Sue Walters

How Do You Know That He's Bright but Lazy? Teachers' Assessments of Bangladeshi Pupils in Two Year 3 Classrooms

Abstract
This article considers how teachers come to assess pupils' needs and abilities and how pupils come to acquire particular identities in the classroom - particularly Bangladeshi pupils who are both English as Additional Language (EAL) pupils and minority ethnic pupils. This work is a contribution to an emerging 'sociology of educational assessment' (Filer and Pollard, 2000) which considers assessment as a social practice, one which has consequences for identity, educational opportunity and the reproduction of social difference. How teachers understandings and expectations of pupils, how their needs as teachers to organise, manage and accomplish their lessons and how their pupils' actions in presenting themselves as particular kinds of pupils, contribute to the achievement and underachievement of minority ethnic and EAL pupils is outlined through the presentation of data from three case studies. The article attempts to outline how the case study pupils came to be positioned within their classrooms, how particular understandings and identities were ascribed to them and how this resulted in particular resources being made available to them. It also considers how the support provided by teachers focused on behaviour rather than on language development because of teachers' needs to manage their lessons.

Introduction
This article is concerned with how teachers come to assess pupils' needs and abilities and how pupils come to acquire particular identities in the classroom. The focus is on developing an understanding of the micro-processes of assessment and their implications for learner achievement in relation to pupils who are Bangladeshi and who are thus both minority ethnic pupils and English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils in mainstream English schools. These understandings arise from case studies of Year Three Bangladeshi pupils attending school in a predominantly white part of England. There is no suggestion that these understandings can be easily generalisable to a larger population of Bangladeshi pupils or to other minority ethnic or EAL pupils, however, the understandings generated from these very specific, micro-settings are intended as a contribution to an emerging body of research which considers assessment not as a 'technicist' exercise (Filer, 2000) but as a social practice which involves the sociocultural interpretations of pupils and teachers in the context of the management of their daily classroom lives (Filer, 2000; Filer and Pollard, 2000; Leiter, 1976; Keddie, 1971) - a practice which has consequences for identity, for pupil access to resources and educational opportunity and for the reproduction of social difference. The case studies usefully point to ways in which we might begin to understand the complex ways in which teachers' understandings and expectations of pupils, their needs as teachers to organise, manage and accomplish their lessons and their pupils' actions in presenting themselves as particular kinds of pupils in the

classroom contribute to the achievement and underachievement of pupils, especially those processes which contribute to the achievement and underachievement of minority ethnic and EAL pupils in our schools.

This achievement and underachievement of minority ethnic pupils in English mainstream schools has occupied educational policy and research since the 1970s. Statistical studies in the 1970s and 1980s demonstrated that there was significant educational underachievement amongst certain minority ethnic groups (particularly amongst African-Caribbean boys and Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils) (Phillips, 1979; Tomlinson, 1980; Rampton, 1981; Swann, 1985; Mabey, 1986). Qualitative studies in the 1980s and 1990s sought to look within schools to explore the experiences and processes which created this underachievement. Most of these studies concluded that different (ethnically defined) groups of pupils received different amounts or kinds of attention from their teachers (Wright, 1992; Gillborn, 1990; Connolly, 1998) or that setting and banding arrangements in schools placed these groups of pupils in lower sets where exam entry and choice was restricted (Wright, 1992; Gillborn, 1990) both of these processes leading to disadvantage and underachievement. Whilst research showed that (minority ethnic) pupils gained identities through their teachers' experiences and expectations of pupil behaviour (author ref) the focus of these studies was nearly always on the African-Caribbean (male) pupil and could not explain Asian pupils underachievement as these pupils were perceived by their teachers as 'hardworking and well-behaved' (Wright, 1992; Gillborn, 1990; Connolly, 1998). Some work began to explore the manner in which South Asian pupils were perceived by their teachers and the effects of this. Connolly, for example, described how teachers positioned South Asian boys as 'effeminate' and South Asian girls as 'model pupils' and therefore invisible in the classroom with the result that other pupil groups used these identities to exclude and to assert their own identity against (Connolly, 1998). However, this work does not consider the experience of South Asian pupils as learners and the effects of their positioning and identification on their achievement. This article attempts to outline how Bangladeshi pupils, both male and female, can come to be positioned within classrooms, how their ethnicity and gender can come to play a part in this and how their teachers come to understandings of them that are more complex than 'hardworking and well-behaved' with implications for the children's achievement as learners.

