"VIOLENCE TO TEACHERS."

Library study submitted as part of the requirements for the M. Sc. in Occupational Psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Nottingham.

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ABSTRACT.

In recent years, teacher organisations have expressed increasing concern about the issue of "violence towards teachers". This concern has been echoed by the media, the public, and by the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) who, in late 1990 published the document "Violence to staff in the education sector."

This has not been a wholly British phenomenon, and the study of violence in schools has received attention in many other European countries, but most particularly in the U.S.A., where Congress mandated the "Violent schools - Safe schools" study in 1978.

Despite this recent interest, incidence figures are few, operational definitions are seldom compatible and, in Britain especially, little is known about the circumstances in which the violent incidents occur.

This study examines the known incidence figures, the problems of measurement, and the explanatory theories that have been proposed. In view of the dearth of studies by psychologists in this country, a framework is proposed by which relevant data can be pulled together as a basis for intervention to reduce the risks of violence occurring, and for further research into its nature and significance.

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Section One.

Introduction.

There are a number of reasons for choosing "Violence to teachers" for a library study. On a personal note, I have worked in schools as an educational psychologist for over 25 years, and have encountered teachers who have directly experienced violence. Yet the role of the educational psychologist has generally been construed as pupil rather than teacher centred, and seldom involved the analysis of the occupational characteristics, or hazards, of the teacher.

There has also been much media speculation in recent years about the incidence and causes of violence in schools, and the journalistic cliche "blackboard jungle" has passed into common usage. (See for instance, "8,000 teachers 'are the victims of school violence every week' ", Daily Express 14.3.89. "Music teacher gets £500 compensation for lost eye." T.E.S. 7.9.84). However, in the face of concern voiced by teacher unions and educationalists it would be erroneous to portray the situation as no more than a media invention. In Britain, a Committee of Enquiry chaired by Lord Elton (DES, 1989) reported on violent and disruptive behaviour in schools, while the DES and the Health and Safety Commission have produced working papers dealing with crime (DES, 1987) and violence (HSC, 1990) in the education sector.

Despite the recent interest, there is still a dearth of hard, scientific data on the incidence of violence and the circumstances in which it occurs. As a result, untested and generally untestable theories have flourished, along with the nostalgic yearning to return to a hypothesised "Golden Age" of classroom tranquillity and orderly learning. (A recent example of this was expressed by Prince Charles in his recent keynote speech on education, "Guardian" 23.4.91).

The facts do not readily support the "Golden Age" theory. Disruption was rife in the English Public Schools during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Harrow students staged a rebellion in 1793 which lasted for three weeks (Rock and Heidensohn, 1969). The boys blew the door off the headmaster's study at Rugby in 1797, soldiers were called in and the Riot Act read. An illuminating account account of a rebellion at Eton was provided by H.S. Tremenheere (in Edmonds and Edmonds, 1965). A student at the college during the 1892 rebellion, Tremenheere relates how "...the boys, nearly two hundred... rose against the Authorities, took possession of the College, barricaded it unassailably, disregarded remonstrances, solicitations, and threats of physical force, and only yielded when their demands were granted..." Staff were held captive, the Constabularly mocked, and the Colonel of the Regiment threatened that a "good many heads would be broken..".

Subsequently appointed as the first Inspector of Mines, Tremenheere addressed "safety at work" and prepared the 1850 legislation on "Matters and Things connected with or related to the Safety of the Persons Employed". As if one link with the content of this study were not enough, Tremenheere subsequently became a pioneering Inspector of Schools.

More recently, Rhodes Boyson, a former Minister of Education, has described his own early teaching experience; "My first deputy head told me that when he started teaching in a small Lancashire textile town he, along with other young

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teachers, dared not go to the station at the end of the school day without the presence of the headmaster or he would be attacked in the street by groups of boys throwing stones and sods of earth." (Boyson, 1970)

The closer the search, the more elusive the evidence for an educational "Golden Age."

In view of the amount of uncertainty, myth and speculation, there is a clear need to identify and analyse the nature of the evidence relating to violence towards teachers. Media speculation and anecdotal reporting provide no basis for understanding, nor for planning intervention.

This library study therefore has the following aims;

    1. To identify and evaluate the known incidence figures of violence to teachers in schools.

    2. To identify and analyse the causes generally cited to account for such violence.

    3. To devise a framework for further analysis of the data and causal themes.

    4. In the light of the above findings, to generate proposals for further action.

The above aims will be covered separately in the subsequent sections of this study.

The Incidence of Violence to Teachers.

(A) Teacher Union Surveys.

In the 1970's, teacher unions in the U.K. introduced their own surveys of violence in schools. Lowenstein, (1975) summarised a survey of membership by the National Association of Schoolmasters/ Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT). Data was collected by means of a questionnaire sent to all NAS/UWT school representatives in England and Wales, who were asked to describe how violence and disruptive behaviour were manifest in the school during the period 14th October to 20th December 1974. Violence was defined as "a fairly vicious attack on other pupils, the malicious destruction of property and attacks by pupils or parents on members of school staff."

The collected data related to incidence rates per school. Returns were received from 825 primary schools (5% of the total), 141 middle schools (15%) and 846 secondaries (18%)

The findings revealed 1.5 violent incidents were reported per primary school, 1.7 per middle school and 5 per secondary school in the period studied.

