 48). Leah is presented here as having absolutely no control over herself and her situation. It was God who allowed her to have children, and it is her husband who may or may not decide to start loving her.

Commentators such as Maher (1982) have argued that Leah used her maid Zilpah to bear another son (Genesis 30: 9-13) for malicious reasons: 'Nothing other than female rivalry and spite seems to have motivated her giving her maid to Jacob in order to acquire two more sons through her...' (Maher, 1982: 172). A feminist reading of the text argues that Leah's actions were not meant as a spiteful response to Rachel's use of her own maid Bilhah to have a child, but were motivated by her desire to receive honour from her peers and her husband. Leah's need for companionship from her husband is shown in her argument with Rachel over mandrakes (regarded in the ancient world as an efficacious love-potion) and the right to sleep with Jacob one night during the

wheat harvesting, as she asks: 'Is it not enough that you have taken **my** husband...?' (Genesis 30: 15). This speech of Leah may explain the reasons for her actions in respect to Zilpah: 'This statement indicates that as the second, but more beloved wife, Rachel has usurped Leah's position of privilege as first wife and firstborn...' (Jeansonne, 1990: 77).

The similarities between the story of Sarah and Hagar and the actions of Leah and Rachel in allowing their maidservants to sleep with Jacob and bear children for him are obvious, and illustrate that this was a normal practice within the society at the time. As Tribble and other literary critics note: '...repetition...is important for understanding the...meaning of narratives...[it] often signals...the connection between units...' (Tribble, 1984: xiv). The reader is left to wonder whether Leah or Rachel encountered the same problems as Sarah who became jealous of Hagar's pregnancy and later on, of her son. It is noteworthy that the author of this chapter has not hinted at any problems in the mistress/maid relationship between Leah, Rachel, Bilhah and Zilpah, perhaps because the relationships and thoughts of women were not deemed worthy of discussion. Any animosity and strife between the sisters is, in any case, ultimately caused by their manipulation by their father and the expectations of the patriarchal society in which they lived. 'In their society women have few options for individual fulfilment other than having children. The Hebrew Bible never acknowledges that childlessness is an acceptable alternative for a meaningful life for women or for men...' (Jeansonne, 1990: 79). For modern readers for whom society sets different expectations, this text can be used to call women to reject the assumption that they should validate themselves through the traditional patriarchal views of our culture.

Following Tribble's practice of trying to draw out the positive message for women of biblical texts, it should be noted that there is one respect in which Leah exerts some decision-making power in independence from her husband: it is she who names her own sons (Genesis 29: 32-34) and the son conceived with her husband by her maidservant (Genesis 30: 11), without reference to Jacob. A further instance in the narrative where the sisters appear to break the traditional view of subordinate characters is in their apparent control over Jacob's sex life: it is Rachel and Leah who discuss when Jacob will sleep with whom in Genesis 30: 15, and it appears that Jacob has no say in this, at least on this occasion.

Contemporary Women and the Texts of Terror

In order to gain a more complete understanding of the effect of the patriarchal and andocentric bias of the biblical texts on modern women it was decided that this study should include some account of the views of modern day women about the 'texts of terror' and ways of interpreting them, and about the effect of these narratives on their attitude to the authority of the bible. A small group of women of various ages, some Christian and some not, were therefore approached and invited to take part in a workshop based on these texts. Each of the participants was given a copy of the story of Hagar and Sarai and a summary of Trible's reading of it, then invited to share their reactions by discussing a series of questions. These questions and a summary of the women's responses to them are given below.

How do you as a woman, feel after reading Genesis 16 and 21?

Laura (non-Christian): I feel surprised and angry. I am surprised that I don't remember hearing about this story when I was younger, and I am angry at the way Sarai treats Hagar and how it is condoned by God.

Jody (non-Christian): I feel that the story shows how outdated the bible is, there is no way that such a situation would happen in the modern world. I am not surprised that Laura did not hear of this text when she was younger, it is not something that I would want to represent my faith.

Mary (Christian): The texts make me feel uncomfortable that a woman would treat another woman in such a way. I do not like the picture of Abraham that is portrayed here, yet I think the story shows how God reached out to Hagar twice in her times of need.

Cath (Christian): I, like Laura, don't remember hearing this story when I was younger, and I find it covers issues that make me feel uncomfortable: being forced to have a child by your master and being sent into the desert with your son to possibly die is horrible.

Marie (agnostic): I am horrified that Abraham, the supposed father of us all would send out his son to die in the desert, yet I wonder if it was another test of God similar to the sacrifice of Isaac. I suppose the passage shows Abraham's trust in God to do what is right, yet I cannot shake off the image of Hagar and her son sent into the desert.

After having the chance to read Trible's 'reading in memoriam' of Hagar's story, the women were asked how effective they felt her method was in re-interpreting the texts.

Marie (agnostic): I think she has made a good attempt at showing the errors made by some readers in their take on the text, but I am not left with a positive feeling for Hagar and the actions of Abraham and Sarah, or even God. I understand that perhaps that was not her intention, but it leaves me pessimistic about how anyone can interpret the story positively. It is hard to understand all of what she is saying as it does get quite technical, but I get the general meaning of what she is trying to do, still I do think she loses lay people like me who do not study religion or the Bible.

Mary (Christian): The author does not pay much attention to Hagar's meetings with God or God's angel, I feel she concentrates too much on the negative of what befell Hagar instead of celebrating that she gave birth to Abraham's first son.

Cath (Christian): The book highlights the negative actions against Hagar, and yet I can't help but feel sorry for Sarah who was so desperate to have a child that she would treat another woman in this way. The author does not depict any of the characters in a good light, in particular God who sent Hagar back to Sarah knowing she would suffer.

Laura (non-Christian): I am still feeling angry that God would let a woman be treated in this way, perhaps Marie is right and it was a test for Hagar, and I think it was a cruel test, she was used like a pawn by Sarah who seemed to change her mind, at first she wanted a son through her, then she didn't, and as a mother, she sent another mother out into the desert with her young son. I feel that Sarah made her bed in forcing Hagar on to Abraham, so she should now have to lie in it.

Jane (non-Christian): I think that what Trible is doing is admirable work, I think the world needs to hear about Hagar's story and see the characters in this negative light, they're not these two-dimensional characters who were always working under God's word and were always right and just - they were people who made mistakes and treated others unfairly. I do think that her work would benefit from being more accessible to the public, but I think that in doing this it might lose some of its credibility as it might not be accepted if it wasn't so academic or thorough - so I can see the trouble she faces in getting the message out there beyond theology and religious studies students and writers.

The women were finally asked how far it is possible for them to relate to a bible that contains such 'texts of terror'.

Jane (non-Christian): I do not hide the fact that it is because of stories like these and the acts of the Church to keep women as second class citizens that I reject Christianity, and the same goes for Judaism and Islam. I don't think you can relate to a bible that contains texts like these, you can't gloss over them and you can't pick and chose which you accept and which you don't – so surely you are only left with rejecting it?

Mary (Christian): I disagree with Jody, I think we should look at texts like the one we were shown and understand that they were written in a time where values were different to ours. I think they also show us that we can relate to Abraham and Sarah as they were only human like us. I do feel upset for Hagar, but she had a son and went on to find him a wife, a happy ending of sorts. I don't think that a few texts like these should make us write off a whole book of good which has shown us how to live our lives in a way that is right.

Cath (Christian): I count myself as a Christian, yet it is hard to understand how my God could condone the actions in this chapter, but then I look at ordinary people in the world today who do far worse, they rape and murder people and some could argue that God lets it happen. I don't think he does, I think it is our free will to chose how we treat others. God wasn't absent from Hagar in her time of need, Sarah might not have been punished for being such a cruel women to Hagar, but God helped Hagar when she needed him – surely that is all we hope for, we muddle along as best we can and seek help from God in our hour of need? I think we can still relate to the bible as women and as Christians as God also teaches love, and we do see women in a positive light; the bible also teaches us to respect all others, which includes women.

Laura (non-Christian): I honestly don't know, I wouldn't class myself as a feminist, or a Christian, so perhaps it is different for me?

Marie (agnostic): I don't know, I feel like I am sitting on the fence, but who am I to tell a whole faith that they shouldn't read the bible as it is cruel to women? It has shown me that I, as a woman, couldn't really relate to the Bible, how can you after seeing how women were treated by these 'holy' men?

This summary of views throws into stark relief the problems that the bible's 'texts of terror' pose for women, both Christian and non-Christian alike. However, it was

obviously more important for those participants who are Christian to find a positive way to relate to these texts, or to find a way to justify them. Thus the Christian women found it easier to say whether or not they could attempt to relate to a bible that contained such texts, and both agreed that they could, because they felt that the good taught by the bible had the effect of outweighing the messages of the derogatory texts. However, it is interesting to see that all of the women were perturbed by what they read in Genesis 16 and 21; they all empathised with Hagar, and some also with Sarah. The methods employed by Tribble did appear successful to the women in retelling Hagar's story in a positive way and reinterpreting some of the mistakes of commentators in the past. However, although Tribble's work on Hagar was deemed at least partially successful, most of the participants also said that they felt they were not the intended audience of her work as it came across as very academic. This may be true, but it must be borne in mind that Tribble's work needs to be academically rigorous in order for it to be taken seriously in a tradition of androcentric interpretation of biblical texts.

Conclusions

This study has shown that the scriptural passages identified by Tribble as 'texts of terror' do indeed pose problems for women readers and feminist biblical critics, as they struggle to relate to and interpret stories in which women are abused and raped, yet the male perpetrators of this violence are largely exonerated by the cultural norms of their time. This raises particular questions about the authority and divine inspiration of the bible, which some critics dismiss as a false authority used in a misogynistic culture to affirm the subordinate status of women. The work of feminist biblical commentators like Phyllis Tribble is, then, very important in providing women with new methods of reading and interpreting the bible, methods influenced by both feminist and literary theory. A great deal of work remains to be done, however, to overcome centuries of purely masculine interpretation and proclamation of biblical texts.

Some critique the new feminist approaches as biased, or as trying to read ancient texts in the light of modern values which have no place in that society. Certainly the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' is central to feminist biblical scholarship, but it must be acknowledged also that male interpreters come to the texts with their own, albeit often unacknowledged, preconceptions. It is, indeed, unlikely that anyone can interpret the bible from a neutral standpoint, given the pervasive influence of gender, race, intellectual background and numerous other factors. The hermeneutics of suspicion

is necessary for the achievement of a new insight into the texts, one which seeks to overcome thousands of years of patriarchal rhetoric and interpretation.

In reading biblical passages in memoriam women can see the wrongs done to the women of the text and use this as a means to ensure that women of modern society will not endure the same hardships. They can acknowledge the degrading and often violent treatment of women in the name of religion, recognising the historical context into which the narratives need to be placed, yet seek to draw out positives from these texts and use them as an inspiration for other women.

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Threshold Ministry: Christian Initiation and Church Membership in South Birmingham

Emma Templeton

ABSTRACT

The research presented here originated in an undergraduate work placement in Theology. The context for it is an Anglican parish in south Birmingham UK, which is committed to finding new and more effective ways of reaching out to people outside traditional church structures, and of involving all its parishioners in the process of initiation and welcome of new members. The main focus of the project was the education and formation of candidates for baptism and confirmation through group meetings and liturgy. This practical experience is analysed in this study, in the light of the current theological movement called 'Threshold Ministry'. Particular comparisons are drawn between the new Rite for Initiation into the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic programme from which it is partly adapted, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). There is also some reflection on the difficulties facing all mainstream Christian churches in retaining new members.

KEYWORDS

Christian Initiation, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), Threshold Ministry, baptism and confirmation

Introduction: Parish and Placement Context

The setting for my work placement from January to March 2007 was an Anglican parish on the south side of the city of Birmingham, UK. The total population of the area covered by the team of ministers is 28,300 people (Parish Profile, 2005). Whilst the church itself is situated in a fairly prosperous neighbourhood, around 20,000 people in the parish population live in the poorer outer estates. Major regeneration programmes are currently underway on many of these estates. According to the Parish Profile (2005), there are a significant number of professional people living in the immediate vicinity of the church, but elsewhere in the parish unemployment is very high.

There are eleven schools within the parish boundaries, including one Church primary school, and three secondary schools. Ninety-one per cent of the population are white (Parish Profile, 2005).

At the time of the placement the clergy team consisted of the Rector, two Team Vicars, a Non-Stipendiary Curate, a Methodist Minister and a Lay Reader. The Mission Statement for the Church states that it exists:

- To be a worshipping, transforming community in Christ,
- To live out God's radical welcome for all,
- To be equipped for work in God's world.

(Parish Profile, 2005)

Amongst other aims, the parish is working towards 'growing in faith learning and nurture for all', and 'developing lay leadership teams in worship, pastoral care and outreach' (Parish Profile, 2005:38).

The major focus for my placement was to introduce to the parish, and to help the clergy team reflect on, the new Church of England Initiation Rites, which were compiled in 2006. Called 'Rites on the Way' (Archbishops' Council, 2006), they support a journey of faith, leading to baptism and confirmation. This is a very different model for Christian initiation from the one the parish had been using, and was seen as part of its whole Christian education strategy. The parish was keen for me to draw on the insights and good practice of the Roman Catholic initiation programme, known as the Rite for the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Throughout the placement I worked particularly closely with a parishioner who is hoping to train for ministry in the near future, and I was also supported by the Rector.

The parish hoped that the use of the new initiation programme would assist in the development of lay involvement with those crossing the threshold of formal church life, or with those who have crossed the threshold of the church, but who remain on the edge (Morisy, 2006). In 2005 there were ninety-four baptisms, sixty-five marriages, and two hundred and eighty funerals in the parish (Parish Profile, 2005), and consequently a large number of people were approaching the church, many for the first time, or after many years' absence. Browning (1989) puts forward a vision of parishes being the primary and most important place for religious education to take place, rather than Church schools and Sunday School, as has traditionally been the case. He believes

parishes have 'unique religious educational opportunities' (Browning 1989: 1), and that there should be a 'co-operative enterprise' between pastors, professionals, and lay church workers to participate in this role. The parish team shared this vision, which sits well with my own view that there is a huge need for greater awareness and understanding of those for whom 'the church' may be a barrier to faith or hold many memories and difficult experiences. I, therefore, welcomed the opportunity to compare the practice of my own Catholic tradition with that of the Church of England, and in particular to reflect on the Anglican Church's adaptation of the form of the Catholic RCIA programme to English culture and contemporary conditions.

Preparation and Theoretical Framework

Given the focus and context of the placement, my first task was to familiarise myself with recent research in the area of Threshold Ministry. This concept is an ancient one, but has been explored and developed in new ways for the contemporary context, in particular by Ann Morisy, an Anglican Theologian, who writes of the need to develop new ways of seeing the church in the twenty-first century. She stresses, for example, the call to the church to 'make God credible, visible and accessible to post-Enlightened, cynical and anxious people, that is, people in Britain in the twenty-first century' (Morisy, 2006: 125).

Morisy (2006) views all ministries as being divided into three domains: the explicit, the foundational and the vocational. She describes the explicit domain as consisting of the bulk of church practice, including formal public worship, which she suggests is now very threatening and difficult for the vast majority of the population to relate to. The foundational domain aims to strengthen confidence, in that it 'helps to foster in people a sense of the possibility of God' (Morisy, 2006: 129). However, she sees the vocational domain as offering the greatest possibilities for mission, 'linking work for the Kingdom of God with recognition of salvation through Jesus' (Morisy, 2006: 131). Morisy views this role as one of encouraging people, enabling those both inside the church and outside, encouraging people to cross 'the threshold' in whatever way necessary, to journey deeper. She sees this as the essence of discipleship, and emphasises that encouragement 'to encounter the stranger as brother or sister is an essential aspect of the vocational domain' (Morisy, 2006: 131).

In a similar vein, Grey (1997: 70) has argued that 'the church has always understood mission as the command to preach the Gospel to the ends of the Earth.'

According to Grey, the poor are clearly the rejected, the vulnerable, refugees, political prisoners, but she says there now exists a new category of 'spiritually poor'. This includes the economically rich, those deprived of spiritual resources, those living in broken relationships or in the pressure of the professional rat-race. She writes: 'It is no accident that the Spirit is creating a new vulnerability towards listening and acknowledging the truth of others, particularly the truth of groups on the periphery,' (Grey, 1997: 42).

Grey points to the German theologian Paul Tillich, writing after the Second World War, who speaks of his 'existence on the boundaries' (Grey, 1997: 9) – a place between the old and the new worlds, between the rational and intuitive, between secular culture and religion. His work resonates deeply with the experience of many women and men today. As people hunger to experience God and to rediscover mysticism and contemplation, Grey says this 'calls for creative boundary living and prophetic action right here, in our own patch of ground' (Grey, 1997: 50).

It was in the light of this theological thinking that I was to conduct my project, developing strategies to work positively and effectively with those approaching the church, crossing the threshold, maybe for the first time or after many years. Many of these people come to celebrate their marriage or baptism for their children, and others are seeking to journey deeper into relationship with God and with the Christian community in Birmingham. Reflecting specifically on Christian Initiation, Drumm and Gunning (1999) warn that 'the church must now turn its attention to the Rites of Initiation if it is to be a vibrant institution in the future', and describe initiation as 'the process whereby a community incorporates new members into itself' (Drumm and Gunning, 1999: 30). Interestingly, they view the Roman Catholic RCIA as 'Quite definitely...(one) of crossing a threshold, accepting the difficulties of the spiritual journey and experiencing separation in order to leave the past behind and enter a new life,' (Drumm and Gunning, 1999: 57).

The introduction of the RCIA programme following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) saw the restoration of a process of initiation which dated from early Christianity. It was in response to a worldwide request from Bishops who felt, according to Crichton (1986), that the situations faced by Christians in the modern world were very similar to those living under third and fourth century pagan influences. Crichton (1986) describes an ancient world which had either rejected or become indifferent to Christianity, and one in which the traditional support systems could no longer be relied upon.

Our modern world surely echoes such a time, resulting in the need for essential support if individuals are to remain practising Christians. The emphasis in the RCIA programme, Crichton explains, is on the community of individuals, a shared faith, involvement in all aspects of church life, both in its teaching and its structures, locally and more widely. He stresses the need to remember that the RCIA programme is not intended to simply increase numbers, but is a vital witness to the work and action of Christ's church. Crichton (1986) goes on to highlight the rich educational process that the RCIA programme provides, and, most importantly, in which candidates maintain an active role. A precise explanation of the RCIA process is given by Jones (1997), who describes it as a means by which:

...new members of the church are led, by stages and at their own pace, into full participation with the community of the faithful alongside whom they have journeyed. That community develops its proper identity as an evangelising, welcoming, faith-sustaining body...

(Jones, 1997:1)

The major task of the work placement, then, was to reflect on ways of adapting the RCIA process for wider use across Christian denominations.

Christian Initiation in a South Birmingham Parish: The Current Situation and the Desire to Change

During the placement the majority of my work was directed towards the preparation of candidates for confirmation. For many years previously, this activity had been led by a member of the ordained clergy, taking the form of a 'Christian Basics' course. Typically these sessions happened very much in isolation from the rest of parish life, and were directed only at those who were not yet considered Christians, with no wider community involvement. The new Church of England guidelines produced in 2006 propose that the new rites to support a spiritual journey such as this should 'enable the whole church community to support and learn from their (the candidates') journey' (Archbishops' Council, 2006: 316). They go on to say that 'the formation of its members in their adult discipleship is now understood to be central to the church's development and mission' (Archbishops' Council, 2006: 317). The publication of these new guidelines made possible a change in practice which had long been desired by many within the parish, and which is firmly supported by much Christian tradition.