As well as being categorised as minority ethnic pupils, Bangladeshi pupils attending school in England are nearly always EAL pupils as well. EAL pupils are pupils learning the curriculum and learning English at the same time. As such, EAL pupils have particular and diverse language and learning needs which usually differentiate them from monolingual English pupils (a situation that has spawned much literature concerning how these needs are to be identified and provided for and how such pupils should be assessed eg Safford, 2003; QCA, 2000; Gardener and Rea-Dickins, 2002; Leung and South, 1996; Cummins, 1984). Research shows how these needs are often not identified by formal assessment tests and how struggles that pupils have with classroom work and curricula demands can be interpreted as 'deficient cognitive abilities or a lack of motivation' (Cummins, 1989: 26) with the result that pupils are placed in low sets or in remedial/SEN provision. The case studies presented in this article demonstrate how this is played out in specific classroom contexts and how, rather than interpret struggling EAL pupils in terms of limited cognitive ability, teachers can interpret and assess such pupils in terms of their dispositions, their

ethnicity and gender and in terms of their need as teachers to teach their classes. This article also differs from other work on EAL and assessment in that it is not concerned with how to assess EAL pupils but with looking at how such pupils are assessed by their teachers.

It is argued here that the teachers of the Bangladeshi, English as an Additional Language (EAL) case study pupils came to assess those pupils' needs and abilities through the manner in which the children took part in classroom interactions and positioned themselves as learners in the classroom. The data reveal that how the children took part led to particular identities being ascribed to them and this in turn led to particular resources being made available to them in the classroom in the form of access to opportunities to develop language and to extra support from adults. This paper also argues that teachers focused, through the support they provided, not on language but on encouraging the children to display appropriate behaviour and to fit in with other members of the class (by becoming for example, more confident, or being able to follow instructions). It is argued that this was related to teachers' needs to manage their classrooms and accomplish their lessons.

This approach to understanding the production of particular pupil identities within the social context and interactional patterns of everyday classroom life is also to be found in work by Filer (2000), Filer and Pollard (2000), Pryor & Torrance (2000) Benjamin et al (2002), Hall (2002), Day (2002) and Toohey (2000). This work eschews an approach to assessment concerned only with the accuracy and reliability of tests (Filer, 2000: 2), and focuses instead on assessment as a social practice that takes place in the social context of classrooms (and other school spaces) and which plays a role in the social structuring of modern societies through shaping the ways in which individuals and groups come to be seen and to see themselves (Filer, 2000: 1-2; Filer and Pollard, 2000: 4; Pryor and Torrance, 2000: 110-111). Assessment thus becomes a social product derived from teacher created contexts (Filer, 2000: 85), which fulfils a range of political and social functions. Filer and Pollard have referred to this work an 'emerging sociology of educational assessment' (Filer and Pollard, 2000: 3), however, earlier sociological work on classrooms and the production of pupil identities is acknowledged here (Leiter, 1976; Keddie, 1971). This work includes an understanding of assessment, teachers' needs to manage their classes and explain their pupils and the consequences of this. Leiter's work particularly offers ways of understanding teachers' need to find meaning in pupil behaviour as part and parcel of the everyday management of lessons (Leiter, 1976).

What is taken and developed from Leiter's account of classrooms is the manner in which teachers' assessments of their pupils' abilities is embedded in practical classroom concerns. Writing about Kindergarten teachers and their needs to place their students in appropriate (ability banded) groups and classes, Leiter showed how these teachers, in their daily observations of pupils going about routine classroom activities, used the notion of 'social types' to interpret their students' behaviour. The teachers favoured and considered 'bright' those pupils who allowed them to get on with accomplishing their lessons and had positive views about pupils they considered to be 'independent learners' for the same reason (Leiter, 1976: 123). Teachers had negative views of (and placed in lower ability groups) those pupils who disrupted lessons and prevented teachers accomplishing their lessons and maintaining their sense of competence as teachers. Pupils whom teachers could not find explanations

for were seen as particularly problematic and were classified as 'behavioural problems' (Leiter, 1976: 123).

The intention in this article is to show how the teachers of three of the case study children sought to find meaning in their pupils in relation to their needs to manage their lessons, how ethnicity and gender came to play a part in this, how the children's EAL identity disappeared and the consequences of this for the access the case study pupils had to resources and the opportunities to be successful and achieving learners.

The Study
A year long ethnographic study was conducted in three school sites in a predominantly 'white' city in the East of England. The six pupils who were at the centre of the study constituted the total population of Year 3 Bangladeshi pupils in the county and were seven years old at the start of the research year. The focus of the study was on the experiences of the pupils as learners in the context of the perceived underachievement of Bangladeshi pupils in English mainstream schools. Families, teachers and other children in the classrooms were included in the research and data were collected through unstructured participant observation, through the videoing and tape recording of classroom activities and through in-dept, semi-structured and unstructured interviews.

Taking Part and Teacher Assessments: Becoming 'Bright', 'Wilful', 'Lazy' and 'Shy'
In the research classrooms the organisation of the school day meant that certain spaces were available for the children to show what they knew and who they were (for example, sitting on the carpet at the beginning of Literacy and Numeracy Hour to listen to the teacher's whole-class teaching and to respond to the teacher's questions). The three case study pupils reported here occupied these spaces and took part in classroom interactions in different ways. As a result of these (differing) ways of 'taking part' and of their teachers need to manage their lessons and find meaning in their pupils (Leiter, 1976: 124-125) particular identities were ascribed to these three pupils which had consequences for the pupils as learners.