Whilst these figures provide some kind of incidence for the schools in question, they do not offer reliable or complete information on the extent of violence to teachers for a number of reasons. For example, the definition used incorporated attacks on pupils, malicious destruction of property and attacks on members of staff who were not teachers. The wording of the questions did not permit extraction of figures relating specifically to teachers. While "over half" of the headteachers in the final sample "co-operated" in the completion of the form (Lowenstein, 1975), it is not clear whether schools had an incident reporting policy which would provide him/her with a complete picture.

Low return rates are a common problem with postal questionnaires, particularly those distributed via a union newsletter. The temptation to treat all returned forms as the total sample is irresistible in most of the union surveys. However, while they may not provide accurate estimates of incidence, the raw figures represent one count of some of the individual teachers who have endured or witnessed violent episodes in the workplace. The methodological criticisms should not obscure the fact that violence does occur, and that systems of data collection are as yet inadequate.

A further NAS/UWT survey was conducted in 1985. This time each union member, not just school representatives, was asked to complete and return a questionnaire. One in five of those responding reported pupil violence resulting in serious injury during the first six months of the school year. A further 25% had been threatened with violence, and 10% had been faced with an attempted attack. (NAS/UWT, 1986).

This survey also suffered from the problems of low response rate. Of the potential 125,000 teachers surveyed via the union journal, only 3,910 (3%) replied. However, the survey provided graphic evidence of the extent of personal suffering endured by some teachers; "During the last 14 years I have been assaulted seven times, once with a knife, once with a stiletto, once with

an air rifle (when I was shot in the chest), once when a pupil fed gas into my classroom when I was teaching, twice when pupils have attempted to attack me with their fists and once when an ex-pupil tried twice to run me over with a car." (NAS/UWT, ibid.)

The Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association (AMMA, 1975, 1983) published a policy statement following "the increased numbers of assaults on members", and called on LEAs to record and publish information about assaults on teachers, as well as provide professional and legal support. The Professional Association of Teachers (PAT) surveyed members as part of its submission to the Elton Committee. PAT's survey found that 67% of the respondents reported being subjected to a physical attack by a pupil, 5% had been attacked by a (presumably pupil's) parent, and 86% believed that "cases of violence are on the increase in schools" (PAT, 1987). No figures were provided about total membership size, nor response rates. The National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) surveyed its membership and of those replying, 18% reported that pupils attacked teachers in their schools, and 3% said that parents had been violent to teachers (Breakwell, 1989).

An independent survey conducted by National Opinion Polls (NOP) for the National Union of Teachers sampled the views of 1,000 teachers in state and independent schools. Of the 484 who replied, 50% stated that indiscipline was a frequent occurrence in the classroom, and 20% said they had experienced physical violence, though not necessarily directed at themselves. (Breakwell, 1989).

(B). Local Authority Records.

When the HSC working party onon "Violence to Staff" began its work in 1984, only one LEA maintained and published records on assaults on teachers (Poyner and Warner 1988). Those records related to incidence per school, and identified a much higher level of recorded violence in special, as opposed to mainstream schools. Seventy-seven incidents were reported in special boarding schools (2.48 per school.) There were 97 incidents in day special schools (a rate of 1.31), and 25 (4.16) in Hospital special schools. The comparative figure for mainstream schools was 285 in total, a rate of 0.23 per school. There were a further 19 incidents in colleges, and 32 "unclassified". Apart from the reference to colleges, there was no further analysis of the data according to age level of the pupils. As Poyner and Warne commented; "Almost nothing is recorded about the pupils. Not even their sex..." They also remarked that "nothing is known about the relationship between pupil assailant and staff victim" - a criticism applicable to other reported studies. They concluded, pertinently that "It seems important in the context of an educational environment that these social and psychological factors should figure quite prominently in the kind of information that is required about violence before preventive measures can be considered." (Poyner and Warne, 1988).

(C). National Survey (1988).

The major relevant survey in England and Wales was conducted by the Committee of Enquiry, chaired by Lord Elton, which reported on "Discipline in Schools". (DES, 1989).

The Elton survey was in two parts. Part One was a postal questionnaire sent out

to a stratified, random sample of 300 secondary and 250 primary schools. Of these, 476 (87%) agreed to participate. The sample of teachers from the secondary schools was obtained on a random basis of 1 in 4 from the list of staff members. The response rate was 79%, producing a sample size of 2,525. For the primary teacher sample, the proportion contacted was 5 out of every eight on the staff list. The response rate was a very high 89%, and the final primary teacher sample was 1,083. The questionnaires were distributed in October 1988.

Part Two explored the perceptions and experiences of teachers in ten inner-city comprehensive schools. Individual interviews were arranged with the headteachers and also with ten classroom teachers representating a "cross-section of the views, concerns and experiences in each school." Selection of teachers was made by the headteacher of the participating school.

The incidence figures in respect of violence to secondary teachers were contained in Part One of the report. One point seven percent of teachers had experienced "physical aggression" in the course of their lessons during the survey week. Almost all reported that their experiences during that week had been "typical" or "fairly typical." A further 1.1% reported some form of "physical aggression" in the course of their duties round the school. From the pattern of responses the committee ".. inferred ...that they were referring to physical contact with pupils rather than violence.." and supported this interpretation by reference to the individual interviews in Part Two. In respect of secondary teachers alone, 2.1% reported some form of "physical aggression" in the survey. However, following "a detailed analysis of the questionnaires" the committee estimated that only 0.5% related to incidents of a "clearly violent" nature during the week in question. It is not clear how this reduction was carried out, nor whether it was based on a re-scrutiny of all, or a sample of the 2,525 secondary teachers' questionnaires. If we look at individuals, rather than percentages, the reduction means we are talking about 12, as opposed to 53 teachers experiencing incidents "of a clearly violent nature" in the week of the survey.