According to the Archbishops' Council, it is only in the last one hundred years that the Church of England has fully recognised the theological richness of baptism. It had previously long been considered an isolated moment in the Christian life, or as a birth rite within a Christian society, and so baptism was not closely integrated with a commitment to mission and service in the world. This thinking mirrors the RCIA which, from its introduction, provided a clear structure for bringing new members into the church, and did not concentrate only on the moment of initiation. It aimed to restore the catechumenate, a period of preparation for baptism which had flourished between the second and fifth centuries, and provided 'a public journey in the midst of the community' (Kelly, 2000: 67). The emphasis on 'formation within a community' (Kelly, 2000: 68) rather than on the imparting of knowledge within a teaching environment, is reflected in the changes beginning to take place in this parish, and formed an important part of the rationale for my placement project.

The Project and its Implementation Process

Prior to the commencement of my placement, the parish had already taken the step of preparing their own 'Stages on the Way' programme, adapted locally from 'Rites on the Way' (Archbishops' Council, 2006: 15). This consisted of the candidates and the congregation being presented with four scriptural texts, which would form the basis of the parish liturgy on the last weekend of each month. This is in line with the guidelines for 'structured and regular focus on the four texts and their liturgical presentation in the context of Sunday worship' (Archbishops' Council, 2006: 320) and the call for this to reflect 'the journey of faith of all those within the community' (Archbishops' Council, 2006: 320). This is central to the whole process; Gallacher (1993) strongly urges that the RCIA process likewise should never take place within a vacuum, and that many people within the church have a role to play in welcoming new members. He feels this to be an essential part of parish life, with the input, initiatives and gifts of many playing a part in it. I spent a great deal of time initially talking, listening, observing current good practice, ideas and viewpoints, and learning from others' experience and tradition in order to help me with my role of enabling further reflection and development.

I then sought the advice and experience of a friend who has had many years experience of both participating in and, more recently, leading the RCIA programme at her local church. This was invaluable as a way of hearing how the theory can best work in practice. She reinforced the need to be adaptable, reflective, responsible

and loving, and the basic pattern of a meeting as one of sharing, prayer, listening to the Gospel text, reflecting, sharing stories, and connecting the scriptures to what people believe in their daily life. The practical things, she suggested, were almost as important, so great thought was given to matters such as where and when to meet, the seating arrangements, and preparing refreshments. Remaining adaptable to the very varied needs of a group is essential to its success and relevance to all involved. After conversations with people and through discussion with the clergy, it was decided that the people wishing to be confirmed would be best accommodated within three groups: the teenagers within the Youth Group, young members of the choir during Choir Practice, and the remaining group on a Thursday evening. These groups were all to be led by lay members of the parish, with guidance from the clergy. This decision was not initially welcomed by all the members of the parish team. Despite very encouraging work taking place in various small groups within the parish, some concern was expressed about the danger of small groups not becoming part of the larger parish family. I understand this concern, but agree with Mallison (1989), who stresses the importance of small groups within Christianity across the centuries, and demonstrates how they have played a major role in the growth and renewal of the church. He suggests that the majority of churches which are making a significant impact in their local communities use small groups as a major part of their strategy, because they are best able to satisfy peoples' hunger for spiritual reality at a time of increasing secularisation and ever decreasing allegiance to local church denomination.

There had been much publicity to gauge interest over many months, in the parish magazine, weekly parish newsletter and conversations with individual parishioners. Whilst leading the sessions it was important not to assume a teaching role, but rather one of journeying alongside, not pretending to have all the answers. Despite ages in the group for which I was responsible ranging from sixteen to over seventy years of age, this approach produced an open and relaxed atmosphere and a very responsive group, willing to share experiences in some depth. All the small groups followed the meeting structure laid out in the 'Stages on the Way' programme, so that continuity and good links with the rest of the parish could be maintained. The groups progressed well, and my involvement continued beyond the length of the placement, through to the confirmation celebration some months later. I felt this was important, not only for the candidates, but also as an example to the clergy team that lay involvement at such a level is a necessary part of religious education and enriches the life of the parish community.

Having reflected on my experiences as I helped to implement the programme, I felt that it was very important to ensure that there was adequate support and involvement for the process to continue to grow and develop after the candidates had actually been confirmed. An on-going area of discussion within the Anglican (and Roman Catholic) Church is that of the degree of lay involvement in this kind of small group process. Education about the proper role of the laity is essential if support for the basis of this programme is to grow and develop in future years. The huge resistance to this amongst the clergy is a great handicap. Browning (1989: 2) sees religious education as a partnership or 'co-operative enterprise' between pastors, church workers and lay people. He argues that they should work as co-nurturers and co-missioners, and that the effectiveness of such a partnership depends on 'the ability of the pastor to assist the laity to take up their ministries' (Browning 1989: 2). He points out, however, that many pastors are unable to nurture laity in such a way, perhaps, he suggests, as they feel threatened. This perceived threat by the laity is an issue which is in danger of hindering the progression of education programmes such as these. Browning (1989) explains that our perceptions of religious education are firmly fixed in the context of Church schools and Sunday School context, yet true religious education actually takes place during the preparation for baptism, confirmation, communion and marriage. He says we need to make a 'liberating shift in perception' (Percy, 2006: 11), as pastors who traditionally undertake most of the sacramental preparation have not necessarily seen themselves as religious educators. He suggests that this would release new energy and experimentation in religious education in church, families, workplaces and communities, with the pastor centrally involved but not holding sole responsibility for it. This urgently needs to be acknowledged and addressed in all the mainstream churches.

Another area of concern was the provision of support and follow-up for the candidates after they had actually been confirmed. Shortly after several members of my group were confirmed in May 2007 a report appeared in the journal *The Tablet* expressing concern over the numbers who subsequently fall away after being received into the Roman Catholic Church. Reflecting upon the practice of my placement parish in the light of this article, however, the signs are very encouraging. Kowal (2007) comments on the worryingly large number of newly converted Christians who stop attending church soon after being received, and urges a re-evaluation of the process. She says that, with the emphasis on the ceremony itself and with the support of a friendly team during preparation, a feeling of isolation and abandonment often follows. Kowal

recommends the establishment of groups for 'new Catholics' (2007:16), designed to encourage people to gradually become involved in all aspects of parish life. I am very encouraged to note that this is something which is happening in my placement parish. The group continues to meet weekly to read and discuss the Gospel for the following Sunday, and any other faith issues which may arise. It meets socially, and has begun to take a turn in organising and preparing parish functions. With an estimated twenty per cent of Catholics falling away after being received (Kowal, 2007), pertinent questions are surely raised as to how a parish welcomes people and invites them to become active members of the faith community.

Evaluation and Conclusions

The placement was extremely valuable in many ways, both personally and for the parish. In helping to introduce to the parish the new Rite for Initiation for the Church of England, I found it very helpful to have drawn on the RCIA programme, finding many parallels and much useful guidance. The way in which the Rite has been adapted by the Church of England has, I suggest, much to do with what the Church of England stands for in contemporary English culture. Percy (2006) has written with great clarity on this, and highlights the Church of England's unique position as the Established Church, providing an 'extensive connectedness to the local community; it is there for all who need it, especially at times of birth, death and marriages' (Percy, 2006: 11). Its role, he points out, is 'maintaining religion as something that is public, accessible and extensive', and he claims that there is still a huge demand in modern society for 'religion that is public, performative and pastoral' (Percy, 2006: 13).

However, if the Church of England exists in this way to offer 'a ministry and a faith to a public that wishes to relate to religion without necessarily belonging to it' (Percy, 2006: 13), I feel that this may limit it in some respects. If the Church of England has to remain so broad in its thinking, and not appear divisive or controversial, this clearly has implications for its structure and leadership. Within the Anglican Communion as a whole, for example, there is at present considerable unrest and division about certain issues of belief and practice, which must have an impact at a local level. The term 'provincial autonomy', or the right of each branch of Anglicanism to decide its own policy can also, sadly, lead to disunity and division at a local level. Even in the official Church of England guidelines for Christian Initiation, there appears to be no unified structure: 'Debate continues in the Church of England about the best structures to

support those who are coming to faith in Christ and about how to develop, and perhaps adapt, the Western tradition of Confirmation' (Archbishops' Council, 2006: 347).

The two traditions, Anglican and Roman Catholic, now have a common framework for the Christian initiation of Adults, one based on community, journey and the scriptures, but the adaptation of the RCIA process within the Church of England has resulted also in some key differences. The Church of England guidelines are devoid of any mention of ritual, for example. As Browning (1989) explains, many Protestants pride themselves on being non-ritualistic; they want to experience God directly, instead of through the power of a priest, a sacrament or a rite. This is in marked contrast to the Roman Catholic view that the seven sacraments are 'related to the stages of human life and to the human cries and victories of life' (Browning, 1989: 83). Indeed, according to the official guidelines, the Church of England does not view the celebration of confirmation as a sacrament of the church, with all that that means and signifies, but rather as a stage in the recognition of a person's personal faith, and a strengthening for adult life in the church (Archbishops' Council, 2006: 346).

The Roman Catholic tradition, in contrast, places great value on the role of ritual, and its use is highly developed. DeGidio (1984) writes 'The effectiveness of RCIA does not depend on how well we use story, or implement pastoral advice, but on how well we celebrate the rituals' (DeGidio, 1984: 2). She is of the opinion that ritual is the only way we can communicate adequately our journey of faith, and so argues that 'we need to stop sauntering through the scaffolding of verbiage and sacred structure, and risk falling into the world of symbol and sacred mystery' (DeGidio, 1984: 3)

For DeGidio and others, without ritual, there is so much missing: rituals are such a vital part of everyday life that we need to ritualise as well as verbalise our journeys of faith in order to bring them to life for us, or a whole dimension of our human existence will be ignored. She goes on to explain that rites provide the structure, form and basic model, which are designed to be adapted and changed through words, gestures and symbols for local needs. This role of ritual as changing and transforming is also taken up by Kelleher, who sees it as participating, 'in the life and history of the social body which enacts it; it may change as the social body changes or it may promote change in that body' (Kelleher, 1999: 55)

It must also be remembered that the importance of lay leadership cannot be stressed strongly enough. Failure to allow this can clearly reduce the effectiveness of the whole

process of nurture and formation within the parish setting. It is essential to continue to develop any advances which are made in this area; as the German Benedictine, Gruen (2003) explains, the real nature of confirmation is reflected in the creativity with which parishes prepare for it. This is truly the work of the whole community.

The term 'Threshold Ministry' (Morisy, 2006: 125) can initially appear to be a very abstract phrase, but it makes sense in the widest terms, and very similar concerns and hopes are being expressed by writers from other religious traditions. It is hoped that this form of Ministry will continue to be developed in this parish, with a theological basis to support it, to provide a more solid foundation for those who may view Christian welcome as merely 'making tea' for people. The document I co-produced and presented to the Parochial Church Council to conclude my project offered a firm foundation for this, as did the findings of the research. Once again, this is paralleled in current trends within the Roman Catholic Church. Keefe (2007:28) explains that 2006 was, 'chosen by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales as the year when 'Everybody's Welcome', and work is progressing at parish, diocesan and national level to open up our churches to all comers'. She looks at Christian welcome from the point of view that we are all 'strangers in a sense, pilgrims and exiles journeying to the Promised Land' (Keefe, 2007: 29), so need to provide for others the welcome that we would like ourselves. I find it interesting that in this way the Church of England and other Protestant Churches seem to have advanced far beyond the Roman Catholic Church, although it, too, is actively working with those on the threshold.

Whilst my placement contributed substantially to enabling a new process for Christian Initiation to begin in the parish, it still remains very much in its infancy and an ongoing process of growth and development will be required. Kelly (2000) explains that receiving the sacraments is often seen as an ending of a journey, when they are actually very much a beginning. He argues that the journey needs to continue long after the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. He also asks the question, which I think is very relevant to this particular parish, of what can be done to ensure that new members of a Christian community are supported in their new faith and way of life. However tentative it may seem, a new way of preparation for Christian Initiation has begun and Kelly quotes from the Guidelines for the use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church when he writes:

The world of catechesis can never stand still....those responsible for catechesis and religious education face a dual task, they must faithfully reflect on the whole range and richness of faith and belief which we desire to share; and through the creative adaptation of methods and materials, they must try to communicate that rich vision of faith to today's seekers...

(Kelly, 2000: 87)

I hope that with increased awareness and all-round support, the work in this parish will continue to grow and develop, and that the great potential can be realised, namely that the whole parish will continue to deepen their experience of faith, and grow together as a community.

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The impact of gender and academic ability on self-regulation in primary school children

Laura Anne Blake

ABSTRACT

This article presents findings from an undergraduate work placement research project undertaken at a primary school in the Birmingham area. As recent publications such as Ryan and Deci's (2000) research has linked academic success to levels of self-regulation, the project explored the impact of academic ability and gender on a selected sample of year three pupil's literacy self regulation levels. This is the process by which individuals make their plans, act upon those plans, and self-evaluate the results. Self regulation was assessed using Ryan and Connell's (1989) academic self regulation questionnaire which consists of four subscales – external, identified, introjected regulation, and intrinsic motivation. Twenty children aged between seven and eight years participated in the study over a four day period. Academic ability was classified by teacher's evaluation of pupil National Curriculum literacy level. To assess for differences between ability level and gender on the four sub scales of self regulation, the two way between-group statistical test Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Findings revealed that there were no significant differences on any of the four subscales of self regulation across gender groups. Although significant differences were found across academic ability groups. Findings revealed that high ability groups were significantly different from other academic ability groups. The research concludes that a relative balance in the four subscales of self regulation is pivotal in education regardless of gender or academic ability.

KEYWORDS

Self-regulation, academic ability, gender, primary school aged children

Introduction: Parish and Placement Context

According to the Department for Education and Skills (DFES, 2001) literacy is at the heart of the drive to raise standards in schools. Data from the DFES reiterated that by 2002, 80 percent of 11-year-olds were expected to reach Level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 English tests. In an attempt to make this goal attainable the DFES (2001) designed and implemented the National Literacy Strategy to raise standards of literacy in all primary schools in England. This strategy was evidently employed in the placement setting.

The pupils in the study made the junior school transition in September 2006 so were relatively new to the school. As a general rule of the school, pupil attainment levels tend to vary (as they start at junior school) between below average and well above national average levels, although notably in 2004, standardized test results revealed that pupils performed above the national average in literacy (Ofsted, 2004). Maintaining such standards however was a concern of teachers, as certain pupils repeatedly refused to take responsibility for their own learning.

Research into literacy success was given greater importance with the arrival of higher DFES (2001) expectations (Williamson, 2007). A finding of such research has consistently made the link between academic success and self-regulation. Keeping in mind Ryan and Deci's (2000) definition of self-regulation, (as the degree to which autonomous or self-determined functioning is represented) the main purpose of the study was to discover pupil's literacy self-regulation levels and see if there were any links with gender and academic ability, as recent research has suggested.

As academic achievement has been consistently linked to motivation, the key to this target is perhaps in the construct of motivation. In considering motivation, one must keep in mind that self-regulation is a relatively new concept which derives from motivation theories.

Although it is of general consensus that motivations are primarily the cause of particular behaviours, a common misconception, in reference to Ryan and Deci (2000), is the assumption that motivation is a unitary phenomenon. However, in keeping with Ryan et al (2000), not only do people differ in amounts of motivation but also in levels of orientation. In support, self determination theory, advocates that the most obvious distinction of motivation is evident through its intrinsic and extrinsic sub categories.

Those motivations that are intrinsic in nature tend to be evident in behaviour that is carried out as a result of primarily internal processes, that meet enjoyment and interest needs, whereas extrinsic motivations are seen as the antecedents of an external reward system, much like that of operant conditioning, (Ryan and Deci 2000).

Intrinsic motivation theories are undoubtedly important in the development of psychology, as they challenge early behaviourist approaches that were principally extrinsic in theory. Through operant conditioning for example, learned behaviour became observable through the mediums of stimulus and response. Since a response could be controlled by manipulating, reinforcing or punishing the subject, educators could be forgiven for thinking that by way of long-term potentiation, as discussed in Carlson (2004), children would react in the same extrinsic way to learning.

However, consistent with previous research, Lepper et al, (2005) reported that extrinsic motivation established a significantly negative correlation with academic outcomes. In actuality, intrinsic motivation was a significant positive correlate of children's grades and standardized test scores.

The DFES National literacy strategy framework (2001) promotes the importance of group work. Much like the DFES National literacy strategy framework (2001), the 'SPRinG' intervention program, planned and implemented by Blatchford et al, (2006), was designed through group work to combine cognitive development, motivational and social cohesion approaches, but stressed collaborative and autonomous learning rather than extrinsic rewards. The school in this study also utilized, specific group work piloted by the DFES, (2005) such as 'The Boy and Girl reading group' and 'The Quest group'.

Motivations for success in the classroom were visually evident upon entry into the school. There were achievement boards, raffle ticket systems, and 'pupil of the fortnight' awards. Although these reward systems are principally extrinsic, a crossover arguably exists. Burton et al's (2006) study for example, highlighted the importance of self regulated identification, (which according to organismic integration theory is an extrinsic motivation) as a significant positive predictor of grades. Moreover, specific targets were utilized by both staff and children, with language such as 'We Are Learning To'.. (WALTS), 'We Are Looking For'..(WILFS), and 'Building Learning Power' (BLP) implemented in each lesson, thus serving to provide intrinsic motivations. The DFES National Literacy Strategy Framework (2001) used by all teachers at the

school, supports the moderation of work to academic ability, group work, multimedia assistance and also feedback, all of which as discussed, are possible predictors of motivation levels.

With regard to gender, there appeared to be little evidence documenting any motivational differences. However, in Vermeer et al's (2000) research, girls were reported to have higher persistence levels than boys in a mathematical problem solving experiment. This implied that girls may have been more intrinsically motivated, especially as they had lower ratings of self-efficacy compared to their male counterparts.

Importantly, it has been proposed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations can be manipulated. Cognitive evaluation theory suggests that, as detailed in Ryan and Deci's (2000) research, rewards, positive feedback and communications together with an Internal Perceived Locus of Causality (IPLOC) increase intrinsic motivation. In support, Burton et al, (2006) also indicated that positive intrinsic manipulation led to significant improvements in individuals' psychological well-being after writing a midterm examination. Ryan and Deci (2000) also postulated that intrinsic motivations can be further manipulated by both parent and teacher.

Assor et al (2005) carried out research which involved directly controlling teacher's behaviour in the classroom. The researchers instructed the teachers to expose children to frequent directives, interrupt and interfere with their preferred learning pace and to ban critical and independent opinion. In line with Ryan and Deci's (2000) research their hypotheses were supported by their results; such teacher behaviour served only to diminish intrinsic motivation. In fact, such behaviour aroused negative emotional responses of anger and anxiety and enhanced a-motivation (the state of lacking an intention to act) and extrinsic motivation. This also promoted restricted engagement styles across gender.

The reactions of the pupils in Assor et al's (2005) research were supported by the theoretical organismic integration mould, evident in Ryan and Deci's work (2000). Its structure enables one to see in the form of a continuum, the extent to which the self, determines motivation for behaviour, as exemplified by Assor et al (2005). Ratelle et al (2005) results suggested that perceived parental autonomy supported predicted scientific persistence partly through students' autonomy.

Given that Ryan and Deci (2000) are insistent of the fact that intrinsic motivation only occurs for activities that hold intrinsic interest for individuals in certain areas, perhaps

multimedia in the classroom would promote intrinsic expansion. After all, Westby and Atencio (2002) not only reported that computers have the potential to increase students' motivation and involvement in learning, but also that they enabled more rapid understanding and integration of different types of information, thus developing new types of thinking and reasoning. Since multimedia is thoroughly integrated into the curriculum, it would be fair to assume that during computer based activities intrinsic motivation amongst the pupils in this study would also be high.

Furthermore, cognitive theory provides support for the growth of multimedia in the classroom. According to Chambers et al, (2006) each learning objective has a given intrinsic cognitive load and if this is in excess of the child's working memory capacity, the objective must be divided into components that the child's working memory capacity will allow. Since a learner has a limited working memory capacity for both words and pictures, technology that caters for this (capitalized in the class by way of a 'Smart board') would surely limit the cognitive load.