Attar
> As a pupil on a good day he is brilliant, gives you the answers you need, he's always thinking at a higher level than the majority of the rest of the class. He's very inquisitive you know, he'll ask questions that help the others understand and sometimes make you think about what you teach as well which I really like and you know on a good day he works really hard, gets the work done very, very quickly, very neat, top standard.
> (Miss Birch 6/11/00)

Attar's case study has been presented elsewhere (author forthcoming). Here the focus is on how Attar becomes understood as a pupil by his teacher, what kind of pupil he becomes identified as, the consequences of this for the support that Attar receives and how his ethnicity and gender play a part in this.

Attar's teacher saw Attar as a bright, inquisitive pupil, 'a very able and intelligent boy'. She came to these assessments of him as a learner because of his eagerness to respond to questions during Numeracy Hour and the accuracy of his answers, his eagerness to join in and answer questions at other times when the children were gathered on the

carpet and responding to teacher questions, his excellent reading and spelling and because he was able to work fast and complete work accurately in Numeracy. Early observations of Attar in the classroom showed him to be very focused on the teacher and what she was doing and saying, joining in interactions with his teacher with great enthusiasm and giving correct answers. He was frequently chosen by his teacher to answer questions when he raised his hand. Attar was able to position himself as a 'bright' and successful pupil in relation to the teacher in these key activities in the classroom by taking an active part in interactions and by taking up the spaces offered in the classroom by his teacher, especially in Numeracy and reading.

In his teachers' comments about Attar on a good day we can also see that Attar's positive identity comes about not simply because he can demonstrate certain (cognitive) abilities and skills in the classroom but that these 'abilities' were ones that aided the teacher in the accomplishment of her lessons (and thus in her sense of competence as a teacher). Attar is a 'brilliant' pupil because he gives the teacher the answers that she needs. Attar also contributes to the accomplishment of a lesson by 'ask(ing) questions that help the others understand'. He even offers the teacher something for herself by asking questions that help her think about her teaching. Attar does not threaten or challenge the management of the teachers' lessons - he 'works really hard', he 'gets his work done very quickly' and he presents his teacher with 'neat' work that is 'top standard'. Attar is judged to be a good pupil. He demonstrates his ability for his teacher through his participation and his inquisitiveness.

However, Attar's performance as a bright and successful pupil meant that his teacher did not see that he struggled with the English that was required in the classroom and that he had many problems with understanding what words meant and with reading. His performance as an eager-to-please pupil, his readiness to take part in interaction during Numeracy and answer teacher questions correctly, and his ability to read and spell 'brilliantly', meant that his English language needs as an EAL pupil were not recognised by his teachers. His fluent social English was understood as indicative of an equally fluent ability with the more formal, abstract uses of English required in the mainstream classroom (Cummins, 1989: 21-22). It was not recognised that Attar could not read (-for-meaning) average, age-appropriate texts or worksheets and that he lacked general knowledge about the worlds he was reading about in his story books. Attar was also complicit in hiding this (see author 2004).

As a result Attar had problems with completing work which required reading (for-meaning) and writing. There were occasions when Attar did not appear to be working in class or did not complete work or presented his teacher with poor work which she described as 'messy' or 'sloppy'. He appeared on these occasions as a pupil who was not working or trying; a different pupil to the Attar who presented himself 'on a good day'.

> ... but on a bad day, with the good days and the bad days related to how he has been with me, he'll just do nothing and be completely lazy and not make any effort and just write nonsense because he thinks he can get away with it so that's what he is like.
> (Miss Birch 6/11/00)

A recognition of Attar's EAL needs would have provided an explanation for Attar on 'a bad day' but because his EAL needs were not seen another explanation was sought for to explain the discrepancy. The explanation that begins to emerge here is that Attar is lazy, is not motivated and thinks 'he can get away with it'. A 'within-child' explanation begins to emerge to explain Attar rather than an explanation that includes the structures, practices and expectations of his classroom. There is also here a trace of the teachers' concern about this pupil's (real) challenge to her professional competence and identity as the teacher. The 'bad days' are related to how Attar has responded to her as a teacher ('to how he has been with me'), to his challenge to her authority and competence ('he thinks he can get away with it') and his subsequent non-conformity to the expected work-ethics of classroom life. These appear as a list each revealing the expected behaviour of 'the good pupil', a pupil who will always 'do something', 'work hard', 'make an effort' and 'write well'. Such a (good) pupil will allow this teacher to manage her classroom well, accomplish her lessons and maintain her identity as a good teacher who cares about the pupils under her charge.