There are a number of unresolved questions about this data analysis. Respondents have clearly been uncertain about the terminology and definitions used by Elton. (This is discussed in more detail in Section 4). It is clear from the case studies summarised in Part Two of the report that all teachers do not share a common definition of violence as it occurs in schools, and, to put it no higher, the collected data is highly likely to be ambiguous. As there was no copy of the questionnaire included in the report, it is not possible to draw any further conclusions.

In view of some of the findings collected before the Elton Commitee began its enquiries, (eg "Violent schools; Safe schools." NIE, 1978) it is disappointing to find no further breakdown of data by demographic or other variables. For instance, the "Safe schools" returns portrayed a "month of the year" and "day of the week" factor in respect of violence in schools, which the methodology of the Elton survey neither controlled for nor measured. To what extent would the results have been different had a different week of the year been chosen for the Elton survey?

A final puzzle relates to the different possible interpretations of the incidence data as presented. Elton rightly cautions against extrapolation to larger time scales, whilst highlighting that respondents replied that the week

in question (to which the findings relate) was a "typical week". Does this mean that the same 0:5% or 2.1% "typically" get assaulted throughout the school year? Or is the violence randomly apportioned across the teaching profession? (The findings from the "Safe schools" study indicate that some teachers do experience multiple victimisation.)

These critical comments need to be balanced by the recognition that the Elton Committee addressed the complex and politically sensitive issue of school discipline, not the specific area of violence to teachers. In terms of its initial brief, the Report has collated information, analysis and opinion from a comprehensive range of sources and produced important and practical recommendations. Many of these relate to the initial and post-experience training of teachers, and have resulted in government money being made available to support LEAs in the provision of training for teachers and other staff.

(D). Incidence figures from abroad.

Urben, chair of the Societie Pedagogique in Geneva, reported that "absenteeism is on the rise, verbal clashes are frequent and assaults against the teachers have begun to occur in several countries" (Urben,1986). In Sweden, the "Committee against violence in the school" drew attention to the existence of physical and psychological violence "that the pupil perpetrates on (the) teacher, or vice versa". (Swedish Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, 1980). In Poland, Obuchowska (1989) described how violence can disrupt the educational process. In the autumn of 1990 students and teachers took to the streets in Paris to protest against violence and demand better internal security and smaller classes. (Guardian 14.11.90).

But it is in the U.S.A. that most concern about school violence has been expressed by the media, parents and the teacher unions.

(E) "Safe schools; violent schools." National Institute of Education (NIE, 1978).

In 1974 the "Safe Schools Study Act" was introduced into the American House of Representatives by congressmen Bingham of New York and Bell of California. This Act mandated the Department of Education and Welfare to conduct a study to determine "the incidence and seriousness of school crime; the number and location of schools affected; the costs; the means of prevention in use, and the effectiveness of those means." (National Institute of Education, 1978).

This resulted in a three phase study.
    Phase 1: a mail survey in which principals in a representative sample of over 4,000 public and elementary schools were asked to report in detail the incidence of illegal or disruptive activities for selected one month periods between February 1976 and January 1977. The nine one-month reporting months (major holiday periods excluded) were randomly assigned to participating schools.
    Phase 2: a survey of a nationally representative sample of 642 public junior and high schools. Data was collected by a site visiting team. Principals were again asked to log incidents during the reporting month. In addition, students and teachers were also surveyed.
    Phase 3: an intense case-study of ten schools which previously had serious problems of crime and violence, but which had since changed dramatically for

the better.

The main findings relating to violence to teachers are summarised below.

(i). Physical attacks on teachers.
This data derives from Phase 2 and is based on responses from 23,895 teachers in a sample of 642 secondary schools. An estimated half of one percent of the teachers were attacked in schools during the survey month. Whilst attacks on teachers were fewer than those on students, 19% of the teachers required medical treatment, as opposed to 4% of the students. The risks of attack were the same for both male and female teachers.

(ii). Multiple victimisation.
For both students and teachers, being victimised in one way is associated with further victimisation in other ways. For female secondary teachers, this association is particularly strong in respect of rape. The NIE report "4/100ths of 1%...are raped in a month. In two months, the rate is about 8/100ths of 1%. Yet speaking in terms of probabilities, if a female teacher is attacked once in a two month period, the chances of also being raped in that period shoot up from less than 1 in 1,000 to almost 1 in 10 (9.5%), more than a 100-fold increase in risk."

(iii). Age level taught and school location.
A teacher's risk of being attacked in a junior high was 0.89% as opposed to 0.46% in a senior high. Assaults, as with robbery and theft, were associated with community size. "The proportions of teachers reporting attacks decline markedly as we move from large cities to smaller cities, to suburbs to rural areas. A typical teacher in an urban high school stands 1 chance in 55 of being attacked within a month's time, while a teacher in a rural senior high school has one chance in 500."