Studies regarding multimedia in the classroom however have only provided tentative results. The results in Chambers et al (2006) study provided only partial support for the utility of embedded multimedia as a component of initial reading instruction. In addition, where Wasik and Bond (2001) found children in an interactive book reading intervention group scored significantly better than children in the comparison group on a vocabulary test, De Jong and Bus (2002) found a regular book format was more supportive of learning about story content and phrasing.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), the questionnaire used in this study not only originated from human motivation, but also focused on social contexts and the development and functioning of personality. Since the school environment fosters these three elements, the study was aimed at further highlighting problem, or potential problem cases with self regulation levels.

Much of the group work in the class was gender and academically regulated, which impacted on the choice of variables in assessment. The lack of existing literature assessing gender and self-regulation alone, called for an evaluation. However, this also made it difficult to predict the influence that gender would have on academic self-regulation. Therefore, the aim of the study was to determine if there was any main effect of gender on the four motivational subscales that make up the Academic-Self Regulation questionnaire (external regulation, introjected regulation,

identified regulation and intrinsic motivation). It was also designed to see if this effect interacted with literacy academic ability in motivational attribution.

An example of identified regulation, in agreement with Burton et al (2006), could be a person who revises well (a principally uninteresting but important task) because they relate this to performing well in an exam and getting a good job in the future. Although children across the board in terms of ability displayed a lack of responsibility for their learning, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant difference across literacy ability groups.

Introjected regulation is incorporated subconsciously into your own psyche but not accepted as your own. In agreement with Ryan and Deci (2000) it is considered to be a relatively controlled form of extrinsic motivation. It was hypothesized that there would not be any statistical differences across literacy ability groups.

The main aim of this study was to investigate the impact of gender and academic ability on literacy self-regulation levels. Although Peklaj et al,(2006) concluded that neither intrinsic or extrinsic levels of motivation differed between students attending partially streamed classes and heterogeneous groups, it was hypothesized that there would not be any differences amongst the ability groups in intrinsic motivation but that there would be differences with external regulation. The findings from such a study could be beneficial in planning gender and academic ability specific intervention strategies to combat poor self-regulation levels in literacy.

Methodology

Participants

A stratified sample of 20 participants from a non-denominational, mixed primary school in the city of Birmingham was asked to participate in the study. Of the participants, ten were female and ten male. Participants were grouped according to their current National curriculum levels in literacy as advised by the teacher. Eight participants were grouped in the high ability group, six in the middle ability group and six in the low ability group. All of the participants were members of the same year three educational class, aged seven or eight.

Design

The study utilized an independent samples experimental design. The design consisted of two independent variables: literacy academic ability (three levels: 1=high, 2=middle and 3=low ability) and gender, (two levels: 1 =female and 2=male), and one dependent variable: self regulation. This consisted of four subscales: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. The questionnaire consisted of 32 items altogether.

Materials

A standard 32 item Academic Self-Regulation questionnaire, compiled by Ryan and Connell (1989), containing questions regarding external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation was used. For those pupils with learning difficulties an adapted questionnaire containing 17 questions (also compiled by Ryan and Connell, 1989) was employed. Both questionnaires were developed for children aged between seven and eight and are based on a four-point scale where four signified a "Very True" or "Always" response.

Procedure

Each participant was drawn from a stratified sample to participate in the study. Prior to any testing, written informed consent was obtained from the parents/guardians of all participating children in addition to the consent of the children themselves. The study took place in what would normally be pupils' assembly time, (20 minute period), with five pupils in each sitting.

Each participant was seated in the classroom and an attempt was made to make them feel at ease. Participants were verbally briefed, informed that there was no deception involved in the study and that they would not be tested on anything as there were no right or wrong answers. They were assured that the researcher merely wanted their motivation to learning literacy rating and that their opinion would be combined with others for the purpose of said project. It was also reiterated that the results would be anonymous. Participants were told if they would like to withdraw the answers provided at any point, their parents could contact the researcher at the email address provided or they could tell the researcher directly.

Participants were asked to note their gender and literacy group (allocated by the teacher) on the front of the questionnaire for the purpose of anonymity and variable

analysis. Students were told that they could indicate how true each item was for them by circling the answer that applied to them. The participants then engaged in the questionnaire, providing answers using a four point scale ranging from very true to not at all true. This procedure lasted approximately 20 minutes per group. Upon completion all participants were debriefed. Each questionnaire was scored by calculating the subscale score for each of the four subscales, external, introjected, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. Very true was scored 4, sort of true was scored 3, not very true was scored 2 and not at all was scored 1. The data was then entered into a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 15.

Ethics

Approval from Newman College’s Ethics Committee was sought and obtained through a thorough application process.

In accordance with British Psychological Society (BPS) ethical guidelines (2007), there was no deception involved, appropriate de-briefing was administered, and there were no physical risks involved. Full written parental consent was gained, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured and the participants were reminded they could withdraw any information provided at any point if they wished to do so. All raw data was stored in line with the Great Britain Data Protection Act (1998).

Statistical analysis

Four two way between-groups ANOVAs were conducted to explore the impact of gender and academic ability group on the subscales of self-regulation e.g. external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. As four ANOVAs were carried out, the risk of producing a Type 1 error significantly increased. In an attempt to reduce this risk as advised by Pallant (2005), the alpha level was set to the value of .0125.

Findings

The findings from the descriptive statistics revealed that there were slight numerical differences between the mean scores on the self-regulation sub scales between male and females and between low, middle and high ability groups. To assess if there were any significant differences between the means, ANOVA’s were carried out.

Table I. shows that females had a slightly higher mean score than males in external regulation. Table II. shows, that the middle ability group had a higher mean score than the high and low ability groups in external regulation.

Table I. Mean scores in external regulation for female and male participants.

Gender	Mean
Female	25.361
Male	24.889

Table II. Mean scores in external regulation for high, medium and low ability groups.

Group	Mean
High ability	28.375
Middle ability	30.833
Low ability	16.167

External Regulation

In External Regulation, findings revealed that there was a statistically significant main effect for ability group $F(2, 14) = 27.390, p < .0125$, this was not so for gender $F(1, 14) = .079, p > .0125$. The interaction effect - group*gender: $F(2, 14) = 2.994, p > .0125$ did not reach statistical significance.

A post hoc test (Tukey HSD) confirmed that the mean scores for both high ability group ($M=28.375$) and middle ability group ($M=30.833$) were significantly different from the low ability group ($M=16.167$) and thus were unlikely to have been caused by sampling error. The high ability group ($M=28.375$) did not differ significantly from the middle ability group ($M=30.833$).

Introjected Regulation

Main effect of gender was not significant. $F(1, 14) = .096, p > .0125$. Despite inferential analysis the main effect of group was not significant either $F(2, 14) = 5.837, p > .0125$. Again there was not a significant interaction effect - group*gender: $F(2, 14) = .025, p > .0125$

Identified Regulation

The main effect of group: $F(2, 14) = 101.057, p < .0125$ was significant but the Main effect for gender; $F(1, 14) = .007, p > .0125$ was not significant. The Interaction effect of group*gender: $F(2, 14) = 1.538, p > .0125$ was not significant.

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the high ability group ($M=25.625$) was significantly different from the low ability group ($M=10.500$). Also the mean score for the middle ability group ($M=24.833$) was significantly different from the low ability group ($M=10.500$). The high ability group ($M=25.625$) did not differ significantly from the middle ability group ($M=24.833$).

Intrinsic Motivation

The Main effect of group: $F(2, 14) = 7.296, p < .0125$ was significant. The Main effect of gender: $F(1, 14) = .183, p > .0125$ was not significant. Interaction effect of group*gender: $F(2, 14) = .586, p > .0125$ was not significant.

A Tukey HSD post hoc comparison confirmed the difference between the middle ($M=22.167$) and low ability groups ($M=10.833$) was significant. Although, the differences between high ($M=19.750$) and low ($M=10.833$) and high ($M=19.750$) and middle ($M=22.167$) groups were not statistically significant.

Discussion

The results of this study indicated that academic ability is influential on three of the aspects of literacy self-regulation levels. These aspects were external regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. Gender did not have any impact.

Considering the limited scope of this study it is important to interpret the results cautiously. This study failed to link gender to academic success. Instead it highlighted differences in terms of literacy academic ability groups. Despite the findings in Peklaj et al's (2006) study external regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic motivation all produced differences. These differences may be true of other samples or it could simply be that this design of four

ANOVAs caused Type 1 errors. On the other hand, that is not to say where no differences were found across gender and introjected regulation that this would reverberate with an alternative sample.

Limitations of present study

Given that it was conducted as a work placement project for an undergraduate degree over one academic term, it would be reasonable to suggest the sample size and time length may have had an impact on the results.

Although the questionnaires were anonymous the implementation of a Social Desirability Scale as adopted by Lepper et al, (2005) would validate the study further, in assessing the degree to which children were motivated by a need for approval, or a fear of disapproval in their responses to questions.

Recommendations for future research

Although the lower ability group means were the lowest in comparison to the other groups on every subscale of the self regulation questionnaire, it would have been interesting to have added a pre-post element to the design in investigating whether this intervention had a statistically significant impact on pupils self regulation. This pre-post variable would also allow for any mobility within the groups.

Although the participants in this study were the same age, Lepper et al (2005) suggested meaningful conclusions could be drawn from using age as an independent variable. Perhaps in future it would therefore be worthwhile to assess the impact of age. As females had higher persistence levels than males in Vermeer et al's (2000) mathematically based study, perhaps age, gender and subject would be correlated. With the literature discussed in mind, student/teacher dynamics as exemplified by Assor et al's (2005) study may also establish valuable links to academic success and self-regulation.

In addition, the risk of type 1 error could be reduced further by using a larger sample (perhaps the whole year group) and employing MANOVA as opposed to four independent ANOVAs for statistical testing. This method of analysis would be more reliable as according to Coolican (2004) MANOVA enables one to test several dependent variables as a set, across the various conditions of the independent variable.

Conclusion

In this study the impact of gender and academic ability on literacy self-regulation levels was assessed. Whilst three of the four subscales produced significant differences across academic ability groups, gender did not significantly impact on self-regulation levels. From this research it is important to find out the reasons why self-regulation levels are different amongst academic ability groups. Only then can intervention strategies gain the right focus and attempt to combat problems with self-regulation levels.

Finally, it seems apparent that although Lepper et al (2005) maintained that extrinsic motivations were negatively correlated to academic achievement; it could also be argued that external regulation is not always a bad thing. After all, the two constructs of external and intrinsic motivation are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

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Interference Between Work and Family Life: The Moderating Effects of Social Support and the Impact upon Physical Well-being

Elizabeth Singleton

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships between body composition and physical activity of a selected sample of British Primary School children. The study also assessed gender differences in physical activity and body composition amongst this group of children. Twenty two children aged 9-11 participated in the study over three days (one weekend day and two weekdays). Body composition was assessed using air-displacement plethysmography and physical activity was determined using heart rate monitoring. The correlation results indicated that there was no significant relationship between body composition and physical activity ($r = -.404$, $p = .070$). The results of the Independent Samples t-test indicated no significant difference between boys and girls in body composition ($t_{19} = -1.306$, $p = .207$) or physical activity ($t_{20} = -.579$, $p = .569$). Only 27 percent of children met the recommended guidelines for daily physical activity. However, this was only achieved on one day out of the three days of monitoring. Such low level of physical activity amongst primary school children is a cause for concern.

KEYWORDS

Work and family conflict, Employee, Lifestyle, Physical well-being, Social support

Introduction

Astonishingly the modern world of employment for some people includes working more than fifty hours per week (Mental Health Foundation, 2003). Moreover, some employees spend a further eleven hours outside of work just thinking about their job (Mental Health Foundation, 2003). This extensive work culture is growing due to a variety of reasons. Some people work more, simply because it provides a sense of achievement or lifts self-esteem. Whereas others work longer hours in order to raise a

career profile, or to meet tough standards expected from employers. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, the main factor driving individuals to increase time at work are those associated with financial rewards (Mental Health Foundation, 2003).

Subsequently, if more time is spent at work, less time is available for home life. Therefore an individual's responsibilities to their family (i.e. childcare) and friends, or even to their own out of work interests must be affected. Furthermore, the modern family has changed considerably from the original nuclear ideal in which the father was considered the breadwinner while the mother stayed at home (Halpern, 2005). Families in which both parents work are now more common and therefore traditional gender stereotypes, such as women solely portrayed as housewives have weakened (Halpern, 2005). In addition, the actual family structure is more varied, including single parents, step relations and same sex couples (Tasker, 2005). Specifically, single parent families place the financial and care giving burden on the shoulders of just one person (Boden, 2005). Hence, the removal of a stay at home family member must present implications for family responsibilities such as; looking after elderly parents/children or just simply the home environment.

Thus, everyday life for many people includes juggling the domains of both work and family in order to fit in with contemporary society. Although the individual may consider the responsibilities of each domain as totally separate, these two spheres of life are very much intertwined (Kelloway, et al, 1999). The challenge for many is the ability to simultaneously undertake the different roles presented by employment and family relationships (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). The effect is wide ranging and is relevant not just in the obvious demands of parenthood but also individuals who fulfil other family roles; such as that of a brother, aunt or carer for elderly relatives. Surely this struggle between work and family must produce repercussions for a variety of lifestyle elements, such as health and relationships. Therefore it is important to examine how the pursuit of a harmonious life balance can be disrupted by the interference of one domain upon the other (e.g. work interferes with family or family interferes with work).

Roles within the Work/Family Interface

The conflict that occurs between work and family life has been attributed to the clash of an individual's different roles (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). This role conflict theory has demonstrated various effects when people switch between work and family environments. For example, Cardenas, et al (2004) investigated the difference between

traditional gender and work roles. They found that gender roles, such as motherhood, diverted attention to family issues while at work. Whereas work roles continued to distract individuals while at home. For example; women reported thinking about their ill child rather than concentrating on their work duties as well as contemplating work projects while making the dinner at home. Such everyday situations and role conflicts are faced by many people.

In contrast some research has argued that role conflict is not responsible for interference between work and family domains. Graves, et al (2007) found no negative interference between the role of parenthood or marital partner with work life. They administered self report questionnaires to managerial employees from a variety of organisations. Interestingly, it was shown that managers experienced little family intrusion upon work. Graves et al. (2007) argue that this is due to the level of job responsibility that managers face. Simply put, higher level staff have to prioritise work, regardless of their home commitments, in order to keep their jobs. Furthermore, they suggest that different life roles produce a beneficial effect. They argue that managers actually thrive at work from the pressure of providing for their family through financial gain (e.g. affording university for their children).

Work and Family Life Conflict

Work interference with family (WIF) has been demonstrated by numerous studies and has subsequently produced a wealth of literature. Thus, the following papers stem from the most recent research.

Casper, et al, (2002) discovered that professionally employed mothers with a strong, committed work ethic demonstrate higher levels of WIF. Likewise, people who work longer hours also report more work interference with family (Major, et al, 2002). Indeed, Major et al. (2002) studied a range of employees from a single public organisation. Through self report measures they found that employees spent longer at work which encroached upon their family life. Major et al. (2002) argue that employees are motivated to do so for career progression and financial need. Furthermore, this impeachment of family time caused significant psychological strain, which ultimately effects work performance and health. Importantly, it has also been shown to negatively affect family relationships by increasing tensions between partners (Matthews, et al, 2006).

A seemingly obvious solution to prevent work effecting family life is to reduce job commitments by working part time. However, although part time work does indeed seem to do so, the financial implications make this an option few families can afford (Van Rijswijk, et al 2004). Furthermore initiatives implemented by different employers in order to manage family/work conflict (i.e. flexi-time, emergency carers leave) remain relatively ineffective (Burke, 2004). Employees report that such initiatives are often only useful in the short term and apply to limited flexible job roles (Burke, 2004).

The modern family has changed somewhat from the traditional male breadwinner type to now include single parent and dual-earner families (Jacobs and Gerson, 2001). It is this change, Jacobs and Gerson (2001) argue, which presents new issues and greater family to work interference (FIW). Indeed, Van Rijswijk et al. (2004) argue that family responsibilities affect work life because certain situations are out of the individual's control. A primary example is when employees' children fall ill. Furthermore, they suggest this can impair well-being indirectly by the anxiety and strain it produces.

Interestingly in contrast to WIF there is limited research surrounding the area of family interference with work (FIW). Studies have shown however, the negative effects of family responsibilities upon the work environment such as; absenteeism, poor punctuality, lower productivity, less concentration, less job satisfaction and a poorer relationship with the boss (e.g. Foster, 2003; Hammer, et al, 2003; Lapierre, et al, 2006). Once again disruption in life balance is seen to affect work ability and health.

Health Implications of Work/Family Conflict

Conflict between work and family life not only affects work performance or social time but also, and perhaps more importantly, can be detrimental to an individual's health (Kinnunen, et al 2006, Thomas and Ganster 1995). Both Brotheridge and Lee (2005) and Lapierre and Allen (2006) identify that higher levels of work interference with family life can lead to decreased physical well-being. In particular, Brotheridge and Lee (2005) asked government employees to complete self report questionnaires about their work and family lifestyles. Indeed, the results showed that work encroachment upon family life was linked to physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach complaints. Brotheridge and Lee (2005) state that this is due to an overload effect, whereby individuals fail to recover from work while not there and thus a build up over time leads to poor health. Interestingly, the majority of participants in this study were married or cohabiting, thus Brotheridge and Lee (2005) advocate further investigation into the lifestyle conflict of single workers also.

In contrast Mikkelsen and Burke (2004) studied male, married, medium rank police officers via self report questionnaires. They argued that work interference with family life had mental but not physical health implications. Mikkelsen and Burke (2004) proposed that this is because family/work balance concerns the individual and hence causes psychological distress, but fails to impact upon general health.

The Influence of a Supportive Social Network at Work and Home

One influence that seems to affect work to family interference is the level of employer support experienced by the individual. O'Driscoll, et al (2003) found that managers who received support from supervisors also experienced less work and family conflict.

Work interference with family has been seen to affect physical well-being (e.g. Brotheridge and Lee, 2005), thus reduction via employer support should present health benefits. This is indeed the case according to Lapierre and Allen (2006). They found that managers, across various occupations, who experienced support from both their supervisor and co-worker, indicated less work to family conflict and improved health. Lapierre and Allen (2006) explain these findings by using a resource drain theory. Thus, managers who have increased support benefit from a larger pool of resources, both emotional and instrumental, which helps to alleviate stress and strain of work/family conflict.

As might be expected when the influence of work support reduces WIF, a similar mirror effect is reflected via the impact of family and friend relationships on FIW. Carlson and Perrew (1999) suggest that a sound social network enables individuals to deal more effectively with stressful situations and hence they report less family to work conflict. Likewise Zhang (2006) found that the support received from partners and spouses relieved the pressures of family life against employment. Such social support can take various forms such as emotional backup (empathy, understanding, listening) or active involvement (advice, assistance) and therefore better equips the individual in dealing with life between family and work (Aryee, et al, 2005). Once again Lapierre and Allen (2006) found that the benefit of support from a network of family and friends not only reduces FIW but also manifests better health via an increase in personal resources.

Evidently, establishing the impact of interference between work and home life presents important implications not only for employers seeking productivity but also the

physical and psychological health concerns of the individual. Thus, investigating methods which promote successful lifestyle balance is essential to the modern way of life and the ever increasing workforce (National Statistics, 2007).

The primary aim of this study is to assess the impact of two types of work-family conflicts (i.e. WIF and FIW) upon physical well-being. Then consider how job level (managers/non-managers) and marital status (married/non-married) effects WIF and FIW. Furthermore, the study aims to consider the influence of supportive networks within work (supervisor/co-worker) and outside of work (family/friends), upon employee lifestyle balance.

Methodology

Design

The present study adheres to a cross-sectional design by implementing a comparative analysis of individuals who are measured at one set time (Coolican, 2004). The participants were tested via self report questionnaires and also a small focus group, thus incorporating two distinctive methodological approaches (qualitative and quantitative)

The quantitative data was analysed using two statistical techniques; (1) Pearson's product moment correlations; a test to establish relationships between the variables, (2) Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA); a test of difference between the variables.