Attar's teacher continues to search for an explanation for Attar's behaviour in the following,

> He's bright, he's inquisitive, he thinks really hard. He's very - if he thinks that the teacher is worth his time then he's very keen to please, very keen to show what he can do but we did have this clash and I don't know, still don't know why. I think it was because he felt I couldn't speak to his parents because as a new teacher I wouldn't have any way of (contacting them because they don't speak English) and - via Mrs W., she gave me Lufna's number (an LEA Bangladeshi support teacher and interpreter. She translated the teacher's report). He's been very different since I sent the report home and I think that's it. It just seems to me that, you know, if he's so bright, if he's so able, then why mess about unless it's because he thinks he can get away with it? Now he's found out he can't. He's still a bit of a mystery.

Attar's teacher is trying to explain and resolve the question 'If he's so bright, if he's so able, then why mess about?'. She needs to think through and resolve this discrepancy not because she has a particular need to pick on or malign Attar as a pupil but because she needs to find a means of keeping this pupil on track as a successful, achieving pupil, find a way of preventing him from taking up too much of her teacher time in supervision and at the same time protect her own identity as a caring, professional and successful teacher.

The explanations that she comes up with here are that Attar works hard if he thinks his teacher is worth it, if he respects his teacher, and that there maybe some kind of personality clash between them. This is then superseded by a wondering whether Attar's behaviour can be explained by his belief that he can get away with being lazy because he thinks that she cannot communicate with his parents as they do not share a common language. The sending home of her report, translated into his parents' language, has, she feels, made a difference. However, she is not confident that the explanation for Attar can be reduced to just this ('He's still a bit of a mystery') and she continues with her search for meaning in Attar by stating,

He was underachieving unbelievably because he couldn't be bothered to do the work. He was being defiant with the work. The fact that he was underachieving - it was to do with the personality clash between me and him. Now it might have been a personality clash. It could be that he's got to respect you as a teacher, or whatever it was that was affecting his work, I'd love to know why, I really would love to know why....

I was partly wondering about the whole Attar thing. Whether it was because I was female. I don't think it was now but I did consider it for quite some time that it might be. It's meant to be this whole background culture of you know, like females are meant to really enjoy school because they are just treated as equals in school. Now I've no experience of that so I wouldn't be able to say but .....I think Attar brings an attitude to school but Reena doesn't.
(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

Her description here of Attar is of interest because it shows which kinds of explanations get called on and which kinds do not in order to explain and find meaning in this pupil. The teacher first tries out the explanation that Attar couldn't be bothered and was 'defiant' and that this defiance emerged either from a personality clash between the two of them or because Attar needed to respect her authority as a teacher. Although she is not sure about this in the first instance she returns to this explanation and as she tries to make sense of Attar again she this time situates it more firmly in relation to gender and ethnicity. She wonders if Attar lacked respect for her as a (female) teacher because of his (Muslim, male) background and although she says that she lacks experience of this kind of issue she follows it immediately with the statement that Attar has an attitude whereas, Reena, the other Bangladeshi pupil in the class does not. This thinking calls on the teacher's interpretation of Attar's cultural background and community. Her explanation here is based around her interpretation of Attar's ethnicity and gender ('Whether it was because I was female'), Attar's background and culture ('this whole background culture') and finally, even though a lack of experience of such things is acknowledged, 'I think Attar brings an attitude to school but Reena doesn't'. This final statement 'locates' 'having an attitude' with Bangladeshi/Muslim male pupils. Attar has 'an attitude', Reena, the other Bangladeshi/Muslim female pupil in the class, does not. Having an attitude is not something that the English monolingual members of the class have, Attar is not compared with another white boy. There are gender resonances here, Bangladeshi/Muslim boys have a certain attitude towards (white) females, which Bangladeshi/Muslim girls do not. Here Attar is understood as a Muslim boy and these identities, as boy and Muslim, are inseparable. Attar's laziness, lack of effort and his challenge to his teacher's authority are located very much within a fixed notion of the child's personality as something imported into the classroom, whose source is to be located beyond the realm of the school and its influence (ie the home, the community). Again, there are elements here of this teacher's need to protect her competence and identity as a teacher. She is aware of how her monolingual status makes her vulnerable and Attar's parents and their support potentially unreachable. There is also a sense of her need to recognises the challenges of having this pupil in her class so as to be able to deal with them. As noted before this is important for her self-identity. Her pupils need to respect her, to recognise her identity as a competent teacher if lessons and the classroom are to go smoothly and to be successful.

Attar's teacher did her best in coming to some explanation of Attar. She tried out various explanations about why there was a discrepancy between Attar on a good day and a bad day (between the 'good' Attar and the 'bad' Attar). She called on what she knew as a teacher and as a social actor in wider society. She followed good professional practice as a teacher and called on what she knew about the culture and background of Bangladeshi/Muslim pupils and applied this to her thinking. What we can see though is how particular understandings (understandings that can be inaccurate and limited) are applied, who they are applied to and how they affect how a pupil is understood. The way in which pupils are understood and assessed as learners in the day-to-day processes of classroom life, which we have glimpsed here, have implications for the access that pupils have to important resources in the classroom that affect their ability to be successful learners and achievers.