(iv). Day of week, month of year and violence.
The Report found a symmetrical pattern to the incidence of violence against both students and teachers occuring across the days of the week. The incidence was low on Monday, rose towards the midweek and returned to a low point on the Friday. (The pattern for vandalism and property offences was the reverse, being higher on Mondays and Fridays.)

Data was also analysed in terms of the month of the year in which it occurred. The incidence of violence against the person peaked in February and thereafter fell month by month (with the exception of May) until it reached its lowest level in December. (Curiously enough, the pattern for vandalism was again almost a mirror image, rising month by month from a low in September to peak in December. Whilst the pattern from February to May was less clear, the month of February revealed a particularly low incidence.)

(v). Characteristics of classes taught.
The risk of violence to teachers was greater when teaching larger classes (ie over 30 students) and classes containing relatively large numbers of low ability pupils.

(vi). Hostile encounters.
Almost half of the teachers surveyed said that students had sworn at them in the previous month. Again, these figures reflected location, with the percentages being two-thirds in large cities, and two-fifths in rural areas.

Twelve percent of teachers reported receiving threats of physical harm from students at least once in the survey month. Significantly, 12% of teachers had also drawn back from confronting a misbehaving student out of fear for their own safety. Again, the percentages were higher in urban communities.

(vii). Teacher attitudes.
The teachers completed 10 questions from a "Pupil control ideology scale". Each statement represented a negative attitude towards students. "On every item a higher proportion of victimised teachers than of others endorsed the statements." The authors point out that "harshly authoritarian teachers may provoke violence by students." On the other hand, they add that "teaching in violent schools may engender authoritarian attitudes in teachers." They might also have added that the specific experience of being assaulted may well engender such attitudes in some teachers.

The "Safe schools" survey has provided educationalists and social psychologists with a wealth of data about violence to teachers (and to pupils) in the American school system. The careful and detailed breakdown of its findings highlight the inadequacy of crude, overall measures. The methodology employed enables "high risk" schools to be identified, as well as "high risk" situations within such schools. Both the methodology and the subsequent findings present a basis for planned approach to the reduction of violence in schools.

(F). Union and media reaction.

The New York State United Teachers Union (NYSUT) introduced a discipline programme in the 1980's aimed at schools, citing the Gallup Poll's annual finding that members of the public identified "lack of discipline" as the number one problem confronting schools (NYSUT, 1982). In 1985, The American Federation of Teachers set up its own National Commission on school violence and reported that 120 students had been shot in Detroit in the previous school year. They claimed teachers had been assaulted so often they no longer conducted after-school parent teacher conferences. The Los Angeles security budget was £10 million, 302 armed guards were employed, while teachers continued to be assaulted at the rate of one a day. The New York chairman of the Union was quoted as stating "..if a student threatens to march out of class, the teacher should not respond by saying 'You are leaving over my dead body' because the student just might try to arrange that." (T.E.S. 5.4.85).

By the late 1980's there were conflicting views between the boards of education and the unions about the incidence of violence in schools, and the effectiveness of methods to reduce it. In 1987 14 murders were reported on school premises in California, 7 involving the death of students. Six thousand guns were seized - an increase of 28% - and junior high schools alone reported 24,437 cases of assault, robbery and extortion. In one week in New York, 1988, a teacher was stabbed, another bludgeoned with a baseball bat, a third beaten up with fists and a fourth injured when someone tossed a stun grenade into her room. (T.E.S. 10.6.88).

Reviewing these British and American studies, fundamental problems recur in respect of the nature of the data that is collected, and the way in which it is used. First, the figures focus solely on one party in what is a social dynamic. In order to interpret such figures we need to know more about "the relationship between the pupil assailant and teacher victim." (Poyner and

Warne, 1988). Secondly, the use of total incidence figures alone masks the wide range of between-school differences. For instance, in America the majority of the schools are not in high risk, inner city locations, but in relatively settled and safe suburban and rural settings. The escalated risks for teachers and pupils in the relatively smaller, but dangerous, inner city areas of New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Miami diluted when those figures are pooled with those of the larger, safer population. A third reason relates to the cultural and professional reasons which may lead to teachers under-reporting instances of assault. In the absence of routine "no blame, no stigma, no fault" recording systems, it is not surprising that many teachers respond with a "no dice" when asked highly simplistic questions about violence in schools.

In respect of the union surveys, perhaps we should be less pre-occupied with the accuracy of their incidence figures and more concerned the accounts they provide of the distress experienced and support required by some of their members as a result of violence in the work place. The onus is on the employers, the LEAs and schools, to collect and provide sound, reliable data.

However, from a research point of view, Reid's cautionary conclusions merit consideration; "At the moment the literature is full of biased findings from pressure groups or incomplete statistics because of the notorious difficulties encountered when attempting to gather accurate statistical data from schools and LEAs on a delicate topic which is complicated by definitional and semantic issues." (Reid, 1988).

Violence in Schools - Associated Factors

With the exception of the authors of the "Safe schools" report who plaintively confessed to having no explanation for their statistically significant finding that Tuesdays attracted most of the arson attacks and false bomb alarms, it has been an "open season" for educationalists, psychologists and sociologists to indulge in wild theorising about the causes of violence in schools. Some observers blame violence on television, others the lax, or too punitive, juvenile legal system. Menacken (1990), in an echo of "West Side Story"s Officer Krupke sees it as a "social disease", whilst Wilson (1987) puts it down to teacher insistence on marking in red ink, the symbol of blood and violence. One major problem, among many others, is that researchers make it difficult for themselves, and us, by using the same words to describe different events, and different words to describe the same events.