The qualitative data was analysed via thematic analysis (following Boyatzis, 1998, recommended technique). This particular method was chosen because it offers an accessible and flexible approach to analysing qualitative data. It allows theoretically pre-developed themes to be identified by the use of structured codes within the data, enabling quick and effective analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Furthermore, Boyatzis (1998) suggests that thematic analysis allows insight into qualitative information and is also a suitable method in which to support or enhance quantitative findings; hence it was adopted in the current study.

The Sample

The participants consisted of a sample of 50 employees from six branches of a leading British Bank in the West Midlands region. The participants ranged in age from 18 to

60 years old and included 26 male and 34 female workers. The majority of the sample were full-time employees (88 percent) of white British ethnicity (82 percent). The job level of the participants ranged across five grades with 60 percent of the employees in non-managerial roles and 40 percent in managerial positions. The focus group participants were a random sub-sample of six employees from the main sample above and were all female, aged between 25 to 38 years old.

Materials

The psychological tests utilised consisted of four self report scales. These included;

1. Work/Family Interface Eight Item Scale

Work/family conflict was measured via an eight item scale designed by Kopleman et al. (1983). Participants had to rate eight statements along a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The first four items measure work interference with family (WIF). An example question= 'After work I come home too tired to do things I would like to do'. The last four items measure family interference with work (FIW). An example question= 'I'm often too tired at work because of the things I have to do at home.' This section is scored in two parts; a total score for the first four questions indicates WIF and a total score for the last four questions indicate FIW. The higher the score the greater the level of interference.

2. The Physical Symptoms Inventory

The physical symptoms inventory (PSI) was produced by Spector and Jex (1998) and is a measure of somatic health symptoms. The scale includes 18 symptoms such as backache, headache, tiredness or fatigue. Participants were asked to consider whether they had any of the symptoms over the past 30 days. The three possible responses are; 1. No did not have the symptom, 2. Yes did but did not see a doctor and 3. Yes did have symptom and saw a doctor. The PSI is scored by giving a point to each reply of the yes type. Therefore the scores can range from 0-18, in which the higher the score the more physical symptoms experienced.

3. The Contact Rating Scale

Lleiter and Maslach (1986, cited in Brotheridge and Lee, 2005) designed the contact rating scale as a measure of support received from work colleagues. It incorporates 24 questions again on a likert type scale with a response from 1 (never) to 7 (always). The questions are divided into two sections; 12 questions refer to an immediate supervisor,

12 identical questions refer to a favourite co-worker. An example question; 'Listens to what I have to say'. Therefore the employee's work support can be assessed from different colleague levels.

The contact rating scale is scored in two parts; a total score for supervisor support and a total score for co-worker support. Within the 12 identical questions in each section, three are reversed items, for example; 'Is too busy to talk to me.' On these questions the score is simply reversed so that if a participant marked 5 it would actually be scored as a 3. Once again the higher the score the higher the support received.

4. The Perceived Social Support Instrument

This scale was used in order to measure the support that employees received from their social network of family and friends. It was designed by Procidano and Heller (1993). Again this scale is divided into two sections; 22 identical statements in each, but one set refers to relationship with friends, while the other refers to relationship with family. The respondents mark each statement with one of three possible answers: yes (score 1 point), no (score 0) and don't know (score 0).

The perceived social support instrument includes statements such as: 'My friends give me the moral support I need.' and 'I rely on my family for emotional support.' 5 reversed items such as 'Most people are closer to their friends than I am' are incorporated within each section. These statements are marked by reversing the score so that yes = 0 points and no = 1 point. Overall marks out of 22 are calculated for both sections, in which the higher the score the greater the social support received.

Focus group topics:

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed to help guide the focus group, questions were based on the findings revealed from the self-report questionnaires and the literature.

Procedure

The current study obtained college consent and ethical approval via Newman College's Ethical Committee. Furthermore, ethical guidelines recommended by the British Psychological Society (2006) were adhered to throughout the research. Written organisational consent from the leading Bank was also obtained.

Participants were provided with a consent form and information sheet detailing the aims of the study and ethical implications. The participants, in the presence of the researcher, completed the four questionnaires. Upon completion of the questionnaires, a focus group was then carried out with a sample of six employees. The focus group was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, with pseudonyms used so as to protect participants' anonymity.

Results

The results of the two methodological approaches (quantitative and qualitative) are reported through the results section in a sequential order:

Quantitative Results

To address the aims of this empirical paper, this section includes analysis of preliminary data and the inclusion of two statistical tests; Pearson's product moment correlations and MANOVA.

Preliminary Data

The descriptive statistics, as shown in Table I, indicate that work interference with family (WIF) (mean: 12.62) has a higher occurrence than family interference with work (FIW) (mean: 7.96).

Table I. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation
WIF	12.62	4.304
FIW	7.96	3.220

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Results

Split Level Pearson's product moment correlation coefficients were conducted to assess the relationship between Support, WIF and FIW for married and single employees (e.g. marital status) and managerial and non-managerial employees (e.g. Job level).

Table II indicates one significant relationship between WIF and work support amongst married employees. Thus, married employees with higher work support report less work interference with family. The coefficient of determination indicates 38 percent shared variance; hence the level of work support helps to explain 38 percent of the variance in respondent's scores on the WIF scale.

Table II. WIF/FIW and Social Support Relationships within Marital Status and Job Level.

	Relationship Between:	r	p	Variance %
Marital Status				
Married	WIF & Work support	-0.618	0.001	38
	FIW & Family/friends support	0.229	0.260	5
Single	WIF & Work support	-0.013	0.950	0
	FIW & Family/friends support	-0.258	0.224	6
Job Level				
Managerial	WIF & Work support	-0.648	0.002	42
	FIW & Family/friends support	0.080	0.736	0
Non-managerial	WIF & Work support	-0.124	0.515	1
	FIW & Family/friends support	0.036	0.850	0

Evidently Table II also indicates that there is a significant relationship between, WIF and work support for managers only. This indicates that managers with higher work support have less work interference with family. Once again the coefficient of determination indicated 42 percent shared variance.

Interestingly no significant relationship was identified between physical health and work/family conflict (WIF and FIW), as shown by table III.

Table III. Relationships between WIF/FIW and Physical Health.

Relationship Between:	r	p	Variance %
WIF & Physical Symptoms	0.083	0.568	0
FIW & Physical Symptoms	0.136	0.346	0

MANOVA Results

To ascertain if there was a difference between marital status and job level groups on the combination of dependent variables (i.e. WIF, FIW, work support, family/friends support, physical health) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. As the study includes five dependant variables and two independent variables (i.e. marital status and job level) MANOVA eliminates the need for multiple individual tests and therefore reduces the risk of type 1 error (Pallant, 2001). However, Field (2005) highlights the importance of only testing dependant variables together which are theoretically linked, hence the current study completed two separate MANOVAS. One tested the independent variables (marital status and job level) against the two dependant variables of WIF and FIW, while the other tested the same independent variables against two dependant variables of work support and family/friends support.

Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality and homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices with no violations noted. Furthermore as MANOVA is sensitive to outliers, box plots were also analysed. Two outliers were identified in the work support data, however when the five percent trimmed mean (131.76) was compared to the data mean (130.06) (as recommended by Pallant, 2001) it was considered that these outliers were not having an extreme effect and were therefore included in the analysis.

There was no significant effect of marital status (married or single) ($F(2,45) = 2.213$, $p > 0.05$; Wilks' Lambda = 0.91; partial eta squared = 0.09) or job level (managerial or non-managerial) ($F(2,45) = 0.627$, $p > 0.05$; Wilks' Lambda = 0.97; partial eta squared = 0.027) on the combined dependant variable of work/family conflict (WIF & FIW).

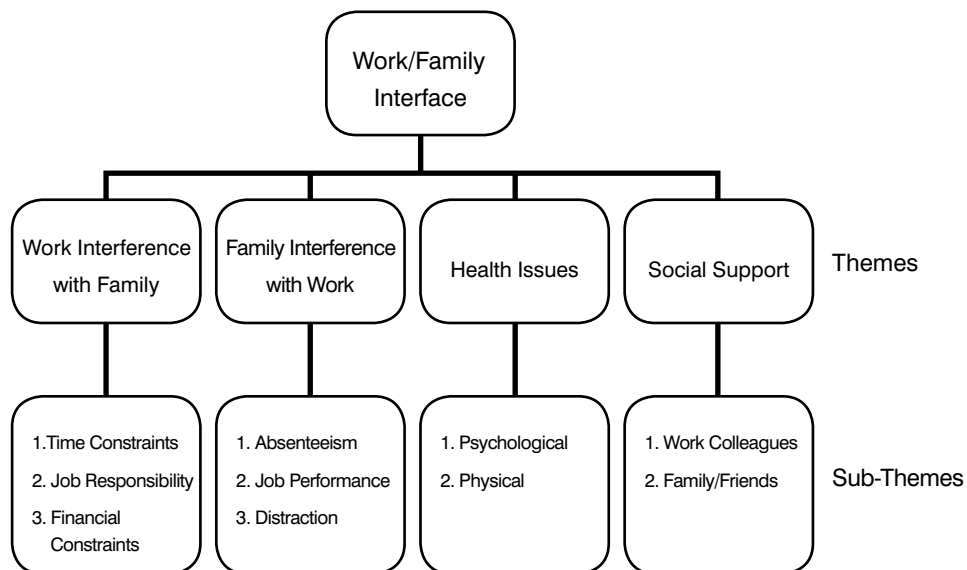
There was also no significant effect of marital status ($F(2,45) = 0.395, p > 0.05$; Wilks' Lambda = 0.98; partial eta squared = 0.017) or job level ($F(2,45) = 2.676, p > 0.05$; Wilks' Lambda = 0.89; partial eta squared = 0.106) on the combined dependant variable of social support (work and family/friends support).

Hence, findings reveal no difference in the amount of social support or work/family conflict reported by individuals of different marital status and job levels.

Qualitative Results

Thematic analysis of the transcript identified a variety of sub-themes as shown in Figure.1. The four main themes were established prior to the data collection, and were given individual codes in order to ease detection within the transcript. The codes included five elements, as recommended by Boyatzis (1998); a label, a definition of the theme, description of how to identify its presence, exclusions and an example. The sub-themes are issues that were evident within the main themes.

Figure 1. The Four Themes and Sub-Themes of the Work/Family Interface.



Work Interference with Family (WIF)

Work interference was readily described by all six of the focus group participants and mainly seemed to cause time constraints; "So with my job I am very much tied to the branch until I finish all of my work...then of course you are late leaving and late getting home and late making dinner and then late taking the kids to judo" (participant B). Part time work was on the whole viewed as a way to alleviate WIF, although financial constraints made this an unviable option: "I would love to be able to work part time but with two kids, a mortgage and bills to pay there is no chance" (participant F).

Family Interference with work (FIW)

Once again all the participants described some form of FIW; the most frequent example being childcare issues and responsibilities; job absenteeism was often caused by ill children or relatives. Interestingly, participants readily described being distracted by family concerns whilst at work, which subsequently affected their job performance; "I do think my work suffers because of my family commitments" (participant D), "I've found that if there are problems at home then I don't concentrate on my job and I make mistakes, which is dangerous when you are dealing with people's finances" (participant A). Evidently FIW raises serious concerns for any employer.

Health Issues

Physical health was not evidenced to be particularly effected by conflict within the work/family interface. Two of the participants reported a lack of energy or tiredness, rather than actual symptoms such as back ache or nausea. In contrast, psychological health did surface as a substantial side effect of both WIF and FIW; "It is stressful juggling work and family, trying to be in two places at once sometimes" (participant F). Participant B spoke of mood changes caused by the strain of balancing work and home life, which then impacted upon her relationship with her husband and children.

Social Support

The majority of participants described examples of having relatives or friends who assisted in their family responsibilities (such as taking children to dentist appointments) and thus reduced FIW; "For many school years my friend would collect my kids from school when she collected hers, without her I don't know how I would have managed" (participant A). Conversely, work support was not universally reported and seemed to vary depending on the relationships held with colleagues or management.

Participant C explained that her co-workers, who also had children of their own, were more supportive than younger staff because they understood the responsibilities involved. However, although the level of support varied amongst branches and individual job positions, it was acknowledged that when received support at work did help to alleviate WIF.

Discussion

The impact of work/family conflict upon physical well-being

Pearson's product moment correlation revealed no significant relationship between physical symptoms and work/family conflict (WIF and FIW). Finding no relationship between the specific domain of FIW and physical health is not unusual as health impact is mainly associated with WIF, as stated by Kinnunen et al. (2006). Interestingly, the absence of a significant relationship between work interference with family (WIF) and physical health offers support to previous research by Mikkelsen and Burke (2004). They argue that physical health remains relatively intact regardless of work and family interference. Furthermore, they alternatively suggest that mental health is negatively affected via the worry and strain caused by WIF. Indeed, the current study indicated psychological consequences within the focus group results. Here it was found that individuals were very aware of the struggle between integrating work/family commitments and this resulted in anxiety, irritability and stress. Hence, this specific finding would surely be of relevance to employers who are looking to promote a mentally healthy work force and reduce periods of sick leave. It may be valuable for companies to consider providing psychological benefits (such as counselling) in order to assist with the strain produced by work and family conflict.

Conversely, previous research has demonstrated a negative effect between WIF and physical symptoms (e.g. Thomas and Ganster, 1995). Brotheridge and Lee (2005) also proposed a connection between physical well-being and work to family conflict. However it is important to consider the exact relationships these studies describe. Brotheridge and Lee (2005) explain a somewhat indirect link between physical well-being and WIF. They argue that work encroachment upon family life produces an overload effect which builds up over a period of time. This work overload disables normal functioning and reduces recovery time during non-working hours, which eventually leads to physical ailments. Therefore, although Brotheridge and Lee (2005) propose a negative effect of WIF upon physical health perhaps this is not as clear cut

as measuring one domain upon the other. Thus, the current study's lack of a significant relationship between physical symptoms and WIF could be explained by the direct nature of relationship examined.

The influence of supportive networks upon employee lifestyle balance

The findings revealed certain relationships between the type of social support received (i.e. work or family/friends support) and the work/family interface (i.e. WIF and FIW). These findings are discussed separately within the two domains of FIW and WIF.

When Family Interferes with Work (FIW)

Surprisingly, no significant relationship was identified between the level of family/friends support and FIW. Therefore, this finding suggests that the level of family/friends support received does not impact upon the level of family interference with work. This is in contrast to the work of Zhang (2006) who argues that both emotional and instrumental support, provided by a family network, better equips the individual to deal with FIW.

Conversely, the findings from the focus group do concur with Zhang (2006). Support provided by family or friends emerged as a sub-theme and often surfaced throughout the discussion. Participants gave frequent examples of how relatives assisted with their family commitments (i.e. take children to dentist appointments) in order to alleviate family conflict upon work. Thus, it could be suggested that a reliable family/friends network provide the individual with greater resources and these help them to deal with everyday life responsibilities. This difference between qualitative and quantitative results could be due to the interpretation of family/friends support. The questionnaires did not address specific instrumental assistance but took more of an emotionally supportive stance, whereas the focus group participants expressed patent instrumental family assistance. Once again the benefit of a varied methodology is evident.

With regard to FIW, certain findings bear particular significance for any conscientious employer. The focus group participants revealed serious consequences of family intrusion upon work life, including poor job performance, absenteeism and frequent distraction away from work duties. These findings support the research conducted by various authors who all demonstrated the negative effect of family to work conflict (e.g. Foster, 2003; Hammer et al., 2003; Lapierre et al., 2006); Van Rijswijk et al. (2004)

specifically argue that family issues outside of the employee's control are the source of much work disruption. Thus, it may be proposed that employers carefully consider the family commitments of their workforce and do not underestimate the impact of FIW.

When Work Interferes with Family (WIF)

A clear relationship between work support and work interference with family was apparent from the correlations. This relationship suggested that the higher the amount of work support, the less WIF experienced. The findings from the focus group, within the current study, portray a slightly different account. Indeed, work support was viewed as beneficial if it originated from a trusted colleague, but often the organisational support mechanisms (i.e. emergency carers leave) were viewed as superficial and practically useless in helping to balance home and work life. This is in agreement with the paper produced by Burke (2004), who also found organisational benefits to be transparent. In particular, this finding highlights important implications for potential employers; perhaps encouraging strong co-working relationships is of more benefit to WIF than offering flexitime or allocating limited emergency leave.

The Differences between Marital Status and Job Level

The current study also considered the impact of job level and marital status upon the work/family interface. Interestingly, results showed that relationships within these two groups mirrored each other. Both married and managerial employees found that more work support related to less work interference with family (WIF). In contrast, single and non-managerial employees reported no similar relationship. These findings could be attributed to the resource drain theory postulated by Lapierre and Allen (2006). It could be argued that managerial and married staff benefit from a larger pool of resources (their respective partners and colleagues) which enables them to equate this to decreased WIF.

Alternatively this finding could be due to married and managerial individuals simply reporting either higher levels of work support or lower amounts of WIF. Therefore the current study addressed this issue by assessing the difference between reported levels of social support and work/family conflict amongst the split level groups. The results demonstrated that no significant differences existed between marital status and job level according to the amount of work family conflict or social support received. Therefore married or single and managerial or non managerial employees do not

report different amounts of work/family conflict or different levels of social support. As this element of the current study was included due to the recommendations of previous research (Brotheridge and Lee 2005, Lapierre and Allen 2006) the results cannot be discussed in the light of comparable literature.

Conclusion

Obviously the study of the work/family interface produces valuable insight into the lives of the current workforce. Importantly it highlights the struggle of juggling everyday life in a changing social and economic climate. Clearly the occurrence of work interference with family is more common than its reverse domain of family interference with work, which holds vital issues for both employers and the individual. This turbulent lifestyle is primarily driven by the financial pressures of modern day life, an element that may be difficult to combat.

Family interference with work has been evidenced to stem from parental duties and creates a variety of negative work disruptions. Thus responsible employers should not fail to recognise its relevance to the work environment and take steps to provide a supportive and perhaps understanding colleague community. Also of benefit to the reduction of family to work conflict is the individual's network of family and friends, which have been demonstrated to provide invaluable instrumental assistance.

Similarly, sound work support, via either co-worker or supervisor, is an effective buffer against work interference with family. This is particularly true for those who are managers or in a stable relationship, possibly because they possess a larger pool of resources which helps them deal with lifestyle conflict. Once again employers need to redress their organisational benefits which are often viewed as ineffective by employees. Focusing on creating a workforce with reliable, trusting relationships amongst staff may be advantageous.

Lastly, the impact of work/family conflict on physical health is not straightforward. While previous research has demonstrated a somewhat indirect link, it has been shown that psychological ramifications exist. Thus, it remains imperative for both employer and employees to effectively address the work/family interface so as to avoid psychological illness and foster a healthy workforce.

Limitations to the Present Study

The present study is subject to various limitations, one of which concerns the use of self report scales. Spector and Jex (1998) highlight that this very type of measurement can be susceptible to bias and influenced by alternative factors which are not being measured. Furthermore, Brotheridge and Lee (2005) suggest that self report scales could be affected by social attitudes. Thus, participants may be more comfortable reporting work interference with family (WIF) because this is more 'socially acceptable' than reporting family interference with work (FIW).

Cross-sectional studies have also been found to be limited with regard to the consideration of maturational changes (Coolican, 2004). Differences between participants ages could, for example, affect the amount of family responsibilities they hold or affect the importance they place on family time; both are major influences when contemplating work/family life balance.

Furthermore, restricting the sample to a single organisation may have confounded the results. It is possible that the type of occupation involved in the current study could have influenced the level of work/family conflict (i.e. staff in certain job positions were confined to remain on work premises until daily processing was completed, regardless of the time of day). Incorporating a multi-company sample, as did Graves et al. (2007), would have eliminated this concern and strengthened the study.

Recommendations for Future Research.