As a result of his teacher's understandings and explanations of him as a pupil, Attar did not receive any support for his specific language needs, despite his difficulties in this area. Instead of EAL support Attar received support for his behaviour - he was placed in two nurture groups in the school to encourage him to make better relationships within the school. He was not offered any support with his language from the visiting EAL teacher nor within the classroom. In this way we can see that behaviour becomes the focus for supporting Attar and not learning.

Because he did not have an identity as an EAL pupil and therefore did not receive any support with his language and learning, Attar was, and will continue to be, forced to rely more and more on his own strategies for presenting himself as a 'bright' student. The responsibility for continuing to do well in school and to acquire the necessary knowledges and skills to achieve as a pupil are placed more firmly on Attar's shoulders than on many other pupils. Not only does he not receive support for his EAL needs in school but he does not have very much support at home, or in his community, for acquiring the social capital and dominant (majority ethnic) language and literacy skills that ease the career of a successful and achieving pupil within mainstream education.

Reena
Reena, unlike Attar, did not take an active part in classroom life and presented herself in the classroom as a quiet, shy, disengaged pupil (and as awkward and ill-at-ease as a pupil joining the class for the first time, despite having been a member of the same class for over three years).

> Reena arrives with her mum holding her hand. In the classroom, once her mum has left, she stands awkwardly on her own. Then she sits on the carpet but does not talk to or sit near any other children. She sits alone. She sits away from the teacher next to the big, comfy chair at the back. She bites her fingers. She answers the register at the right place but she speaks very quietly. She has put her book bag in the wrong place along with five other children in the class. After the register, when the maths cards are given out, she does not get given a card until a girl sitting in front of her gets up and gets one for her. Reena can do the maths task, only about one third of the children in the class can do it....Reena doesn't put her hand up to answer a question once during this session.

(Fieldnotes 18/9/00)

During the beginning of the group work part of the Numeracy Hour Reena finds her place at her group's table quickly but then she just sits down and waits. She looks to the others to see what is to be done. Her group have to measure things in the classroom. She trails around after Poppy and Charlotte, (two other girls in her group) for about two-thirds of the session. She just follows them. She doesn't speak to them and they do not speak to her. They ignore her but do not tell her to go away.
(Fieldnotes 18/9/00)

During all of my early observations Reena 'took part' only in the sense of following the physical directions of where to go and where to sit issued by the teacher. She replied to her name in the register (but did so very quietly), went to sit in her group, copied down the date in her book, looked at what other children were doing and copied what they were writing in their books or on their worksheets. She did not raise her hand to answer questions and she was often ignored by the other children.

Reena made no effort to play the role of an enthusiastic, eager-to-participate pupil. Her classroom teacher interpreted this behaviour as a consequence of Reena's shyness and lack of experience in being able to focus and concentrate on the carpet.

Reena doesn't mix with the other children. She's very shy. Excruciatingly shy.
(Miss Birch 28/9/00)

She's got beautiful handwriting, really really good spelling and capital letters at the start of sentences full stops at the end. You know very, very able but just needs refocusing and help.
(Miss Birch 6/11/00)

And Reena did receive support in her classroom. This is how the peripatetic EAL teacher explained the reasons why Reena received EAL support throughout the whole of Year Three.

Because she's in a way only just got going, I felt it was sort of a help just to keep coming. And she was having two teachers this year because she was having Miss Birch …. who she didn't know, for a term and then she was having Mr Field and because she hadn't had anything to do with him and because he was a man I thought well perhaps, as she's really starting to write independently and become much more confident perhaps it was better to keep coming in case she sort of had a wobble because of the change. But I think academically now she's fine really. I mean she's coping well. It was more just to give her a bit of a boost.
(Peripatetic EAL teacher 14/9/00)

Reena was thus seen as a pupil who was academically competent but who needed focusing and support to give her a boost and to stop her 'wobbling' and needing more teacher time. As a result of this identity, Reena was provided with EAL support and

class support (despite her abilities as a pupil). One of her teachers even recognised this.

> I think her language ability is probably not much poorer that Attar's (who was considered to have excellent English). I think that she presents in a different way. She's probably getting a longer crack at additional help because of how she presents herself.
> (Mr Field 14/6/01)

Thus Reena's presentation of herself as a particular kind of pupil meant that she received support for all of the research year. Reena was offered support to help her conform to expected classroom behaviours, to be more confident and to join in. Yet Reena didn't always present herself as lacking in confidence. Reena had a very different presence on the school playground,

> When Reena comes out on to the playground after her lunch..she watches the children skipping until they stop. She teams up with another Bangladeshi girl and they go arm in arm around the playground. A Bangladeshi boy joins them walking around the playground. Reena is the leader in this game. They walk around the painted maze. Reena still leading the direction of the walk. She is confident, the dominant one. She plays at 'strangling' her friend. She covers the whole playground in her play. She then plays skipping-in-a-ring games with the same girl and a White boy. She is very happy and laughing.
> (Fieldnotes 11/10/00)