(i). Terminology.

Wayson points out the need to distinguish between violence and ordinary school discipline problems. Failure to do this produces inflationary incidence figures which can be exploited by politicians hoping to extort votes from the fearful, and by "those consultants who sell solutions designed to fix things that are not broken." (Wayson, 1985). This in turn worsens the situation by taking responsibility away from the teachers. Similarly violence is frequently linked with vandalism, yet if there is a link, it is not a simple one. The "Safe schools" study pointed out that students in schools with high levels of violence were characterised by apathy and felt they had no control over their lives. Emphasising academic achievement and encouraging students to strive for good grades within their ability level led to increased commitment and was associated with less violence. Conversely vandalism seemed to involve students who cared about school, but were losing out in the competition for grades and leadership positions. Denied what they saw as adequate rewards for their efforts they took aggressive action against the school, not the teachers. Unfortunately many papers and studies have lumped violence, disruptive behaviour and vandalism together, producing misleading incidence figures and flawed causal speculations.

(ii). Do schools have any effect on violence levels?

Menacken's studies of violence rates in Chicago schools represented a socio-political emphasis on the over-riding importance of the social pathology of the community (Menacken, 1989 and 1990). He argued that "socially disorganised, crime-ridden neighbourhoods produce socially disorganised, crime-ridden schools." These inferences were based on a comparison of school and police records for an inner city area. He proposed that priority should be given towards efforts to improve housing and employment for both pupils and their parents. In the meantime, though "schools are already safer than their surrounding communities" more could still be done "while society is being reconstructed." Evans and Evans (1985) had also argued that psychological

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theories were not sufficient to account for student aggression, and advocated an ecological approach encompassing the school organisation and personnel, students,the community and the family to identify those elements of the school programme that contributed to aggressive acts.

Nevertheless, a considerable amount of evidence has been put forward to stress the influence of the school, and the value of school based interventions. In a controversial paper, Power (1967) claimed that some schools may actually cause delinquency. He argued that the between-school variations could not be explained by school size or the delinquency rate in the catchment area. Wayson (1985) pointed out that social and community factors are not under teachers control, and went on to highlight what teachers can do to improve school conditions and ameliorate violence. He claimed that 80% of violent incidents in schools resulted from some dysfunction in the way we organised schools or trained staff. The "Safe schools; violent schools" study concluded that school crime and violence are not mainly caused by a cadre of serious offenders whose behaviour is intractable, that schools are not innocent victims and that a large number of schools did manage to reduce their crime rates without resorting to the expulsion of problem students (NIE, 1978). More recently, in a comprehensive review of the British literature Graham concluded that "... it has not been shown that schools have a direct effect on delinquency..". He qualified this by adding that "they (schools)... would certainly appear to have a considerable influence on the behaviour ... of their pupils." (Graham, 1988). The following year, the Elton Report reported "Research shows that differences in the ways in which schools are run are associated with different standards of .. behaviour and attendance among their pupils." (A recent review of literature and complexities of analysing whole school change is provided by Reynolds, 1991).

(iii). School size.

Economies of scale, and the opportunity to offer wider curriculum choices and a greater range of facilities have contributed to an increase in the size of secondary schools. During the time of a major building programme of comprehensive schools in the 1960's, Weeke's commented; "The only experience we have really had of such large institutions is the older public schools, the lunatic asylums and H.M. Prisons." (Weekes, 1966). The "Safe schools" study did report finding an association, although not a strong one, between school size and violence. The larger the school, the greater the risk of violence. A stronger link was found between class size, the number of different students taught by a teacher in a week and violence. The link beween class size and violence was not confirmed in Britain by the Elton committee, who felt that, at best, their evidence was inconclusive and that it was an area for further research taking into account the size and composition of the class, teaching styles, teacher stress, teacher workloads and class contact time.

(iv). School design and layout.

A number of American studies have confirmed the existence of particular "high risk" areas for violence on the school premises. For instance, Menacken, in a study of Chicago schools in high crime districts, reported the following;

> Only 38% of teachers reported feeling "very safe" in their classrooms.

Only 5% of teachers reported feeling "very safe" in the school parking lot.

Only 2.5% of teachers reported feeling "very safe" on the school grounds.

44.3% of pupils reported they did not feel safe in school.

31% of pupils reported carrying a weapon into school during the year.

72% of pupils reported being in a fist fight in school during the year.

20% of pupils avoided the parking lot for fear of personal harm.
(Menacken, 1989)

The "Safe Schools" study reported that classrooms were the safest place in the school for students, but not for teachers. Thirty eight percent of the assaults against teachers took place in that setting (just over a third of these occurred when the teacher was not with a class.) Guetzloe reported that risks of violence were highest during the crush in corridors, halls, doorways and stairs between lessons, and advocated that design and layout, as well as construction plans, should be approved by a school "security engineer." (Guetzloe, 1989).