Unfortunately the current study did not have sufficient participant numbers to consider the real impact of ethnicity on the work/family interface. Thus future research could focus on the effect of ethnicity upon lifestyle balance. Different cultures may indeed vary in how they regard the importance of employment or equally a stable family environment. This could possibly assist employers to understand the differences presented by multicultural workforces.

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Exploring Classroom Behaviour in Young Adolescent Males

Daniel Blake

ABSTRACT

The following article presents results from an undergraduate work placement project conducted at a secondary school in the West Midlands region. The study investigated pupil behaviour as a major problem facing the school. This behaviour was not only affecting the individual's academic performance, but in some instances, was preventing other pupils from learning. The study focused extensively on pupil rationale with regard to why they behaved in an undesirable manner. A qualitative methodology was adopted, permitting the use of interviews. Thematic analysis revealed there to be four main themes; frustration, boredom, relationships and life outside of school. The research advocates that classroom behaviour is encompassed by a myriad of factors, such as individual circumstance and the role of a significant other. This issue needs addressing in order to understand the reasons for current behaviour and improve conduct and academic performance in the future.

KEYWORDS

Problematic behaviour, relationships, frustration, school

Introduction

Undesirable behaviour was selected as the focal point of the study as it was a recurring theme in the day to day life of the school examined as part of the research project. The undesirable behaviour included, but was not limited to, truancy or walking out of class, verbally abusing teachers and fighting. This behaviour was seen to have a negative affect on both the individuals concerned and their classmates.

The focus of the study is a secondary school in the Birmingham area. The school is a large Catholic comprehensive, and according to the OFSTED report (2006) consists of pupils from a region of substantial social deprivation. Within the school a separate

house is provided where student mentors work with pupils who have become disruptive in class, or inhibit the learning of a fellow pupil.

In recent years, the school's drive for educational advancement has been inhibited by undesirable behaviour. The biggest problem facing the school is concerned with attendance, as according to the schools most recent OFSTED report (2006) some pupils do not attend school when they should, and attendance figures are inferior to many other schools. A study by Schwartz et al (2006) indicated that poor attendance was linked to unfavorable outcomes such as a decreased grade point average and increased aggression. This has led to changes in the way educational institutions deal with such issues. The introduction of some form of mentoring system has been a common option.

Guidelines from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2007) propose that learning mentors can act as role models and are capable of shaping behaviour. Sanchez, Reyes and Singh (2006) also bring this point to our attention. Furthermore, DCSF (2007) state that all boys would benefit from additional guidance. Dubois and Silverthorn (2005) argue that student mentors have a beneficial effect on school behaviour. The role of student mentors forms a vital aspect of the study, as when students engage in undesirable behaviour they are referred to a mentor for additional support.

Due to the problems facing the school it is currently in 'special measures', having failed its most recent OFSTED inspection in 2006. OFSTED enforce special measures in instances where an institution fails to provide students with a satisfactory standard of education.

The study was targeted at year 7 pupils (aged 11-12). This was agreed upon between the institution and the researcher, as it was deemed that in the limited time available, younger pupils would be more receptive. It was indicated that troublesome behaviour increases as pupil's progress through the school, and the school in this study deemed it highly unlikely that any worthwhile data could be generated in relation to other groups of pupils in the time available.

A disturbing aspect of the research pointed to the fact that a number of the pupils are clearly able and talented and yet seem intent on accepting failure as an outcome of their education. In the pursuit of knowledge of troublesome school behaviour, Legault

et al (2006) focused on motivation, or a lack of, which they termed 'amotivation.' They argue that problem behaviour can be understood as a direct outcome of 'amotivation' and low self belief.

A number of schools in the UK now have some kind of mentoring facility in place. The typical set-up will usually see a mentor in a school for a few hours each week. According to the DCSF (2007) clusters of schools pool their resources together, resulting in mentors working at various schools.

The school in this study was quite different; it had an extensive mentor support system that runs throughout the school. The mentors and the mentor house play a significant role in how the school attempts to combat problematic behaviour. Students have a mentor allocated to each year, and they work principally with the pupils with documented problems. A strength to this form of support relationship is that it often develops naturally, be it through leisure or an extended family member, and without the expectancy or pressure of an everyday parent/ child connection. Some problems may lend themselves more easily to resolution through this form of support rather than via parental intervention.

In support of the approach, DuBois and Silverthorn (2005) measured the impact that mentoring relationships have on adolescents. They found that young people experiencing good quality relationship displayed favorable tendencies towards education, were more likely to shun problem behaviours and showed a better level of psychological well-being. It is asserted that the impact of this kind of relationship can be both broad and complex in terms of the development of the skills, resilience and emotional strength of a young person. Taking a lead from DuBois and Silverthorn (2005), Sanchez et al (2006) also stress the importance of non parental forms of adult support. They concur with DuBois and Silverthorn's (2005) findings that these relationships are vital in helping young people with important decisions, or assisting with school life, peer pressure, career advice etc.

Pressley et al (2006) explore how a school that educates previously failing students can promote achievement, resulting in students that succeed. They found that many entered the school with extremely low reading abilities (in the bottom 30 percentile), while a few years later; their scores were around the 77 percentile range. This was replicated within almost every issued standardised test. In order to achieve this it proved necessary to implement a number of features, such as reducing class sizes,

and introducing specific writing and communication studies. The school which Pressley et al (2006) studied is similar to the school featured in the present study. At this school, children attend because of previous failure in another institution. Here, the strategy is also used of sending pupils to the mentor house as an alternative to a more conventional classroom setting.

In the school under investigation, behavioural problems often lead to walking out of lessons and truancy. This can serve to create further problems outside of the school. As well as the obvious problem of ending up with poor grades, Egger et al (2004) discovered a possible connection between school refusal and psychiatric disorders. The results paint a harrowing picture; 'anxious school refusal' was related to depression, as well as separation and anxiety disorder, while pure truancy had links to conduct disorder and depression. Most notably, of these assorted school refusers, 88.2 per cent had a psychiatric disorder to go along with increased behavioural and emotional problems. These figures emphasise the need for positive action to deal with the issue of truancy.

If, as Egger et al (2004) suggest, enforced pupil absenteeism and truancy has such a significant link to psychiatric illness, swift acknowledgment is imperative. Bernstein et al (2001) conducted a follow up study with depressed, school refusing adolescents. They found that a considerable amount of participants met the criteria for either anxiety or depressive disorders a year after treatment. Bernstein et al (2001) findings show how difficult it can be to overcome this sort of illness. By highlighting the potential outcomes in this way, Bernstein et al (2001) as well as Egger et al (2004) show that it is imperative to identify problems as early as possible before they manifest into something more serious.

However, identifying the factors or reasons behind truancy can be a difficult process. It is highly unlikely that there is a single reason for absenteeism, and individuals are likely to have differing reasons dependent on personal circumstance.

The research aim was to gain a better understanding of classroom behaviour, but more specifically to explore children's reasons for partaking in disruptive behaviour within the classroom environment. The ability to identify the factors that are associated with such behaviour will enable educators to tailor school programmes associated with reducing such factors thereby preventing the kind of negative psychological outcomes previously discussed. Developing a healthier learning environment should improve

not only academic performance, but lead to an enhanced enjoyment of the school experience for both students and educators.

Method

Participants

Three participants took part in the study, all of whom were male, aged between 11 and 12. The participants were specifically chosen by pupil mentors. Two had been in frequent trouble at school, while the other participant was reported to be generally well behaved at school, but had some personal difficulties in his life away from the school. This pupil was selected specifically by the year 7 mentor; other poorly behaved pupils were not given permission to take part, and the school under investigation insisted on the pupil with personal difficulties taking part.

Design

The design of the study was qualitative in nature. The researcher obtained data through the use of semi structured interviews. Coolican (2004) advocates the use of semi structured interviews, as conversations flow naturally, and allow the interviewee to explore previously unforeseen aspects raised in discussion. The purpose of the study was to try and gain a better understanding of pupil behaviour in the classroom. Support for the use of qualitative research comes from Schilling (2006) who proposed that a qualitative approach allows for a more in depth insight into the thoughts and ideas of an individual. In addition, Coolican (2004) stresses that the foundation of research lies in the association generated between researcher and participant. In adopting this approach, a relationship is able to be developed naturally, as part of normal conversation procedures.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data generated from the interviews (in accordance with the Braun and Clarke (2006) proposal for conducting thematic analysis). This method was adopted as it offers a flexible framework when undertaking qualitative assessment. This particular approach allows for identification of initial codes within the data. The codes are then categorised into meaningful groups, allowing for potential, (data driven) themes to be produced. The themes can be wide ranging, but are still capable and effective in describing key issues and debates raised (Braun and Clarke 2006).

Materials

Materials consisted of initial consent forms, (which included an information sheet detailing the project) that were given to participants and their parents, and a digital voice recorder. The interviews were later transferred to a disc using Olympus Digital Wave Player Software. A semi-structured interview schedule was designed to help guide the interview. A list of topics was decided upon between the researcher and the pupil mentors, who gave advice on what they felt the participants would be comfortable with. Included were questions about the pupil's life at home, school subjects, relationships with teachers and future plans upon school completion.

Procedure

Those taking part were brought together and seated in a room. Collectively they were informed about the study. Here they were given the chance to take part if they chose. The participants agreed, and they were given consent forms that required signatures from their parents as well as themselves. An information sheet was provided along with the consent form so that their parents were aware of proceedings.

Pupils were individually taken from a pre determined lesson and interviewed in a house separate from the school. Individual interviews took between 15 – 25 minutes. After the interview was finished, the participant was debriefed and thanked for their time. The pupil was then escorted back to their respective class. The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. To protect anonymity, pseudonyms were used in the interview to refer to the participants' responses.

Ethics

Permission for the study was granted by Newman College's Ethics Committee and the study abided by British Psychological Society (2007) ethical guidelines. Permission was granted by the school in question and consent from parent and participant was gained. The pupils were informed that they could withdraw at any time. Participants were debriefed after the interview, and data was stored in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act.

Findings

The data emerging from the semi-structured interviews was subjected to thematic analysis. A range of codes were employed to categorise data. Key themes arising out of the analysis are considered below. Extracts from individual interviews are used to support the thematic findings.

Theme 1: Frustration

Two codes emerged within the data that comprised this theme; SWK (school work) and TR (trouble).

When the interview focused on lessons that the pupils did not like, or struggled in, their frustration with the situation and at times themselves became apparent.

"I can't understand any of them. It's too hard. Then she reads the test scores out, and mine, like mine ent [are not] the lowest, I just guess mine, but like I don't want her to read mine out if I don't know what I'm goin on about."

SWK

"Spanish. That's crap. I don't even understand a word. I don't know one word."

SWK

"They won't help me so I just do other stuff. Me and my mate were playing money up the wall and let off a stink bomb, so then we got sent to the head teacher."

TR

Theme 2: Boredom

Two codes informed this theme: LOS (lack of stimulation) and POP (pupil opinion).

All of the participants spoke of feeling bored in class. There only seemed to be a few lessons that they enjoyed.

"I get bored, in most of the lessons I get bored, I only don't in PE cuz it's jumping kind of thing."

LOS

“All the other lessons are boring”

LOS

The school's OFSTED report in 2006 stated that teaching did not inspire students, and unchallenging tasks led to unproductive lessons. This was to some extent reflected in pupil observations.

It should be pointed out that the pupils always attended PE, it is the best attended lesson for that age group and there are also the least amount of behaviour problems. Interestingly, all the pupils would like to use computers more in their lessons if given the chance.

“Yea, let them go on the computers, bring some games in or something.”

POP

“Yea in all your lessons. See like in maths when you have to write it all down? You should do it on computers.”

POP

Theme 3: Relationships

Three codes informed this theme: PJ (projection), POP (pupil opinion) and INT (intimidation).

The first participant, who seemed to get into the most trouble, seemed to want to pass blame on to other people.

“But I got along with him as a tutor as soon as I went in his class he was a dickhead.

Like as soon as I went in his class chewing a packet.”

LOS

He did not seem to realise that when he had got into trouble it could have been avoided. If he did not walk into the class eating the problem would not have manifested itself into something bigger.

“Then he starts moaning at me. I went to try and get out of his lesson like walking out, he comes in there pushes me and goes get in here now.”

LOS

It was clear from how the student spoke that he was intelligent, but perhaps struggled to express himself, as he constantly sighed and shook his head during the interview.

The relationship that the pupils had with a teacher affected how they felt about that lesson. It is unfortunate that students sometimes enjoy lessons, but will not go because of the teacher.

“I like Tech coz I like building, you can build stuff and I like cooking I just hate him [the teacher]. See tech, I can't go to it, I hate it. I'd love to make a key ring to put anything on it, but like I can't stand him, I hate him. I'm missing out on making stuff because of him.”

POP

It is clear from the data that some pupils feel uneasy about the relationship they have with their teachers and some perceived level of intimidation exists within them.

“I don't get into that much trouble. Just now and again. I'd like the teachers to be more nicer.”

INT

“That's why I didn't want to go to science. She's scary.”

INT

Theme 4: Life outside of School

Two codes informed this theme: AGG (aggression) and ADH (adulthood).

Two participants much preferred not to be at school, and seemed to have a good idea of what they wanted to do when they were older. Evidence of an aggressive outlook could also be seen through the interview process.

“I'm going in the army to kill people. Or I want to be in the plane to bomb people.”

AGG

“I got arrested for beating this kid up who was cussin' me.”

AGG

“My uncle was in the army and he nearly got killed by a bomb. And all my cousins still wanna do it, even my little cousins. One day, there’s that many people in our family, we’ll probably open our own army.”

AGG, ADH

“My brothers getting an apprenticeship, so I probably wanna get an apprenticeship it’s good money.”

ADH

This keenness to follow in a family members footsteps shows the importance of significant others in shaping not only behaviour but life choices.

However school wasn’t viewed in a negative light by all participants. One of the young people interviewed said:

“I like it better at school. I can get away from stuff at home.”

Another young person saw school very specifically as an escape from family problems:

“I learn more at school, I can do better at school. Because at home, my dad’s girlfriend has got two kids and they’re really annoying. School gives me a break really.”

HP

Discussion

The findings of the study suggest that different manifestations of behaviour in the classroom stems from a range of issues. It is feasible to propose that classroom behaviour occurs because of personal circumstance, demanding school work or a troubled relationship with a teacher. To increase understanding of classroom behaviour, a more specific, lengthy study may be required. The gaining of an increased level of understanding about life outside school would be useful. The findings also suggest that pupils need to be taught how to deal with angry or hostile situations; particularly those pupils who may already have behaviour problems.

The study also highlights the importance of family members and that they can greatly influence behaviour in school and in the future. Two of the participants plan on doing the same jobs as other family members - a brother with an apprenticeship and an uncle in the army. The aforementioned work of Sanchez et al (2006) bolster this idea, as they found that non parental adults are vital in helping young people with important decisions such as career advice.

The research also gains support from the work of Legault et al (2006) as they suggest that feelings of boredom and frustration are common. They also suggest the reason for this can be directly related to a lack of academic motivation.

Limitations of the present study

The primary limitation of the study is the number of participants interviewed, meaning that the results are unable to be generalised to a significant extent. With the possibility of researcher bias being an issue in any qualitative study, it is pertinent that the findings of the study should be considered in the framework of its limitations. It should be noted also that the interviews were aimed solely at the students. As outlined earlier, Heyne et al (2002) conducted individual interviews with parents and teachers in their work. If teachers views had also been incorporated into the study, it may have proved possible to gain a different perspective on behaviour, which in turn would give a more rounded view.

In spite of these limitations, it should be noted that the study tackles an important issue and the findings offer a valuable insight for both staff and students.

Conclusion

The study succeeded in uncovering some possibly significant reasons for unfavourable behaviour. Frustration, boredom, relationships and life outside of school all contributed to how individuals acted whilst at school.

The relationship between teacher and student can sometimes ‘tread a fine line’ and a delicate balance needs to be struck in that relationship for it to grow and prosper. The study suggests that understanding the needs of each individual is of the utmost importance. This, however is easier said than done. Large classes and supply teachers

may hinder a rapport being built. This point was emphasised in the schools OFSTED report in 2006 which found that staff recruitment difficulties were having a detrimental effect on teaching.

Future studies should look to integrate more participants, as well as using a series of interviews over an extended period of time. This would give any findings an increased degree of empirical validity.

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The relationship between children's enjoyment and perceived competence in PE Lessons

Victoria Child

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to determine if there is a relationship between perceived competence and enjoyment in primary school children during Physical Education (PE) lessons. Participants were 145, eight to twelve year-olds (65 males, 80 females, mean age = 10 years; $\pm s = 1.2$ years) attending a middle school situated in Norfolk. The Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) was used to measure participants' enjoyment/interest, perceived competence, pressure/tension and effort while performing in a PE lesson. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation showed there was a statistically significant relationship between enjoyment/interest and perceived competence, effort/importance and pressure/tension. The findings highlight the importance of perceived competence on intrinsic motivation and enjoyment in compulsory PE. Future research should focus on determinants of enjoyment and perceived competence in PE in primary school children. In addition it should look at the influence of social factors on children's motivation to participate in PE. For example, adult influences, such as teachers and parents, and peer influences.

KEYWORDS

Motivation, perceived competence, primary education

Introduction

Physical education (PE) is considered important in promoting health-related fitness programmes and creating positive attitudes towards physical activity and exercise (Sallis and McKenzie, 1991). Research has found memory of competence in PE can influence physical activity participation in adults (Fox and Biddle, 1988; Thomas, 1985). This suggests PE can only be used as a vehicle for lifelong participation if pupils are

motivated to develop competence by actively participating and enjoying the experience of PE lessons (Ntoumanis, 2001).

Enjoyment appears to be a significant factor influencing motivation for continued participation in physical activity (Carroll and Loumidis, 2001). This notion is supported by both research findings and theoretical predictions. A large survey conducted in Northern Ireland found that enjoyment was a factor in 69 percent of the sample's participation and lack of enjoyment a factor contributing to 75 percent of the sample's amotivation toward participating in their chosen sport (Kremer, 1997). Similar findings have been produced in a school setting. Enjoyment and fun were rated by primary school children as the most important reasons for participating in PE (Chung and Leung, 1998 cited in Carroll and Loumidis, 2001). Laws and Fisher (1999) support this, in a qualitative study with schoolchildren they concluded that children seem to use the terms 'enjoyment' and 'fun' to summarise all that is positive and good about PE. However, it was also found that the pupils could not articulate further and struggled getting beneath the real meaning of fun and enjoyment (Laws and Fisher, 1999).

Research suggests that perceived competence influences enjoyment and interest (Brustad, 1993; Williams and Gill, 1995). However, while there have only been a few studies examining this relationship in a PE context, the findings propose that perceived competence is a powerful indicator of children's motivation to participate in PE (Luke and Sinclair, 1991). This suggestion is supported by a number of theoretical models.

Harter's competence motivation theory (Harter, 1981) proposes that individuals who experience independent successful mastery attempts strengthen their perceived competence, which in turn increases their intrinsic motivation, and thus increases their innate desire to continue participation (Harter, 1981). Similarly, Cognitive Evaluation Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) proposes that motivation fluctuates depending on how competence is perceived. In particular it suggests that a positive appraisal of ability enhances intrinsic motivation but lowers it if perceived competence is undermined (Deci and Ryan, 1985).

Self-determination theory also highlights the importance of competence on motivation. The theory predicts that in order to facilitate their motivation, well-being, performance and development, an individual must use social contexts to satisfy three basic innate

needs; autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Standage and Treasure, 2002). Deci and Ryan (1985) have suggested a self-determination continuum to describe motivation types where intrinsic motivation represents the most self-determined regulation.

The majority of previous research into children's motivation to participate in PE or in physical activity has investigated older children, especially in regard to the relationship between enjoyment and perceived competence. There is significantly less research on primary school children in the UK (Carroll and Loumidis, 2001). Therefore, there is a need for further research in this area, especially when there is the pressing concern of rising obesity levels in children; children need to be enthused with PE at a young age to encourage lifelong motivation in physical activity. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between intrinsic motivation and perceived competence in primary school aged children's motivation to participate in PE. The study hypothesises a relationship between intrinsic motivation and perceived competence.