If Reena had presented herself in the classroom in the manner in which she presented herself on the playground each day it is unlikely that she would have received support during the research year. The way that Reena took part in classroom life, the manner in which she appeared as withdrawn, disengaged and non-participatory resulted in her being perceived as a shy, quiet pupil who lacked confidence and who, because of being a Muslim girl may have had a problem having a man as a teacher. This identity meant that Reena received support during the research year which was of benefit to her as a learner. Reena was understood through the lens of White English interpretations of South Asian females. If Attar had behaved in the same way (both children were in the same class), it is unlikely that any of the adults would have assumed that he was shy and lacking in confidence (or found it difficult to be taught by a man or a woman) and provided him with support. While Reena received support throughout Year Three (which everyone agreed she did not need) Attar received none. The case studies show how expectations and assumptions about girlMuslim and boyMuslim behaviours, and responses to these, can be important determinants of the support children receive and how children come to be identified.

Rahul
While Reena's lack of participation was understood as resulting from her girlMuslim shyness and lack of confidence, Rahul's was understood as laziness and a lack of motivation, a failure 'to listen'.

Rahul did not take part in interactions with the teacher during whole class teaching times. He was frequently disengaged from what the teacher and the class were doing.

Rahul had spent less than five terms in an English classroom in comparison with the nine terms that his peers had spent in school because of family mobility and an extended visit to Bangladesh. As a result Rahul was at an early stage in acquiring English and had missed extended stretches of the early years' curriculum placing him behind his peers in what he had experienced, and the opportunities he had had for learning, in his English school.   At the same time his Year 3 teacher talked a lot and used few visual resources so Rahul spent much of his school day immersed in a classroom that was awash with complex, oral language that he initially struggled with and then gave up trying to follow. In this way Rahul was not able to position himself as a successful (or even included) pupil within his classroom (Benjamin et al. 2002: 549). He was not able to make as many choices as Attar and other children in how he could present himself in his classroom setting.

His class teacher at the beginning of the research year understood Rahul's non-participation as a consequence of his lack of English. As a result of his non-participation and the manner in which his teacher understood this, Rahul was provided with access to resources (and, unlike Attar, was perceived to be a 'very manageable', 'polite' and 'obedient' pupil). He was placed in Numeracy and Literacy groups that had teacher support, he had infrequent access to the visiting EAL teacher and his classroom teacher began the year by holding spaces for him so that he could contribute some responses during Numeracy sessions. Yet as the year progressed, despite his teacher's understanding of the range of difficulties that Rahul faced in the classroom, the focus of the support and what the teacher wanted from Rahul, shifted from developing his language to getting him to a point where he understood her instructions and was able to work independently.

> (At the beginning of the year) he did have this difficulty with listening on the carpet and with following instructions and knowing what to do independently.....gradually as time has gone on he's certainly become more and more able to work independently and I've finally got him to do some writing independently, whereas before he just sat there and did nothing...
> He doesn't actually give of himself very much.
> (Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

The teacher's focus became to get Rahul to behave like an 'independent worker' and 'to listen' so that he could get on with work and not need so much from her. 'Not listening' became the problem and this 'not listening' arose from Rahul's 'not giving of himself very much' and his lack of motivation.

Thus, a key behaviour that the teacher needed to see Rahul acquire, so that she could manage her lessons, was to be able to work independently from her which meant that he needed to do was to understand the instructions she gave. Once his English was good enough for him to understand instructions for doing and completing tasks he would be able to work independently. (This understanding of Rahul ignored the fact that he needed the language to be able to complete tasks as well as to understand what the task was). In the teacher's account, not having enough language slipped into 'not listening' and EAL support, and Rahul's EAL identity, became subsumed to the teacher's need to manage her class.

> I try to say to him always 'Do you know what have got to do Rahul?' because, I mean, you know, that is all he needs. I'm trying to get him to the point of knowing what to do.
> (Mrs Heatherly 7/11/00)

Rahul received very little EAL support during the year. The focus of the support offered to him, in the second half of the research year, was to enable him to conform to the behaviours and practices of the classroom. At the end of the research year Rahul's class teacher reiterated that Rahul 'simply needs to listen'. The only recommendation that she passed up to Rahul's new Middle School regarding support was that 'he needs to be reminded to listen on the carpet' (19/6/01). In this manner Rahul's future support was likely to continue the focus on understanding task instructions so that he behaved like other pupils in the transition between whole-class teaching and independent work rather than supporting him in the development of his language which might have given him some small opportunity of catching up with his peers and becoming a successful and achieving pupil.