Calabrese (1986) stressed that school design and layout should take into account the need for teacher – teacher support, and teacher – pupil contact. In the UK, the DES (1987) produced practical guidelines for the design and analysis of the built environment, and for safety measures to reduce the risks of crime in schools. The Elton committee also drew attention to the influence of the design and maintenance of buildings on pupil behaviour and school atmosphere. (D.E.S., 1989) More recently still, the Health and Safety Commission, in their document "Violence to staff in the education sector" have pointed out that "The general design and physical environment of buildings can sometimes be improved to reduce the likelihood of outbreaks of violence." Their preventive strategies include the design of the physical aspect of premises, the need to avoid ciculation bottlenecks, good sightlines for supervision and the requirement that durability of construction should be consistent with attractiveness of the finished building. (HSC, 1990).

(v). Security procedures.

In Oakland, California students and teachers practise bullet drill "in which they move away from windows and crouch under their desks" (Guetzloe, 1989). In New York city, security guards patrol the corridor in the central schools, teachers have access to panic buttons, students are body searched on arrival, CCTV cameras scan the corridors, and there are metal detectors in the entrances, with electronically controlled doors. In "Controlling crime in schools; A manual for administrators" Vestermark and Blauvelt (1978) provided a checklist to identify school security problems and serve as the basis for safety policies. These policies included preventive measures (e.g. security devices and personnel) as well as guidelines for handling crises such as riots or hostage-taking (echoes of Tremenheere).

It is clearly important to identify the extent, nature, time and location of

any security problems. For instance, there is little point in making the perimeter secure if the aggressors come from within the school. However, the justification for more security procedures often stems from their failure. For instance, the introduction of security devices and personnel may themselves adversely the student - teacher relationship, remove responsibility from the teacher, and act as a violence trigger or psychological challenge to the more some alienated students. In turn, the worsening security climate may become the justification for more and better security devices. There is some support for this point of view in the "Safe schools" study, which found that security devices could be effective if supported by effective "governance" and leadership. In the absence of such "leadership", "reliance on technical measures can result in a continuing battle between disaffected students and beleagured security forces."(NIE, 1978). It is not entirely flippant to suggest that if such devices appear to work, you probably did not need them in the first place.

In the UK, the Health and Safety Commission noted that one Further Education College succesfully overcame an intruder problem by the introduction of security cards for staff and students, and erecting high perimeter fences. (HSC, 1990).

There is no evidence that any of the other measures discussed here have yet been employed in British schools, although there has been some discussion about the value of introducing an identity card system in some schools to monitor absence from school and lessons.

It is difficult to see how teachers can give of their best, or children develop and learn, under some of the fearful conditions and security responses outlined in this section.

(vii). Curriculum issues.

The major reports on secondary education in Britain (DES,1963 and 1989) and school safety in the USA (NIE,1978) agree that the relevance and level of the curriculum in relation to the age, ability and aspirations of the students has a major impact on commitment to school and behaviour in the classroom. Classroom management techniques will not be effective if pupils do not see the relevance of what they are expected to do, or if activities are pitched at an inappropriate level of difficulty.

More recently attention has been given to the "curriculum" of conflict resolution. One approach is through Social Skills Training groups, in which small groups of students are taught a problem solving approach to the difficulties they encounter in school, (Cartledge and Milburn, 1986; Cross and Goddard, 1988).

Other schools have introduced "mediation" techniques and strategies, and trained students to act as "campus ombudsmen". (A full review of the literature on mediation in schools is contained in Marshall, 1987). "Peacemaking; The management of confrontation" is a similar curriculum based approach for schools. This is a three stage model covering crisis prevention, crisis intervention and crisis resolution (Commanday, 1984).

A prime aim of both SST and mediation is to increase the individual's repertoire of skills, and therefore choices, when confronted with a conflict

availability to students and staff are characteristics of principals in schools which have made a dramatic turnaround from periods of violence." (Ibid).

The Elton Committee similarly endorsed the role of the headteacher and senior management; "Our evidence indicates universal agreement that the quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and senior management team ...is crucial to the school's success in promoting good behaviour." Regardless of management style, Elton found consistent themes ran through effective school management, viz; "..clear aims for teachers and pupils and good staff morale and teamwork. Effective leadership tends to produce a positive atmosphere and a general sense of duty." Elton makes a distinction between the personal

situation. The assumption being made is that violence may result from a lack of alternative negotiating techniques, and that a culture in which physical aggression is the normal response to conflict will in turn escalate, not reduce violence. (Further strategies for incorporating violence analysis and reduction as a topic into the normal school curriculum are described by Diem 1982). Placing social skills training and conflict resolution firmly within the school curriculum helps students and teachers to develop their own skills in managing difficult situations and minimising the likelihood of violence.

More specialised curriculum programmes have been formulated for use with highly aggressive adolescents whose violent behaviour has resulted in their placement in residential schools (for examples, see Glick and Goldstein, 1987).

(vii). Teacher training.