Method

Participants

Participants for the present study were 145, eight to twelve year-olds (65 males, 80 females, mean age = 10 years; $\pm s = 1.2$ years) attending a middle school situated in Norfolk. After institutional ethical approval, parental and participant consent was obtained prior to starting the study.

Instruments

Intrinsic Motivation Inventory

A shorter version of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) (Appendix 1) was used to measure participants' enjoyment/interest, perceived competence, pressure/tension and effort while performing in a PE lesson (Ryan, 2001). Each item is rated on the Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree).

Reliability of the shorter version of the IMI has been shown to be adequate with an alpha coefficient for each of the four subscales of enjoyment/interest ($\alpha = 0.78$), perceived competence ($\alpha = 0.80$), effort ($\alpha = 0.84$) and pressure/tension ($\alpha = 0.68$) (Cuddihy et al., 2002). This is supported by McAuley et al (1989) who found an internal consistency

coefficient of 0.85 for the overall scale. This exceeds Nunnally's (1978) .70 criterion 'deemed to represent acceptable reliability in the psychological domain' (Standage and Treasure, 2002: 96).

The IMI has concurrent validity with the long version; the results for the short version have been found to be almost identical to those of the long form of the IMI (Cuddihy et al., 2002). Boyd et al. (2002) found that all the IMI's items met the minimum criteria in the four subscales tested and additionally that the IMI seems to be valid in its measurement of intrinsic motivation.

Procedure

Children responded to the questionnaire immediately following their regular PE lesson. It was emphasised to the participants that the investigator was interested in their individual feelings towards PE therefore there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questionnaire items (Standage and Treasure, 2002). The principal investigator distributed the questionnaires and then read out one question at a time leaving sufficient time for the participants to answer before reading out the next question. This ensured that those participants who may have struggled to read the questions could participate fully in completing the questionnaire. In addition, this allowed participants to be helped with questions they had regarding the wording and/or meaning of any of the items. The questionnaires took approximately ten minutes to complete.

Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha was used to find the internal consistency of the IMI. Descriptive statistics were carried out on the IMI data to determine which factor the children rate as the main motivator for participating in PE. A Pearson's Correlation was used to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and perceived competence.

Results

Internal Consistency

Alpha coefficients for each of the four subscales of enjoyment/interest, perceived competence, effort and pressure/tension in Table I suggest that the short version of the

IMI used in this study has acceptable reliability. All subscales are above the accepted .70 criterion used in the psychological domain (Nunnally, 1978). In addition, the results show the overall scale has an alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .763$.

Table I. Alpha Coefficients for the IMI data

Measure	Alpha Coefficient (α)
Overall	$\alpha = .763$
Enjoyment/interest	$\alpha = .791$
Perceived competence	$\alpha = .840$
Effort/importance	$\alpha = .758$
Pressure/tension	$\alpha = .801$

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics in Table II show that the children rated enjoyment/interest as the main motivator for participating in PE. Effort and perceived competence were also rated highly.

Table II. Mean and standard deviation scores of the four subscales of the IMI.

Measure	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Enjoyment/interest	M = 24.65	$\pm s = 4.72$
Perceived competence	M = 18.61	$\pm s = 4.68$
Effort/importance	M = 21.47	$\pm s = 3.49$
Pressure/tension	M = 10.17	$\pm s = 4.$

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation

Table III shows that there is a strong positive statistically significant relationship between enjoyment/interest and perceived competence and effort/importance. r^2 suggests that 54 percent of the variability in effort/importance can be explained by enjoyment/interest (Field, 2005). Whereas, enjoyment/interest only accounts for 26.52 percent of the variance in perceived competence (Field, 2005). There is also a strong statistically significant negative correlation between enjoyment/interest and pressure/tension with r^2 suggesting that 28 percent of the variability of enjoyment/interest is caused by pressure/tension (Field, 2005).

Table III. Pearson correlation coefficients (r) obtained between enjoyment/interest and perceived competence, pressure/tension and effort.

Factor	r	sig (2-tailed)	r^2 (% of shared variance)
Perceived competence	$r = .515$	$P = .000$	$r^2 = .27$ (26.52%)
Effort/importance	$r = .735$	$P = .000$	$r^2 = .54$ (54%)
Pressure/tension	$r = -.529$	$P = .000$	$r^2 = .28$ (28%)

Discussion

The results of this study show that there was a significant relationship between perceived competence and enjoyment which supports the hypothesis that there is a relationship between intrinsic motivation and perceived competence in motivating children to participate in PE. This supports previous research that found that perceived competence influenced enjoyment and interest (Brustad, 1993, Williams and Gill, 1995). In addition, research evidence in an education setting indicates that being able to show competence increases enjoyment which is likely to result in continued participation (Fox and Biddle, 1988; Weiss, 1987).

The children rated enjoyment/interest as the main motivator for participating in PE. This finding supports previous research (Chung and Leung, 1998 cited in Carroll and

Loumidis, 2001; Kremer, 1997; Laws and Fisher, 1999). Thus, if the children rate PE because they enjoy it they will be motivated to participate actively in PE. The results show there was a strong correlation between enjoyment and the three measures. Effort/importance had the highest correlation and a large percent of the variability of effort/importance appears to be explained by enjoyment/interest (Field, 2005). This strong relationship between effort/importance and enjoyment/interest is expected because if children enjoy PE and are interested in it they are likely to put more effort in. This is echoed by Pelletier et al. (1995) who also reported a positive relationship between effort and intrinsic motivation in sport and Ntoumanis (2001) who found that intrinsic motivation strongly predicts levels of effort. 'This makes sense because the students who find PE exciting and fun are likely to exert high effort to learn new motor skills and accomplish a certain level of competence' (Ntoumanis, 2001: 237).

In addition, it is logical that there is a strong negative relationship between enjoyment/interest and pressure/tension because if a child feels uncomfortable and pressured during PE it is probable that they will experience less enjoyment or alternatively, a child who feels relaxed is more likely to enjoy the lesson. Children who feel pressured often experience boredom i.e. they are uninterested in the lesson and therefore feel less enjoyment (Ntoumanis, 2001). Whereas, children who are intrinsically motivated are less likely to feel bored because they are interested in the lesson and so will not experience pressure which is evident with boredom (Ntoumanis, 2001).

Perceived competence was also rated highly which supports previous reports that it a powerful indicator of children's motivation to participate in PE and has an influence on enjoyment and interest (Brustad, 1993, Williams and Gill, 1995). However, though perceived competence is correlated reasonably highly with enjoyment/interest it only accounts for 26.52 percent of variation in the motivation scores (Field, 2005).

The findings of this study support motivation theories, in particular Harter's Competence Motivation Theory (Harter, 1981) in that the perceptions children make about their competence in a particular context, correlate to their intrinsic motivation in that context. Similarly, the study's findings support Cognitive Evaluation Theory that suggests that a positive appraisal of one's own ability enhances intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 1985). Additionally, the findings of this study support the self-determination theory where intrinsic motivation represents the most self-determined regulation (Deci and

Ryan, 1985); this supports the research that found that children are motivated to participate in PE because of enjoyment.

This study's findings highlight the importance of intrinsic motivation and perceived competence in compulsory PE. Children are motivated to participate in PE if they enjoy it and find it interesting (Chung and Leung, 1998 cited in Carroll and Loumidis, 2001; Laws and Fisher, 1999). This suggests PE lessons should be designed with a child's enjoyment in mind and focus on developing a sense of competence to help intrinsic motivation. Children come to school with different levels of prior experience of sporting activities, some are physically competent and perceive themselves to be, others with more limited experience may not be competent (Papaioannou, 1994). Those with former experience are more likely to have self-determined motivation and enjoy PE and find it interesting and fun, consequently, motivating them to participate in physical activity and sport to further develop their sport skills (Ntoumanis, 2001). However, as Papaioannou (1994) highlights, not all children will feel competent. Thus, perceived competence in PE is vital to motivate children to participate actively in PE and motivate them further into taking part in physical activity, especially those who do not participate in physical activity outside school.

In support of this argument, it has been found that in PE those children who have low perceived competence more often are amotivated and only participate because of external regulation, for example, they have no choice and fear reprimand if they do not participate (Ntoumanis, 2001). Whereas it is less likely for students to be amotivated or externally motivated if they have high perceived competence (Ntoumanis, 2001).

Perceived competence is derived from different sources, for example, adult and peer feedback. Consequently, teachers need to provide appropriate feedback and praise. Research suggests that older children rely on peer group feedback whereas younger children have a heavy reliance on adult feedback which declines with age (McKiddie and Maynard, 1997; Weiss et al., 1997). Thus, a huge onus falls on teachers to help children form these perceptions because it has been found that younger children are not as precise in the judgments they make (McKiddie and Maynard, 1997) and many children do not have prior experience in sport and exercise outside of a school context so do not have previously formed evaluations of their abilities (Carroll and Loumidis, 2001).

Though it is evident from this study's findings and previous research that intrinsic motivation and perceived competence are vital factors in PE, Carroll and Loumidis (2001: 38) note that in PE these are 'often only byproducts of the learning of motor skills in a range of contexts' and not direct objectives because schools have to follow the National Curriculum guidelines. Enjoyment and perceived competence are not always the priority, instead primary school teachers often get fixated on other aims such as the learning of skills and physical activity levels and these two very important factors may be forgotten (Carroll and Loumidis, 2001). However, if intrinsic motivation and perceived competence were more explicitly stated in the National Curriculum physical activity levels may well increase by motivating children to participate in PE and physical activity. In addition, skills can still be learnt but in an environment that promotes fun and where children feel they achieve and are competent. Teachers need to provide the right motivational environment that encourages all children in PE and allows them, regardless of ability, to participate and develop a range of skills (Carroll and Loumidis, 2001).

Inclusion of all children in PE is crucial for their ongoing participation in physical activity. Some children are not physically competent so perhaps PE should be broadened to include more activities and tasks that can be achieved by everyone, where high motor skill is not important, for example walking (Armstrong and McManus, 1996). Fox (1996: 98) supports this and suggests that PE has focused attention too heavily on 'high-intensity exercise at the expense of the type of activity the general public are more likely to take on board'. Obviously motor skills still need to be developed but there are some children who would benefit from participating and enjoying low motor skill activities and at the same time would still perceive them as credible (Fox, 1996).

Finally, although it is evident that the teaching environment should produce a motivational climate where perceived competence and intrinsic motivation are increased (Biddle, 1999) this can be a challenge in 'primary schools for non-specialist teachers, often with limited facilities and equipment and with time constraints' (Carroll and Loumidis, 2001: 38).

A limitation of this study was how the school where the research was undertaken split physical education into 'games' lessons (which includes games, athletics, outdoor adventurous activities and swimming) and 'PE' lessons (gymnastics and dance).

Though it was explained to participants before completing the questionnaires that this study was concerned with physical education as a whole (which includes both their 'games' lessons and their 'PE' lessons) some children may have still completed their questionnaires considering only their 'PE' lessons because the questions talked about PE. This limitation highlights a need for future research in this area; to look at the difference in children's motivation for different types of PE. For example, are children more motivated to take part in games activities than gymnastics and why? Several children commented that they enjoyed 'games' more than 'PE'.

Conclusion

Intrinsic motivation and enjoyment and perceived competence are strongly related and important factors motivating children to take part in PE lessons, thus PE needs to promote these factors. This is especially vital because of the pressing concern of rising obesity levels in children; children need to be enthused by PE at a young age to encourage lifelong participation in physical activity. Future research should focus on the relationship between intrinsic motivation, enjoyment and perceived competence in PE in primary school children and the determinants of each. In addition research should look at the influence of social factors on children's motivation to participate in PE. For example, adult influences, such as teachers and parents, and peer influences.

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APPENDIX 1

Shorter version of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) adapted from Ryan (2001).

Intrinsic Motivation Inventory

Please read each statement listed below and indicate how much you personally agree with each statement by circling a number. 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

1. I enjoy doing PE very much	1	2	3	4	5
2. I think I am good at PE	1	2	3	4	5
3. I put a lot of effort into PE	1	2	3	4	5
4. I did not feel nervous at all while doing PE	1	2	3	4	5
5. I believe PE could be of some help to me	1	2	3	4	5
6. PE was fun to do	1	2	3	4	5
7. I think I did well at this PE, compared to other pupils	1	2	3	4	5
8. I didn't try very hard to do well at PE	1	2	3	4	5
9. I felt very tense while doing this PE	1	2	3	4	5
10. I believe doing PE could be helpful to me	1	2	3	4	5
11. I thought PE was boring	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am happy with my performance in PE	1	2	3	4	5
13. I tried very hard in PE	1	2	3	4	5
14. I was very relaxed in this PE lesson	1	2	3	4	5
15. I think PE is an important activity	1	2	3	4	5
16. PE did not hold my attention at all	1	2	3	4	5
17. I was pretty skilled at this activity	1	2	3	4	5
18. It was important to me to do well in PE	1	2	3	4	5
19. I was nervous while working in PE	1	2	3	4	5
20. While doing PE, I was thinking about how much I enjoyed it	1	2	3	4	5
21. I am not good at PE	1	2	3	4	5
22. I didn't put much effort into this PE lesson	1	2	3	4	5
23. I felt pressured while doing PE	1	2	3	4	5
24. I would describe this PE lesson as very interesting	1	2	3	4	5

How Augmentative and Alternative communication is used to support learning for both verbal and non-verbal children in a special educational needs classroom

John Lahert

ABSTRACT

This article presents the findings from a research placement for a BA (Hons) degree in Early Years Education Studies. It investigates the use of Augmentative and Alternative communication in a classroom of six children with learning difficulties and physical disability. The research identifies the school policy on communication and how it is implemented. It also reviews some of the research relevant to the article. The data generated showed that the school do have a vigorous policy on communication and back this up with documents and staff training. It concludes that the staff are committed to the school policy and that the children are supported in their education through the skilful use of augmentative and alternative communication techniques.

KEYWORDS

Special education needs, Augmentative and Alternative communication, Makaton

Introduction

This paper was originally submitted as part of a research placement module in the second year of a BA (hons) degree in Early Years Education Studies. Alterations have been made to preserve the identity of the school and pupils.

The setting is a large special school which caters for around 200 children between the ages of 2 and 19. The school is a centre for motor education and all of the children have some form of physical disability. Many of the children have additional multiple learning difficulties, medical problems and varying degrees of sensory impairment.

Communication is a central part of everyone's life. Most children learn to communicate as part of their natural development but for some children with learning and physical

difficulties normal communication with speech and writing is difficult or impossible. Addressing these children's communication needs is vital if they are to access education and have an improved quality of life. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) is used to supplement or improve communication where this is impaired (Millar 2003). The definition of AAC for this paper takes the widest view that AAC is any form of communication other than ordinary speech or writing. AAC used in the school is any form of communication used alongside or in place of speech or written word, often several forms of AAC are used at the same time.

The focus for the project was a small scale case study investigation (Bell 1987, Cohen et al 2000) into how AAC is used in a special needs school and classroom to support children's learning. The project was informed by two key research questions. The first question concerned the school's policy towards the use of AAC. The second question was how this policy is implemented and used to support learning and communication in the classroom and wider school environment. The focus and outline of the project was agreed after consultation and negotiation with the class teacher. The school was undergoing a review of communication practice and policy and the class teacher suggested this placement research project could add to the class input into that review.

The class setting for the research accommodates National Curriculum stages four to six. There were six children ranging from eight to ten years. All had some form of learning and physical disability. Learning difficulties ranged from moderate to severe and all the children work within the 'P scales.' P scales are an assessment tool for pupils working below level one of the National Curriculum. They offer a measurable performance which records positive attainment where previously no data or achievement was recorded (Martin 2006). Three of the children in the class were non-verbal and three were verbal although ability levels varied. Some of the participant children in this study had severe physical disabilities and some of the children had life threatening conditions and limited life expectancy. Five of the children used wheelchairs. The range of disabilities and learning difficulties necessitated that a wide range of communication methods were used. This project aimed to investigate how these different communication methods were used to support learning for the children in this classroom setting.

Literature review

A paper and electronic literature search found many publications and articles in the field of AAC and communication for children with special educational needs. The literature review was narrowed down to what is written about AAC and communication in relation to issues discussed in this project. This literature review concentrates on what is written about three issues; the reasoning behind augmentative and alternative communication, what is the justification behind the communication systems in use at the school and what does current research say about the effective use of AAC methods for children in special needs schools.

The published research articles and journals identified for this project tend to assume prior knowledge therefore most of what is written about the background and rationale behind the use of AAC arises out of general introductions into the subject or opening chapters in specialist publications. Wilson (2003) takes a broad view on the nature of AAC as being any method of communication that supplements ordinary methods of speech and handwriting where these are impaired. Millar (2003) is more child specific indicating that AAC is based on enabling the child to use whatever abilities they have in order to compensate for whatever they do not. Cockerill and Carroll-Few (2001) take a different approach suggesting that elements of AAC are used by everyone at different times; such as pointing or gesturing to make oneself understood or emphasising some words with a facial expression. Cockerill and Carroll-Few (2001) and Millar (2003) both give an analysis of how children use AAC as part of their normal development.

Communication Aid Project (CAP 2003) literature defines AAC as a whole range of different activities and points out that there is seldom only one type of communication method or aid in use in any communication interaction. Children will use a wide range of communication strategies at the same time and often interchangeably in the same interaction. Millar (2003) reports that AAC can include facial expression, eye pointing (looking hard at the object you want) signing using special symbols, spelling out the message on a letter board or an electronic speech output aid. Some writers distinguish two main types of AAC system, aided and unaided (CAP, 2003; Detheridge and Detheridge, 2002; Millar, 2003). Unaided communication is described as methods that do not involve the use of additional equipment; this can include body language, pointing etc, and also includes signing methods such as Makaton and British Sign language. Aided communication methods are the usual terms to describe methods

that use additional equipment such as picture charts or computers. There is some distinction between high and low tech equipment, high tech requiring the use of an additional power source. Wilson (2003) advises that some communication systems can use elements of aided and unaided communication. An example of this is Makaton sign language which is unaided because it requires no additional equipment and Makaton symbol books which are aided because it requires the use of a book.

Makaton is the preferred language for sign and symbol communication at the school. The literature search found many articles and books on how the Makaton system is used or should be used, but very little evaluation of its effectiveness. Nothing was found comparing the effectiveness of one system over another. Grove (1982) a researcher working on the original Makaton vocabulary project published research on why signing may succeed where language fails. Although this research was used to find evidence to support the use of Makaton it is useful because it gives insight into the rationale behind the project and the development of the Makaton system.

Makaton was designed as a system to be used simultaneously with normal methods of communication (Grove 1982). The motivation behind this approach is to give children access to as many modes of communication as possible (Grove 1982). In an update of the Grove (1982) research Powell (1999) reports on the successful use of this approach. The research affirms that the use of manual sign alongside speech 'without doubt' supports the communication skills of children (Powell, 1999: 10). Within the paper Powell (1999) reviews other research to support this view. A critique of the Makaton language system by Tetzchner and von Martinson (2002:22) reveals that Makaton is not 'just another signing system... it is designed to teach mentally handicapped children through expressive language and as much visual input as possible'. The understanding that a communication system has the best chance of success when used alongside others is supported by Detheridge and Detheridge (2002) who suggest that sensory impaired children communicate better when using all sensory signals. Miller (2003) states that for children the best opportunities for successful and meaningful communication are when all opportunities to provide clues are used. This could be an interaction using vocal language with exaggerated facial expressions, sign language and picture signs.