In her explanation and understanding of Rahul as a pupil his teacher did not call on his ethnicity and gender to the same extent as we saw in the accounts of Attar and Reena although, as noted above, an explanation that was not called on in her understanding of Rahul was that he was shy or lacking in confidence, Rahul was just 'unmotivated'. Her explanations of why Rahul did not take an active part in her lessons did call on his home background and her perception of his parents' lack of support for education and in her reasonings about the amount of support Rahul should have access to she referred to the fact that he did not have as many needs as 'other children' who were identified as being SEN. This line of thought often became woven together with notions of ethnicity and gender when Rahul's teachers, both past and present, discussed his needs and related these to his home life and the fact that he 'had a lot more going for him' than his younger sister who they felt was considered by Rahul's parents to be 'less important'. 'I think it's because he's the male and....(his sister) spends a lot of time moaning to me that Rahul gets a lot of things that she doesn't' (Peripatetic EAL Teacher 13/3/01). This then becomes a factor in the amount of EAL support that Rahul was considered entitled to receive,

> Does he need English Language support? A big question mark. I mean there's (his) narrow vocabulary but you know there are other children. I think he is doing better than Shazia (his sister)... he has got more going for him really.
> (Peripatetic EAL teacher 13/3/01)

Rahul's entitlement to EAL support was in some complex way considered in the light of 'other children's needs' and in relation to his sister. In this manner ethnicity and gender left their trace mark through understandings of Rahul that came to bear on the access to support that he was considered to be entitled to. (6724 words)

Conclusion
The three cases briefly outlined above demonstrate the manner in which teachers made important assessments of the children based on the ways in which they took part in classroom life. The children subsequently came to acquire particular identities in their classrooms and these identities affected the children's access to resources such as support.

The three accounts also demonstrate the manner in which teachers, because of their need to manage their lessons, had to explain their pupils and find meaning within them. The teacher focus in all three cases was on the behaviour of the pupils and the support that the pupils received was always about changing their behaviour so that they presented themselves as 'normal' (assimilated) members of the class.   In directing their pupils in this way, the necessary organisation and management of lessons could be maintained, as could the teacher's ability to keep twenty-seven or more children, in a limited (and very public) space, engaged with learning and a sense of competency and professional identity could be maintained. The three case studies indicate how some pupils threaten (or potentially threaten) the accomplishment of lessons and/or their teachers sense of competence and how teachers provided resources to support the children's behaviour not their language. Attar was denied EAL support but placed in two school nurture groups to help him with his behaviour and relationships in school, Reena received EAL support to help her become a more confident member of her classroom and to stop her having a 'wobble' during the school year, support for Rahul was always in terms of making sure he knew what to do when a class task was set and encouraging him to listen so that he would know. Changing behaviour meant that the pupils would either cease to present problems to the management of lessons, or to present a challenge to the image of the inclusive classroom or to threaten the professional identity and competence of the teacher. In this manner the three accounts demonstrate how teachers' needs to manage their lessons prevailed over their pupils' EAL identity, an identity which became invisible in relation to the three pupils during the research year. In this manner the children were all manoeuvred into particular positions in their mainstream classrooms which were strongly assimilationist and normative.

The accounts presented here reveal how vulnerable some pupils' access to appropriate resources is in the early years of the education; vulnerable that is to teachers' ways of knowing and explaining them in relation to their needs to manage their lessons and classrooms. These pupils were also vulnerable as achieving pupils in school (especially Attar and Rahul), left to call more and more on their own (limited) resources inside and outside school in order to be successful learners and participators in their school classrooms. The accounts also reveal the assimilationist pull of contemporary classrooms for such pupils despite policy and practitioner discourses of multiculturalism and diversity.   The three pupils were supported to assimilate, to fit in and to be like other pupils rather than supported in their language development and learning.

In adopting an approach that focuses on how the assessment of pupils arises out of classroom practices and relationships, as well as teachers' needs to manage their classrooms, it is possible to begin to see how such practices, relationships, spaces and needs are complicit in the reproduction of educational (and therefore social) inequality, in the achievement and underachievement of particular pupil groups in English mainstream schools. Such an approach refuses to engage in a simple 'teacher racism' explanation for underachievement, ie an explicit teacher lack of regard or respect for particular pupil groups, but shows how unequal (and limiting) positionings can emerge through teachers' professional concern to explain and do the best for their pupils. This offers a way forward in understanding the subtle ways in which social inequality and underachievement become perpetuated in English

mainstream classrooms and focuses attention on the subtle and unexplicated ways in which how teachers come to know, assess and provide for their pupils. This has implications for current debates concerning teacher assessment versus assessment through external tests. These three accounts reveal how teachers' knowing is based on the manner in which pupils interact with them in particular (provided) spaces in the classroom, the dispositions that they ascribe to their pupils and their perceptions of pupils' community, culture, home and gender, not the quality of produced work.

The accounts also reveal the need for better training and professional development for teachers in relation to the language development needs of EAL pupils. With a deeper understanding of language acquisition and development teachers would not need to search for other explanations for their pupils' behaviour, explanations that they currently find in accounts of their pupils' dispositions, homes, communities, their gender and ethnicity.