There seems a large measure of agreement that the initial training of teachers includes too little coverage of classroom management techniques. Reid describes a study of 4,350 graduate student teachers in which 50% considered their PGCE course gave them "some" insight into classroom discipline, and 29% reported gaining "little or no insight". During their teaching practices the majority of these students reported problems in only one area: being unable to control difficult classes. (Reid, 1988). The Elton Report described a survey of probationary teachers which found that "A substantial number of new teachers felt that discipline and control had not been adequately dealt with on their courses" (DES, 1989). The Health and Safety Commission, reviewing violence in the education sector, urged that "Training should be provided for all levels of staff who may face violence in their work", and offered proposals about the content of such courses. (HSC, 1990)

The UK is not unique in this respect. Writers in America have argued that "teacher training should be re-structured to meet the demands of the job" (Calabrese, 1986). Ciscell pointed out that lack of appropriate training and planning results in some teachers assaults by parents, and he provided colourful and practical advice on the management of potentially hostile meetings. ("Parents should be treated like an 800lb Gorilla. Where do they want to sit? Wherever they want!" Ciscell, 1990). Evans and Evans (1985) found that "normal classroom problems can be escalated" by inappropriate teacher management. Creton el al (1989), describing work in the Netherlands, also underlined the dangers of "escalation" and the consequences this has for teacher training and support.

(viii). School management.

By far and away the greatest concensus within the studies is on the importance of the management of the school, and especially the leadership qualities and

SECTION FOUR.

An Alternative Framework for the Analysis of Violence to Teachers.

The conceptual uncertainties embedded within the language we have been using may well account for much of diversity of theory and data about violence in the education sector. Bearing in mind these points, current incidence measures seem crude.

(1). Pupil management and concepts of violence.

An alternative framework is to apply a problem solving approach not to the study of violence, and then looking for environmental correlates, but to the analysis of the pupil - management tasks teachers carry out. Table A. presents one possible model.

Table A.
Levels of teacher pupil management.

1 One-to-one.	2 Small gps.	3 Class gps.	4 Large gps.	5 Incidental gps.
individs.	4-6.	15 - 35.	40 upwards.	3 - 300?
interviews.	learning gps.	may inc small gps.	Assembly.	hallways.
teaching.	in-class.		corridors.	cloakrooms.
pastoral.	withdrawal.		playground.	corridors.
			sports.	playground.
			field trips.	bike shed.
			camps.	carpark.

It is immediately apparent from the above table that an individual teacher has greater control over levels one and two, and far less in respect of four and five. As soon as he/she moves beyond small group settings, the influence of whole school policies, management strategies, school ethos and pupil attitudes become increasingly powerful. The management of small groups on a daily basis is of itself a subtle process, involving overt and covert issues of power, hierarchy and control. Very different skills are required for individual pastoral or teaching work with pupils, or for controlling the very large groups, or encounters with the "accidental" groupings of pupils at level Five.

While other professions share some of these personnel management responsibilities, teaching is unusual in its range. Social workers, doctors and even the police regularly carry out individual work with their respective

clients or patients. Few, if any, of the professions have responsibility for the management of the larger groups faced by teachers as part of their day to day work. Within the police or armed forces management of large groups of personnel is within a very tight, explicit disciplinary code. The sports, leisure or entertainments industries, devolve crowd/group management to stewards and marshalls. It is not a task for the performers, although there is increasing interest on the effects performers or sportspersons may have on crowd behaviour. (For instance, the police have begun prosecuting footballers whose language or behaviour may constitute a "breach of the peace", or be deemed "inflamatory".) Attendance at public events is also an act of individual choice, a privilege for which the spectators/audience pay.

Even a relatively crude management "template", as Table A, gives us a rather different way in to the study of violence. For instance, while Elton rightly stressed the need for better training for teachers in classroom management techniques, classrooms are but one of the interpersonal situations, each of which requires different skills, that teachers are called upon to handle.
There are a number of other pertinent and important ways in which teaching differs from other person-centred occupational groups. For instance, pupils are required by law to attend school, five days a week, until they reach the age of sixteen. And while teachers are paid for attending, pupils are not. If pupils refuse to attend, they may be taken into care, and their parents fined. Unlike other domains, disaffected or uninterested clients cannot "vote with their feet" and remove their custom. This has clear implications for the management of some groups of adolescents. (Imagine a scenario in which pupils were paid for attending, and teachers were taken to court if they did not.)
In considering violence, working with children, as opposed to adults or a cross section of the population, challenges current working definitions of occupational violence. For instance, the Education Service Advisory Committee (ESAC) of the Health and Safety Commission, referring specifically to violence in the education sector, gave the following definition: "Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted by a student or member of the public in circumstances arising out of the course of his or her employment." (HSC,1990). How applicable are the concepts of "abuse, threats or assault" in the context of a teacher's relationship with pupils? Wayson makes the point that there is a distinction between "I am going to kill you" from an angry nine year old, and the same threat from a parent or High School football player. (Wayson, 1985). The element of "assault", with its "unlawful" overtones, also presents difficulties, as we shall consider in the following paragraph. Clearly a number of the conditions and criteria in the ESAC definition do not import readily into teach, and require further analysis.

An important, distinguishing characteristic of the teacher's work is the concept of "loco parentis." This provides the legal basis for the authority teachers assume in respect of the children who are entrusted to them. However, an authority based on such a parental model immediately differentiates teachers from most other professions and occupations. Whilst teachers vary in their interpretation of this concept, the notion of "loco parentis" complicates the issue of violence by framing it in a parental context. Whilst parents may be on the receiving end of some of the actions we have been discussing, they do not necessarily see them as "unlawful", nor as "assaults." Teachers may also retain similar misgivings about the use of such terms, which will again influence survey data and recording systems based on an unelaborated adherence to the ESAC definition.

(2). Psychological approaches to the problems of studying violence.