Recent research has been published evaluating the use of communication aids (Chan, 2004; Wright et al, 2004; Wright et al, 2006). This is linked to the communication aids program. It is relevant to this study because the research is up to date and the

program has funded some of the communication aid equipment used by the children at the school. Communication aids are the physical equipment that use the preferred communication system such as an electronic voice device using Makaton symbols on a keyboard or touch screen. Key findings are that children who use communication aids or other AAC equipment reported positive changes in their quality of life (Wright et al, 2004). It was also reported that parents had strong positive views about the use of AAC communication aids in school settings (Chan, 2004). Parents felt that children who used communication aids were more confident in communicating with their peers and school staff (Chan, 2004). Research on the views of education professionals working with children who use AAC reported positive outcomes for most children (Wright et al, 2006). In regards to educational settings Wright et al (2006) also reported that the research showed communication aid use increases participation in classroom activities.

In the review of literature some key points emerged. There appears to be a consensus that AAC is a broad term that includes all methods of communication. For some children, especially those who are sensory impaired the best chance of success is with a multi-method approach (Grove, 1982; Powell, 1999). Finally there is evidence that points to positive outcomes for children who use AAC when they have the necessary support.

Methodology

This research project has taken the form of a case study (Bell, 1987). This approach was chosen because of its appropriateness for the individual researcher and because it gave the opportunity for one aspect of the school to be studied in depth in the limited time scale. This approach to case study fulfils the criteria set out by Bell (1987:10) in that it has allowed the research to be concentrated on 'specific interactive processes at work'. Specific interactive processes in this case being the communication process between children in the class and adults who work with them. This approach has also allowed the researcher to concentrate on the 'specific instances of practice' in the school (Cohen et al, 2000:34). An important aspect of the planning was an awareness of the need to be specific in the aims of the project and selective in the methods of collecting data. This was because in the busy and demanding school environment it is possible to become sidetracked and have attention diverted away from the project and there was a finishing deadline. Having limited aims and objectives made the project

achievable in the timescale (Bell, 1987). It was also seen as important to set targets as this was a first-time research project and there was concern about allowing time within the project to write up the findings.

The methods of data collection for the project were chosen because they were the most appropriate for answering each of the research questions. To collect data on school policy, two strategies of data collection were chosen; documentary evidence and interview. Documentary evidence involved the collection of data on school policy from three sources; class teacher, school office and speech therapy department. Due to the busy nature of the school, data collection from interviews was from the informal conversational end of the spectrum (Cohen et al 2000). Interviews took place throughout the project when staff were available. There were sometimes brief meetings with the focus on one question or topic and occasionally longer meetings where research issues could be discussed in depth. A particular strength of this approach was that the relevance of the questions and topics discussed could develop along with the evidence collected from the observations and the researcher's developing knowledge of relevant issues. The data collected from interviews came from two sources teacher/classroom staff and the speech and language therapy department.

The data gathered in relation to the first research question regarding school policy guided the research observations. It was through the understanding gained from school documents and staff interviews that the researcher became aware of the range and subtleties of the communication interactions.

It was also necessary to spend some time with the children and the staff to understand when communication had taken place. For some of the children communication could be by eye contact and it took some time to be skilled at recognising this. Some training from the staff enabled the researcher to be aware of these methods and styles of interaction and also the subtleties of communicating with the individual children. In addition the researcher had several training sessions with the Speech and Language Therapist.

To obtain evidence of how the school policy is implemented to support communication methods in the classroom and school environment observations were used to collect data. This method of data collection was chosen because it allowed the researcher to gather live data from live situations (Cohen and Manion, 1984). Naturalistic observations (Cohen et al, 2000) were chosen because they allowed the teacher pupil interactions to

be observed as they normally happened. The researcher was a non-participant in the observations to avoid interference and prompting, this also allowed the researcher to concentrate on what was happening. This was achieved by observing from an attached office or from the rear of the class.

Three episodes were observed; at the start of the school day when the children were going through the planned timetable for the day, the literacy lesson and the beginning of lunch time. For triangulation purposes each of the episodes was observed three times, because each day was different. This approach was employed to obtain data from a range of perspectives and situations (Bell 1987). One further round of observations took place where the methods of communication were recorded by frequency to provide additional triangulation and an element of quantitative data. This approach allowed the salient features of situations to be observed as they developed and generated 'thick descriptions' (Cohen et al, 2000:311). These approaches to collecting data by observation allowed the researcher time to make accurate interpretation of what was observed rather than inferences.

Validity and reliability were considered. Reliability concerns consistency and replicability (Cohen et al, 2000; Bell, 1987). Issues of reliability were not thought to be a concern because the project could be repeated and the results would be replicated. For validity it was considered that the findings describe accurately the data. This fulfils the criteria proposed by Bell (1987) in that data should describe and measure what it is intended to describe and measure.

Ethical considerations (Cohen et al, 2000; Bell, 1987) were prominent throughout the project. The children in the school are among the most vulnerable in our society. Consultation during the project design took place with the researcher's supervisor and at the school. The school's ethical practice and guidelines were checked and adhered to. Written parental informed consent was given before the start of the data gathering process. For medical and child protection reasons researcher/students are never alone with children in the classroom, a trained member of staff was always present. To avoid risk of identity the school, pupil and staff names have not been used.

Findings and analysis

The findings and analysis of the data are presented together, although the key questions will be addressed separately. Interviews with staff were conducted throughout this

project and the findings and analysis of the interview data are presented throughout this section to reflect the approach.

The volume of data collected and the ease of availability suggest that communication policy is prominent in the education strategy at the school. The presence of a specialist speech and language department demonstrates that communication has a distinct and important position in the school.

Twelve separate documents specifically concerning communication were collected in addition to many others where communication issues were mentioned. Some of these were specific to certain conditions effecting speech and communication and others were specific to methods of AAC.

The school mission statement states that a major specialist area of the school expertise is concerned with 'the development of language and communication'. This is further evidenced by the school having a specific 'communication Bill of Rights'. This document is concerned with the rights of the pupils in the school and how the school staff can ensure that these rights are met. Important points stated that within the school all children have the right to express themselves, have their communication signals acknowledged and that they are informed about actions, events and people that can have an impact on their time within the school. These points are linked to the children expressing through a mutually understood communication method their personal preferences and feelings. A prominent response in interviews with the classroom and speech therapy staff supports this view that for some children at the school, communication and the ability to express basic needs and preferences was among the most important things that the children at the school will learn. This demonstrates staff awareness of school policy and the use of that policy.

For staff training the school has issued several documents on methods and good practice to make communication effective. 'Making Communication Successful' sets out the principles that the school use to give the child the 'best opportunities to develop communication skills'. The document also sets out strategies for involving all those linked with the child including parents and other agencies to be involved in discussion and training. Within this document there are also strategies for adapting the environment and choosing the most appropriate communication method for the needs of the child. This concurs with the views of Powell (1999) that the emphasis should be on choosing the method to suit the capabilities and needs of the individual child. Staff

interviews and observations showed that they were aware of the needs of individual children and adapted their methods to suit the child. There are several documents covering specific communication methods. In addition the school have their own core signs training booklet for the use of Makaton in the school. It contains about 100 core and additional signs that all the staff at the school are expected to know and use. Interviews with staff indicate that core signs training forms part of in-house training and observations show that the staff know and use the core signs. The Core Signs Training booklet contains an explanation of the use of signing at the school and describes to staff why and when Makaton signs are used. The booklet is on display in the classroom and training sessions were advertised around the school. Speech therapy staff pointed out that the school use the Makaton system because it is designed to be used alongside speech and the Makaton symbols should be used where appropriate because it offers further reinforcement for the children leading to a better chance of understanding. The class teacher highlighted that some children with physical disabilities can only make imprecise signs and limited sounds but when used together these are able to convey the intended meaning. Research by Powell (1999) describes how well this approach can work for some children. Interviews with the classroom staff show that they have good knowledge of the Makaton system. From this evidence it is clear that the school acknowledge the importance of communication and a clear policy on how to use AAC to support children to communicate. The school also provides training and has resources to support staff to carry out the school policy.

Three activities in the school day were observed to see how the school staff use communication to support children in learning activities. The first observation was where the children go through the plan of activities for the day. The teacher pointed out that this was designed to assist the pupils understanding, sense of time and support conceptual understanding. The plan of the activities for the day was presented to the children in Makaton symbols and written word while the teacher signed as they progressed. All of the children were engaged in the proceedings and took turns to identify the activities. The staff allowed each child enough time to make their response. The verbal children spoke their response but would often use sign as well. A verbal child with severe learning difficulties could only identify the activities when prompted with Makaton symbols. This evidence supports the view of Powell (1999) and Grove (1982) that symbols can support learning when children are unable to access written language because of learning difficulties. Grove (1982:4) makes the point stating that 'pictures are easier than words'. The three non verbal children used a combination

of sign and voice output communication aid to respond to the teacher although they appeared to prefer signing as the response is faster. This activity indicates that the children are supported in their learning through the use of the multi-communication approach as put forward by many commentators (e.g. Detheridge and Detheridge, 2002; Grove, 1982; Millar, 2003; Powell, 1999). The final observation to count the frequency of communication interactions showed that signing was the most often used method of communication. This may be because signing is the method available to all members of the class and the data showed communication between the children was by signing. It was also observed that signing was the quickest method of communication. Wilson (2003) explains that children quickly learn to adapt and will use the easiest and quickest form of communication open to them.

The second activity observed was the literacy lesson. The lesson was an interactive story narrated by the teacher. It involved the use of a story book, finger puppets and various objects related to the story. The story was read aloud with signing only on key words and phrases. The teacher explained that signing was only used on keywords to allow the focus to be on the story. The children were attentive throughout and enjoyed the story. This may indicate that the receptive language of the children is higher than their expressive language. This is possible because the children appear to understand the words that they are unable to express through the vocabulary available to them. This could be a limitation of the Makaton system. The children showed enjoyment by making comments using spoken language and sign. One child was using their voice output communication aid. These observations showed the use of many communication methods in combination. The staff were following the preferred methods available to individual children and were using different methods when communicating with more than one child.

The third activity observed was at the start of lunchtime when the children chose their meal. The menu was displayed in three formats; Makaton symbol, written word and picture symbol. The speech and language therapist explained that this was because some children were unable to read or use Makaton. This is further evidence that the use of as many avenues of communication as possible increases the chances of understanding (Millar 2003, Powell 1999). The children observed had little trouble indicating their meal preferences. The lunch supervisors and kitchen staff were using sign and speaking when communicating with the children. This shows that the school policy is used and implemented by all staff. Further evidence of the use of AAC can be

found all around the school. For example Makaton symbols and picture symbols are used on notice boards and on doors.

In answer to the key questions the findings show that the school has a vigorous policy on communication and the use of AAC within the school. This is demonstrated by the amount of supporting evidence and the knowledge of the staff and observations around the school. The school appears to back up the policy with staff training and staff support. Around the school are many examples of good practice. In the classroom the observations showed staff use AAC to support children in their learning. Staff interview responses indicate that the staff are aware of school policy and put the policy into practice.

Project evaluation

This project proved successful because the key aims were achieved. It was also viewed as a worthwhile experience for the school and they have indicated that the findings will be presented when the school undertake a review of communication. It has been worthwhile for the researcher because it provided valuable experience of carrying out research and the processes involved.

Areas for future research investigation have been identified, these include; the link between receptive and expressive vocabulary and the limitations of the Makaton system. Another area for further research could be into how verbal and non verbal children with learning difficulties communicate with each other.

The choice of the methodology and the research tools used have also been evaluated. The success of the project and placement has justified the case study approach. Bell (1987) and Cohen et al (2000) advocate the use of a case study approach for first time research projects because it is easy to understand, it focuses 'on the particular' and it is based on reality. These factors influenced the design of the research element of the placement. Bell (1987) also points out that it is particularly suitable for the solo researcher. The research tools chosen were also seen as successful because of the volume and quality of data generated in supporting a successful conclusion to the project.

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King Vidor's The Big Parade: Anti-war cinema and anti-war sentiment in 1920s America

Anna Engebretson

ABSTRACT

American public opinion on foreign policy in the 1920s was influenced by the cynical attitudes many had toward the United States' involvement in the First World War. The popularity of anti-war and anti-military activism was growing in an atmosphere that was becoming fiercely isolationist. Yet the United States had benefited enormously from the war, both politically and economically, while suffering a relatively low number of casualties in its six months of combat compared to the other belligerent nations who had been at the frontline of battle for the entire four years of the conflict.

Such anger also contrasts sharply with the more positive accounts of American GIs who returned from Europe in 1919. This essay will highlight the origins of the often-cited "disillusionment" of the interwar years in the rapidly expanding arena of 1920s mass media with a special focus on the influence of the 1925 anti-war film *The Big Parade*. The story of its creation as an anti-war propaganda film, and its links with the already strong anti-war movement in American literature will shed light on an important force behind the shaping of public opinion against the war and American involvement in future foreign entanglements during the interwar years.

KEYWORDS

Cinema, First World War, Anti-war literature, the United States, 1920s

Introduction

Though cinema is about entertainment, it also has a role in translating prevailing views to audiences...the classic films about the war showed that cinema could transform the views of its audience...it is this legacy of historical and political

importance which gives them significance in film, and indeed, world history
(Andrew Kelly 1997: 182)

It may be morbid; folks may object, but it is one of the greatest pieces of propaganda ever launched against the war

(Variety's review of the 1925 motion picture, *The Big Parade*)

For many Americans of the 1920s, the battle scenes of the 1925 silent motion picture *The Big Parade* would be as close as they would ever get to understanding the mechanized horrors of the First World War. Out of a population of 106 million, just over 4 million men had been mobilized, and far fewer had actually made it to the frontlines. David Kennedy explained in his study on the First World War and American society that '[the American G.I.s] were, first of all, as much tourists as soldiers. The average doughboy spent more peacetime than wartime in France...and, though as many as 1.3 million Americans came under enemy fire, few saw sustained or repeated battle.' (1980: 205) Understanding of the miseries of trench warfare usually came from secondary sources. According to Kennedy, 'Americans, for the most part, knew nothing of those facts [of war]. Civilians were little touched by the distant fighting, and the great majority of the late-arriving doughboys had not tasted battle in ways comparable to the experience of their Old World comrades and foes. American [novelists and journalists] had to put forward a 'truth' about the war that was not so easily made apparent to their readers' (1980: 228).

The impact such popular media interpretations have had on public understanding of the First World War, from the Armistice to the present day, has been an area of interest among historians for many years. Paul Fussell first outlined this relationship in his 1975 study of the war poets and novelists of the 1920s, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, stating, 'The Great War seems especially fertile in rumour and legend. It was as if the general human impulse to make fictions had been dramatically unleashed by the novelty, immensity, and grotesqueness of the proceedings.' (1975: 115) Indeed, the art, literature and poetry inspired by the war dramatized the personal experiences of those who fought in more brutally poignant terms than for any conflict in their living memories. Almost immediately, these interpretations coloured by impressions of betrayal and disillusionment influenced interpretations of the war for much of the geographically isolated American population.

There was, of course, a need for a visual account of this 'truth' to compliment those of the anti-war writers. This was what *The Big Parade* established. At a time when motion pictures had yet to be saddled with the burden of sound, silent film was a highly developed visual art form, as able to convey in images what novelists could in words. Director King Vidor's motion picture about 'just an average G.I.' fleshed out a figure already so mythologized in the anti-war novels that preceded *The Big Parade*, that the film struck a crucial blow to the old Victorian-era romanticism of war. *The Big Parade*'s much-lauded realism effectively replaced the old myths of war with a new, more modern one that reflected the more impersonal brutalities perceived after 1918.

In a recent study on the relationship between post-First World War American literature and the anti-war activism and policy of the interwar years, Christopher Nank has drawn parallels between the anti-war novels produced in the 1920s and the pacifist moods of many Americans, establishing a cause and effect relationship between the two. He writes: '[The] growing bitterness in the intellectual community ultimately, by the end of the decade, swelled into an outright pacifist...isolationist belief on the part of a majority of Americans. By the 1930s these sentiments would be codified in actual legislation keeping America out of foreign military involvement' (Nank 2005: 5).

Nank credits the works of anti-war novelists with informing Americans of the grimmer realities of the war, arguing that literature was the most important mass medium of the era with which to spread anti-war sentiment. This explanation, however, stops short of acknowledging other, equally effective avenues within the rapidly increasing variety of mass communication of the 1920s, namely cinema. Motion pictures reached a wide and varied audience to rival that of any other medium during the interwar years and by the time the anti-war movement reached cinema screens in 1925 with *The Big Parade*, they would certainly have had an influence comparable to printed media. Still, Nank's connection between anti-war narratives in literature and the pacifist-isolationist atmosphere in which anti-military, anti-war legislation was created highlights an important aspect of the movement's popularity among American intellectuals, activists and ordinary citizens that sets the platform for this essay. It will be the exploration of a similar cause and effect relationship that cinema would certainly have had with anti-war sentiment at this time, focusing specifically on *The Big Parade* as the first important film to spring from contemporary anti-war literature, that this essay will primarily be concerned with.

Anti-war sentiment in 1920s America

The United States had, by the first decades of the twentieth century, seen many significant conflicts in her short history, but it was the faraway battles of the First World War that first inspired Americans to consider war as a thoroughly tragic, futile experience. People referred to the conflict simply as the Great War for its devastating impact on civilization and its casualties became known as the Lost Generation. In the United States the anger and cynicism expressed by so many began to ferment as early as 1919, when President Woodrow Wilson's crusade to 'make the world safe for democracy' was put to an abrupt end by a conservative Congress that flatly rejected any involvement in his League of Nations. Many grew disillusioned with such idealism and became active in promoting isolationist, anti-military and pacifist ideas and policy.

Idaho Senator William Edgar Borah was nationally popular for his opposition to the war: 'America has arisen to a position where she is respected and admired by the entire world,' he said in 1919. 'She did it by minding her own business.' The highly-subscribed Women's International League for Peace and Freedom urged their American sisters to write on their income tax forms 'part of the tax which is levied for preparation for War is paid only under Protest and Duress' to show their support for disarmament policy. Schools and universities even hosted essay contests in which the public could submit peace plans to win cash prizes for the best ideas. One contest in 1922 gathered a quarter of a million letters of interest and submissions from, among many others, William Jennings Bryan and a young Franklin Roosevelt. The growing optimism of peace activism reached its height in 1928 with the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact, the treaty to outlaw war, when a beleaguered Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg met French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand's offer of a treaty under intense pressure from a myriad of peace organizations across the country, whom Kellogg referred to as 'goddamned pacifists' (Leinwand 2000: 117).

But why had such a distant conflict affected America's attitude to war so deeply? Where did this often-cited disillusionment come from? Americans certainly hadn't suffered the scale of loss, deprivation and destruction as had been inflicted upon the populations across Europe. The United States was the only major Western power to emerge both politically and economically stronger after the war, yet never before had such an insistence for disarmament, for anti-war policy and an interest in pacifist-isolationist ideals taken hold of the country and its politics. So few Americans had experienced

the war first-hand, and the inspiration for such activities had to come from second-hand sources - accounts transmitted through the popular media. A national memory of the war was forming, even in the earliest years after the Armistice, and examining the nature of this memory of the war in the American media as it relates to popular political sentiments of the time reveals the origins of much of this disillusionment.

Yet *The Big Parade*, and the anti-war genre it heralded, is conspicuously absent in social histories of the period. Though *The Big Parade* was perhaps the most widely seen film of the entire decade, certainly considered one of cinema's first blockbusters, the film has been inexplicably forgotten by historians, even film historians, as an influential force in shaping American public opinion on anti-war activism and policy during the 1920s and early 1930s. With numerous studies on the impact of pro-involvement propaganda cinema during the two World Wars, comparatively little attention has been given to the anti-war films of the interwar years that were made with a similar intent. Directors including Vidor, and later Lewis Milestone who filmed Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* certainly looked on their work as propaganda of a significance equal to that of the war years and there is sufficient evidence to suggest that audiences and critics appreciated these films as such. *The Big Parade* was the first of this genre, the films that protested the war, and the story of its creation to its reception and influence on subsequent depictions of the Great War lies in the realm of social as much as film history for its contribution to the anti-war activism with the American public of the 1920s and 30s.