The data presented here has taken us beyond other research descriptions of South Asian pupils as 'hard working' and 'well behaved', their struggles in school as somehow a result of a 'cognitive deficiency', to a position where we can begin to unpack how particular South Asian pupils become understood and positioned in their classrooms, identified as particular pupils and how their learning needs become subsumed to a need to modify behaviour rather than to develop language. Ethnographic research has until now only demonstrated how African-Caribbean (and nearly always boys) become judged by their behaviour in this manner (eg Wright 1992; Connolly 1998). The case studies show how expectations and assumptions about girlMuslim and boyMuslim behaviours, and responses to these, can be important determinants of the support children receive and how children come to be identified. The accounts have shown how EAL pupils can come to be assessed and how an EAL identity can disappear, how teachers come to assess pupils as not simply as having 'deficient cognitive abilities' but in terms of their dispositions, their ethnicity and their gender and relation to their needs as teachers to teach their classes. The focus falls on pupils' behaviour and notions of what lies within the child (and their home, culture and ethnicity) rather than on language development, it falls on what lies outside the school rather than on its own practices and spaces. In this manner the accounts show us something of the role of assessment in social structuring, in reinforcing and reproducing social inequalities through offering the pupils limited opportunities for developing their language (and thus making them vulnerable as successful learners) and through othering these pupils and their families so that ethnic, gendered accounts of them as children prevail over other possible accounts of them as learners. The three accounts have tentatively explored the spatiality of classrooms and the particular spaces that are made available to pupils in which they are to demonstrate what they know and who they are. The accounts show how, very early in the their school careers, children become positioned within classroom spaces and how this positioning sets them on their way to becoming bright, successful and achieving learners or defiant, unmotivated, unsuccessful ones.

References
Benjamin, S., Nind, M., Hall, K., Collins, J. and Sheehy, K. (2003) 'Moments of Inclusion and Exclusion: Pupils Negotiating Classroom Contexts' in *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 24 (5) pp 547-558

Connolly, P. (1998) *Racism, Gender Identities and Young Children: Social Relations in a Multi-Ethnic, Inner City Primary School*. London: Routledge.

Cummins, J. (1984) *Bilingualism and Special Education: Issues in Assessment and Pedagogy* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

Cummins, J. (1989) *Empowering Minority Students*. Sacramento: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Day, E. M. (2002) *Identity and the Young English Language Learner*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

Filer, A. and Pollard, A. (2000) *The Social World of Pupil Assessment: Processes and Contexts of Primary Schooling* London: Continuum.

Filer, A. (2000) (ed) *Assessment: Social Practice and Social Product* London: RoutledgeFalmer

Gardener, S., & Rea-Dickens, P., (2002) *Focus on Language Sampling: A Key Issue in EAL Assessment* NALDIC Occasional Paper 15 Luton: NALDIC

Gillborn, D. (1990) *'Race', Ethnicity and Education: Teaching and Learning in Multi-Ethnic Schools* London: Unwin Hyman

Hall, K.(2002) 'Co-Constructing Subjectivities and Knowledge in a Literacy Class: An Ethnographic-Sociocultural Perspective' *Language and Education* 16 pp. 178-194

Keddie, N. (1971) 'Classroom Knowledge' in (ed) M. F. D. Young *Knowledge and Control: New Directions for the Sociology of Education* London: Collier-Macmillan pp 133-160

Leiter, K. C. W. (1976) 'Ad Hocing in the Schools: A Study of Placement Practices in the Kindergartens of Two Schools' in M. Hammersley and P. Woods (eds) *The Process of Schooling: A Sociological Reader* London: Routledge & Keegan Paul pp116-125

Leung, C. and South, H. (1996) *The Assessment of EAL Pupils: A Discussion Paper for Members* NALDIC Discussion Paper Luton: NALDIC

Mabey, C. (1986) 'Black Pupils' Achievement in Inner London' *Educational Research* 28 (3) pp. 163-173.

Phillips, C. (1979) 'Educational Underachievement and Different Ethnic Groups' *Educational Research* 21 (2) pp. 116-130

Pryor, J., & Torrance, H. (2000) 'Questioning the Three Bears: The Social Construction of Classroom Assessment' in A. Filer (ed) *Assessment: Social Practice and Social Product* London: RoutledgeFalmer

QCA (2000) *A Language in Common: Assessing English as an Additional Language* London: QCA

Rampton (1981) *Interim Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups: West Indian Children in Our Schools* London: HMSO

Safford, K., (2003) *Teachers and Pupils in the Big Picture: Seeing Real Children in Routinised Assessment* NALDIC Occasional Paper 17   Luton: NALDIC

Swann (1985) *The Swann Report (Education for All: The Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups)* HMSO: London

Tomlinson, S (1980) 'The Educational Performance of Ethnic Minority Children' *New Community* 8 pp 213-235

Toohey, K. (2000) *Learning English at School: Identity, Social Relations and Classroom Practice*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters

Wright, C. (1992) *Race Relations in the Primary School*. London: David Fulton.