The success of The Big Parade

On Armistice Day 1925 King Vidor introduced *The Big Parade* with a certain degree of trepidation. Seven years had passed since the end of the Great War and nearly as many since the conflict had been seen in American cinemas. Audiences had become exhausted from years of hysterical 'Hate the Hun' propaganda films and let it be known by staying away from war pictures in droves. Then there was *The Big Parade's* deliberate anti-war theme; not since D. W. Griffith nearly a decade before had a director produced a film with such lofty intentions. *The Big Parade* documented the perceived betrayal of the lead up to the war to the disillusionment of its conclusion, but to his opening night audience, Vidor explained, 'In the Great War many were wondering why in an enlightened age we should have to battle. I do not wish to appear to be taking any stand about war. I certainly do not favour it, but I would not set up a preachment against

it.' However, he added, 'There's not going to be any animosity directed toward some young German fellow just because he happened to be born in Germany and then was drafted. He might be a schoolteacher, an accountant, or even a screen actor. You can't put animosity down to two individuals facing each other. That's what the picture says' (Vidor 1925 cited in Kelly 1997: 39).

In reality, *The Big Parade* clearly did set up a preachment against war that was both new and, Vidor feared, controversial and the director explained the ambiguity of this statement in an interview with Kevin Brownlow years later: "I was strictly anti-war and I was doing as much as I could do to speak against war in that film. It has a lot of things that we definitely thought couldn't be shown in regular theatres and there was a period when we didn't know whether it would be shown. The tie-in between the movie producers and the government and was so strong, and that other censorship - Hayes and so forth - that if you made anything that discouraged enlistment or discouraged going to war or fighting, then the government would say no and perhaps the producers would listen and obey." (Vidor to Brownlow 1980)

Audiences, as it happened, were more receptive to the anti-war theme and flocked to *The Big Parade* with unprecedented enthusiasm. The film achieved record-breaking popularity and profit for the newly formed Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios (the film cost just under \$400,000 to make and grossed \$3.5 million in its first year) and was screened throughout the country for over two years with numerous re-releases even after sound films became the norm (Brownlow, 1979: 193). By 1925 the cynical attitudes toward American involvement in the war in Europe were almost as strong as the frenzied support to 'help make the world safe for democracy' had been in 1917-18 and the success of *The Big Parade* indicated that Vidor had successfully tapped this national mood. Instead of protest, or disinterest, *The Big Parade* was hailed as a masterpiece and the director believed with this film he had encouraged a 'new movement about honesty in war' (Kelly 1997: 34).

An important element of the film's success was its lack of battlefield heroics. Vidor had set out to make *The Big Parade* an 'honest war picture, with some feeling of anti-war.' He said, 'All war stories up to that time had been ones that glamorised war. My idea...was not to glamorise war, but to just have a G.I., a common soldier who didn't want to make war. He didn't think enough to start a campaign against the war but he still felt pretty badly about it' (Vidor 1973 cited in Trachtenberg 2005).

To understand Vidor's de-glamorisation of war, a short synopsis of *The Big Parade* must be outlined.

Synopsis and the making of The Big Parade

The Big Parade begins in quasi-documentary style with the title '*In the Spring of 1917 America was a nation occupied in peaceful progression*', followed by images of humming factories and rising skyscrapers. When the newspapers scream 'War Is Declared!', young, well-to-do Jim Apperson, played by popular silent film actor John Gilbert, joins the U.S. Army buoyed by the patriotic excitement of a ticker-tape parade. He's encouraged by a girlfriend with romantic visions of a military uniform and a father eager for his son to take part in a patriotic cause, and he is shipped to France with a regiment of optimistic 'laughing doughboys'. Jim befriends two other volunteers - Slim, a tobacco-chewing riveter, and Bull, a brash bartender - and the trio representing disparate sections of American society are brought together in a bond otherwise improbable in civilian life. While in France waiting for his call to the front, Jim falls in love with Melisande, a French girl from a nearby village, and the film proceeds to play out the enjoyable clash of cultures that were part of many Americans' fondest memories of army service.

The film then changes tone sharply as Jim's regiment is called to the front to discover the realities of modern warfare. In one chilling scene, the shocked and inexperienced doughboys march through a sniper-infested forest, echoing the American Expeditionary Forces' infamous march through Belleau Wood of 1918, and are struck down one by one. Jim cowers as they advance toward the heavier shelling at the frontlines, a nightmarish landscape of burnt-out trees and poison gas. Settled into their section in the trenches, an officer orders one of them to clear out a German sniper. Slim and eventually Bull are both killed in the attempt and Jim flies over the top to finish the job. When he's caught in the leg by German fire, Jim is forced to crawl through the muddy No Mans Land to a shell hole with a fatally injured sniper.

This leads to the most significant scene of anti-war statement of *The Big Parade* in which Jim, alone with the dying German sniper, lunges toward him with his bayonet but falls back when he sees the German's frightened expression. Instead, Jim offers him a cigarette, putting it in the dying soldier's lips. Frustrated by his feelings of rage and remorse Jim screams from the shell hole, 'What the hell do we get out of this

war anyway? Cheers when we left and when we get back! But who the hell cares – after this?'

The film ends with Jim's return home, but his injured leg has been amputated, to the horror of his mother. Now bitter and feeling betrayed by the family and home that sent him to war, he lashes out when his father tries to welcome him back. Only his mother understands his sense of disillusionment and displacement and encourages Jim to go back to France to find Melisande, ultimately fleeing a home to which he can no longer belong.

During the making of *The Big Parade*, Vidor placed a decided emphasis on visual realism and, to make the battle scenes look authentic, consulted more than 100 reels of Signal Corps footage in preparation for each scene. The march through the woods reminiscent of Belleau Wood was inspired by footage of an army funeral procession. Vidor thought the slow cadence of the procession could be used to give the scene the eerie sense of dread he wanted to illustrate. Vidor said, '[the footage] looked like death even though you didn't see the caisson with the flag draped over it. I thought, lets keep this whole thing on a suspended tempo, and a suspended beat... it would look like death before they got to the actual frontline trenches. To see that everybody was working on the beat we had orchestra leaders and musicians scattered around in the troops and it meant that you picked up the gun on the beat and pulled the trigger on the beat...at first [the actors] laughed at it but they were glad enough to work. They said 'What is this, a bloody ballet?' (Vidor to Brownlow 1980).

Vidor gave equal attention to the musical score and sound effects for the film's release in larger cities across the country. Silent film always had a live musical accompaniment, and the larger movie palaces often had large orchestras at their disposal for the more prestigious releases. Vidor suggested that bugles, drums and explosions be used in the score to emphasise the brutality of the battle scenes. 'To sit there and have those terrific explosives going off was really frightening. It really affected you,' he remembered (Vidor to N. Dowd and D. Shepard 1980 cited in Kelly 1997: 34). With such deliberate manipulation of both senses and emotions, it's hardly surprising that critics praised, above all, the realism of the film. Film critic Robert Sherwood hailed *The Big Parade* as a credible account of the war, a version of history closer to reality than had previously been seen on screen:

'*The Big Parade* is a marvellous picture that can be ranked among the few genuinely

great achievements of the screen. He [Vidor] has made war scenes that actually resemble war...When he advances a raw company of infantry through a forest which is raked by machine gun-fire, he makes the soldiers look scared, sick at their stomachs, with no heart for the ghastly business that is ahead. He has shown an American soldier, suddenly wild with desire to kill, trying to jab his bayonet into the neck of a dying German sniper. He has shown the look on that sniper's face and the horrible revulsion that overcomes the American boy. I doubt there is a single irregular soldier, volunteered or conscripted, who did not experience that same awful feeling during his career in France...who did not recognize the impulse to withdraw the bayonet and offer the dying Heinie a cigarette? I have seen too many movies which pictured the war in terms of Liberty Loan propaganda...*The Big Parade* is eminently right. There are no heroic Red Cross nurses in No Man's Land, no scenes wherein the doughboys dash over the top carrying the American flag.' (Sherwood 1925 cited in Fountain 1985: 114)

Veterans too praised the film's realism, as in Sgt. Charles K. Taylor's review of the screening of *The Big Parade* he attended with his old regiment in 1925. Taylor, like so many others, recommended Parade as an accurate telling of his experiences in the war, although he himself had more positive memories than the story Vidor had depicted:

'This is no picture,' declared the man behind me, 'this is the real thing. You can't fool me. That there's the road through Fismes!'...The actual war scenes were so obviously true that if you forgot for an instant you were only looking at a picture you caught your breath and wondered how the Signal Corps ever did it, and how King Vidor ever got those films released for his picture!

"Men roared at times and slapped one another on the back...and then for a while sat in grim and breathless silence. In an hour or so they experienced anew the whole gamut of emotions that meant for them an infinity of experience. For the Great Adventure – hate it, if you will – is a very cherished memory to millions of us everyday, humdrum men' (Taylor 1925 cited in Brownlow 1979: 193).

So clear was it that audiences would believe *The Big Parade* to be a true account of the war that the focus on America's suffering irked some British and French film critics, raising the understandable objection that *The Big Parade* managed to almost completely omit the Allies' involvement in the war altogether. One reviewer of the Daily Express wrote '...what will be the reaction of the London public to a war film in which there is no British 'Tommy' or French 'Poilu'; which suggests, in a riot of 'he-man'

subtitles, that our weak, worn, and wilting armies in France could not push the war to a successful conclusion without the manly aid of a million dashing 'doughboys'?' (Daily Express 21 May, 1926).

The film and its origins in anti-war literature

While the visual realism was Vidor's, the story was actually taken from American anti-war writer and ex-Marine, Laurence Stallings' bitter, semi-autobiographical novel *Plumes*, which had been published in 1924. Stallings was a harsh critic of Wilsonian idealism, which he and an ever-growing number of Americans blamed for their involvement in what was by then regarded as a senseless foreign conflict.

So quickly had Americans become cynical toward Wilson's visions of peace through liberal internationalism that when the battle between the President and Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, much like the war itself, ended in stalemate, the United States was left out of the League its President had helped create, and many grew disillusioned with the idea that there could ever be a meaningful conclusion to the war (Dimpleby and Reynolds 1988: 73). William Randolph Hearst published a front-page editorial in his newspapers in 1920, summing up the sense of betrayal he believed many Americans felt, stating that the political leaders had 'preached to their peoples that the war was a crusade for democracy, for liberty, for the self-determination of nations and the independence of peoples [but with the Treaty of Versailles] repudiated every pledge they had made and violated every preachment they had uttered' (Nasaw 2000: 270).

Had the League been a success for the United States, perhaps so cynical an audience would not have existed for the bitter anti-war literature that was to emerge. 'The [anti-war] literature of the 1920s would be impossible to imagine,' argues David Kennedy, 'if Wilson had triumphed at Paris, and had progressive expectations been widely fulfilled at home. Those developments would have ornamented the conflict with just the crown of glory and genuine accomplishment that the custodians of the older culture had promised' (Kennedy 1980: 227).

When that failed to happen, it wasn't long before writers, eager to outline their own sense of betrayal at the hands of crusading politicians and opportunistic manufacturing giants, began to criticize both the American military and its politicians. The first significant American anti-war novel of the period was John Dos Passos's *Three Soldiers* in 1921, which was at that time still considered extremely critical and anti-military

so soon after the patriotic fervour of the war years. The reaction Three Soldiers incited from American Conservatives most likely contributed to Vidor's anxiety over his own film four years later. One review in the Chicago Tribune railed against the anti-military angle of the novel under the headline: 'Three Soldiers Branded as Textbook and Bible for Slackers and Cowards. Propaganda of Novel is 'Blow at Americanism' (Ludington 1996).

Dos Passos had joined the war as an ambulance driver and Three Soldiers, like Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* by the end of the decade, derived from his experiences in Europe. For *The Big Parade*, King Vidor chose to adapt the more recently published *Plumes*, with the help of Stallings, who was by then becoming a well-known critic of the war through his Broadway play *What Price Glory?* The critical and popular praise his work was garnering in 1924, compared to that of Dos Passos in 1921, illustrates the quickly changing attitudes toward the war. Time magazine praised Stallings in 1924 as 'a critic of no mean power. He is not the sort of person who indulges in mock sentiment...His *Plumes* is as fine a novel of the War as has been written, and why should anyone who thinks so not say so as plainly as possible?'

Stallings worked with screenwriter Harry Behn to construct the plot for *The Big Parade* and acted as consultant on a number of issues of authenticity during production. Vidor explained Stallings' personal input as important link to the anti-war movement in literature:

'Stallings had been a Marine, and had been at Belleau Wood, and had lost a leg. That's why I had Gilbert lose a leg in the picture; he copied Stallings' leg movement for the last scene, Stallings was the biggest source of information about the war, not so much in writing as in talking. I had to sit with him and draw it out of him. The research that I did was more or less suggested by Stallings.

'One night I was reading about the horrors of battle on the train. He was in the upper berth and I was in the lower. I thought, I don't want to get too involved in this thing, otherwise I won't be able to sleep. I'll just say it's fiction. Stallings had hung his leg up, just as you hang your coat up, but he didn't take his shoe or stocking off the leg. The train started swaying and his boot swung over and kicked me in the face. At that point, I said to myself, well, it must have been real. It was just about gruesome enough for me to realize that I couldn't kid myself any more' (Vidor to Brownlow, 1980)

Though public attitudes toward anti-war literature were relaxing by the time *The Big*

Parade went into production, Vidor and MGM studio executives still worried about the possibilities of the film being boycotted. 'While the picture was in production,' Vidor remembered, 'a vice-president of the Dupont Company visited the set. I told him that we didn't know if exhibitors would run the picture, since it questioned war. We thought somebody might stop it. Now this was the chief war manufacturer. He said, 'Let me know if you have any trouble. I'll set up a series of tents. If the studio tries to stop you, I'll give you all the Dupont film you need for nothing.' It was just the sort of backing I needed at the time. Although [Head of Production Irving] Thalberg was enthused about the picture, somebody bigger than Thalberg might easily have stopped it' (Vidor to Brownlow 1979: 193).

Instead of tents, *The Big Parade* was shown in the most prestigious movie palaces in the country. The anti-war sentiment had gripped the nation's popular imagination. In January 1926, Time magazine reported that President Coolidge viewed the film by 'a special one-night stand in the East Room of the White House. A 23-piece orchestra accompanied the film to Washington. Secretaries and Congressmen looked on as presidential guests.'

The modernization of anti-war messages in American cinema

The *Big Parade*'s critical and commercial success inspired a flood of war films in the late 1920s, often strikingly similar in plot and sentiment against the war. Subsequent films would include *What Price Glory?* (1926), *Lilac Time and Four Sons* (both 1928), *Journey's End and All Quiet on the Western Front* (both 1930) and *The Man I Killed* (1932). American motion picture studios were eager to capitalise on the box office success of *The Big Parade* and filmmakers were interested in the possibilities of the new genre. Many, including Vidor himself, considered themselves self-appointed propagandists for peace. Critics recognized this spirit and, as they did upon the release of *The Big Parade*, urged audiences to see these films for their anti-war message. Variety solemnly declared in a review of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, 'The League of Nations could make no better investment than to cut the master print, reproduce it in every language for every nation to be shown every year until the word War shall have been taken out of the dictionaries' (Variety 7 May, 1930).

Americans, already primed by the anti-war literature of the period and limited access to

first-hand accounts of the war, took these messages to heart. In Michael T. Isenberg's *War on Film*, the author relates the story of one woman stating that after seeing such anti-war films as *Barbed Wire*, *Legion of the Condemned* (1928) and *The Big Parade*, she had been convinced that war was 'a menace'. A similar reaction was gathered from a study on the effects movies had on young people in the early 1930s. The replies from the group of students in the study illustrated how anti-war views could be instilled in an audience after they viewed *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Isenberg, 1981: 46). The repeated anti-war narratives of these films of the late 1920s and early 1930s were forming an understanding of the war that was fast becoming an accepted truth.

Yet by 1933, veteran Ramon Guthrie lamented in the *New Republic* that, 'The one thing that [no one] seems to consider is the fact that a lot of people were like myself and enjoyed the War. The things I loved about it... are apparently essential to any happiness: i.e., close association with large numbers of one's fellow men in a common purpose, the chance to put forth intensive and disinterested effort in a cause greater than one's own personal concerns, economic equality, freedom from economic worries, adventure. Even the fact that I never did expect the war to 'make the world safe for democracy' or anything else did not keep me from enjoying these features of it' (Guthrie 1933 cited in Kennedy 1980: 220).

Such memories have played a far less significant role in America's, or for that matter any other country's collective memory of the First World War. As films and novels reinforced some memories and reflections, others faded to the background and, as time passed, a general consensus began to establish itself. This phenomenon goes some way in explaining the bitterness and disillusionment Americans expressed toward *the First World War* in the 1920s. Those who had no first hand memory of the war had one supplied for them through the media.

Jonathan Lewis found in his interviews with veterans for the 2003 television series *The First World War* that the fictitious interpretations of the war in literature and cinema have been so powerful as to have eventually influenced the accounts of the veterans themselves, making the task of separating the facts from the fiction difficult. 'What [the veterans] can say can be misleading...often mediated by experiences since 1918 and almost certainly shaped by the writings of others' (2003: 22). Dan Todman supports this observation in *The Great War Myth and Memory*, explaining that 'memories grow stronger with repetition and weaker without it, so over time veterans' versions of the war were reconciled with the way the war was being talked about around them' (2005: 187).

With even veterans' recollections vulnerable to the influence of media interpretations of the war, the power of the anti-war narratives that ran through literature and indeed cinema prove to be powerful indeed.

Conclusion

Today, the anti-war element of *The Big Parade* is often overlooked, and the film is sometimes mistakenly referred to as an adventure or action story. Worse still, the more accessible sound film *All Quiet on the Western Front* has since replaced the earlier film in many people's minds as the most important and influential example of the anti-war propaganda cinema of this period, effectively omitting its predecessor's role in shaping public opinion. Nevertheless, King Vidor's anti-war statement in *The Big Parade* was clearly recognized in 1925, as evidenced not only by the reviews of contemporary critics but by the scores of films that followed, attempting to emulate its theme. *The Big Parade* was in fact the original blueprint for subsequent cinematic depictions of *The First World War* that have reinforced public understanding of the war even to this day.

By acknowledging the enthusiastic critical and popular reception of the film's anti-war message, the period of known popular support for anti-war politics for which we have evidence on a wider scale can be proven to extend farther back than the early 1930s. The unprecedented number of cinemagoers who flocked to screenings of *The Big Parade* in 1925, and for the next two years to follow, demonstrates not only the growing appeal of anti-war sentiment, but the new proportions of American society such messages could reach. To understand why we know the First World War as the tragic loss of a pastoral innocence to modern inhumanity that we do today, the contribution of *The Big Parade* as an early and influential narrative cannot be overlooked.

Although the anti-war propaganda of the 1920s and 30s could not prevent the inevitable descent into war again in 1939, the spirit of protest in *The Big Parade* and the anti-war genre it inspired mark a specific period in American political and social history when pacifism, isolationism and anti-war activism were at their most potent and influential. Perhaps the most famous example of its impact can be found in the actor Lew Ayres, the young actor who had starred in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and who was to become the most conspicuous conscientious objector of the Second World War. The experience of filming *All Quiet* had a profound impact on Ayres, and though social acceptability of pacifist beliefs as his would not survive the attack on

Pearl Harbour in 1941, Ayres came to represent the 40,000 Americans who declared themselves conscientious objectors after war was declared. Fired by his studio and even quite publicly divorced by wife Ginger Rogers for ideals that were by then deemed un-patriotic, Ayres eventually volunteered himself for non-combatant medical duty explaining, 'As far as I'm concerned I couldn't kill, and I couldn't go into the army even on your side unless I did what I considered to be constructive work' (Ayres cited at PBS 2006).

For many people of the same generation, it would take a new round of propaganda, again led by Hollywood, to undo the work of Vidor, Milestone and many others of the 1920s and early 30s, to be convinced that war could be anything but the destructive waste the Great War had been portrayed to be.

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