While some studies have espoused a social science or specifically sociological perspective, virtually all the data collection has been atheoretical (although many of the writers have clearly held their own, not always private, personal theories.) Granted that violence is clearly an interpersonal event, the relative lack of published psychological work in the area of violence towards teachers is an unhelpful omission. However, many of the concepts being developed to study violence in other fields have clear implications for schools.

We have already considered, in some detail, the semantic confusion that confounds so many of the educational studies with regard to the nature, definition and incidence of violence. Forgas (1986) uses a cognitive approach to study our personal theories, or "implicit representations" of violence. He points out that we know relatively little about the distinctions people make between aggressive incidents as they are experienced in every-day life. In fact, whether or not a particular incident is construed as "aggressive" is not a simple process. Aggressive encounters occur in social situations, which are themselves structured by repetetive routines. These routines govern many of relationships and social transactions. Forgas is particularly interested in our implicit cognitive representations of these daily interactions, or "social episodes". We share a concensual representation about what constitutes such an episode, and about the rules, norms and expectations that shape it. If we translate this into a classroom, and apply it to the interactions between teachers and pupils, we can recognise that while each party may have different "norms" about, say, acceptable noise levels, nevertheless they do "negotiate" some form of "truce". Breakwell (1989) reported that the caring professions often operated a norm of "tolerable agression" in respect of what they might deem acceptable from patients. Thus nurses might expect the occasional physical blow from a patient in severe pain, or one who is mentally disturbed, while teachers might tolerate a certain amount of jostling or "horse play" from children, as might residential social workers. Other more mundane norms evolve which significantly govern social interctions. For instance, a number of studies have pointed out that junior school teachers are not primarily stressed by violence, nor by fears of it, but by the accumulation of small, repetitive demands from pupils throughout the day. (Houghton et al, 1988, Wheldhall and Merrett, 1988) And, Forgas points out, it requires a Herculean effort for any one individual to alter the group norm, the consequences of which may not be fully anticipated.

From the work of Green (1990) we can also reasonably expect levels of cognitive development to be a factor in the young person's growing elaboration of schemata about meaning in social episodes. Some of the difficulties researchers into school-based violence have encountered may well derive from the fact that teachers perceptions are particularly sophisticated and compounded by their assessment of the pupil's development level, and the implication that has for the pupil's understanding of "intentions", norms and social rules. For instance, in the individual interviews carried out for the Elton Committee, teachers had great difficulty in answering questions about violence they had experienced without referring to the particular social episode in which the incident occurred, and the meaning they attached to that episode. For one, a physical encounter was not construed as "violent" as there was no apparent intent to hurt. For another, the rules that governed his/her interpretation of the situation meant that being "deliberately elbowed" out of the way was not

seen as physical violence. Yet for a third person, the incident was seen as "physically violent", even though no physical contact was made, because it involved the threat of violence whilst holding a potentially dangerous implement. In other words, although we do share schemeta about the nature of the episodes, we also formulate our own individual, implicit perceptions, and both aspects are strongly, but of course not totally, situational. Individual differences are clearly implicated, and in most of the research conducted in schools so far, we know as little about the psychological profiles of the attackers (or their victims) as we do about the context in which the violence occurred.

The Elton interviews also highlight two other important psychological findings. The first is that "violent" social episodes do not necesssarily match with "crimes" as defined by the legal system. Secondly, the apparent severity of the incident is not necessarily the most important attribute we apply to aggressive encounters. Forgas describes the shooting of muggers on the New York subway by a self-styled vigilante. Initially a folk hero, he was nevertheless arrested. Legal and social representations of his acts clearly did not match. However, the social concensus shifted as it emerged that at least one of the muggers was shot in the back, another was shot when already wounded and incapable of self-defence, and that the vigilante had made remarks indicating that his actions had been premeditated.

The case has been consistently made in this study that we know very little about the context in which the school based violent incidents occurr, the nature of the previous relationship between the parties concerned, nor their ability, training, or other personal qualities which will contribute to the way in which they avoid, resolve, manage or escalate potentially violent situations. Green (1990) has drawn attention to the range of significant environmental and interpersonal variables which may contribute to violent situations. While we do need to identify and study the variables and antecedents relating to violent incidents, these factors need to be incorporated within a model that encompasses the significance of social representations and situational meanings. Finally, the concept of social episodes and their representation illuminates much of what is happening in the events listed in Table A.

Approaches to the study of violence which do not take into account the subtle and dynamic classification systems that we operate when making such meanings, and about which we know relatively little, are unlikely to make sense of the data they produce, nor to generate effective action plans.

A research agenda therefore needs to include an analysis of the meanings attached to violence episodes by both teachers and pupils as a way out of the semantic confusion, and to provide a basis for generating the right sort of research questions. As has been argued, teaching is a particularly complex activity, involving unusual understanding and management skills in interpersonal relationships and group behaviour, across a wide range of situations, for a wide range of different purposes . The approach being advocated offers a link between teachers, who know most about the practice of their profession, but find the issue of pupil violence does not fit easily into many educational theories or philosophies, and psychologists who, in their studies of violence in other occupational settings are producing relevant findings and concepts, which are not currently accessible to teachers.

SECTION FIVE

Action Agenda.

A. Research questions

(i). Definitions and social meanings.

Following the conceptual discussion in Section Four, and criticisms relating to the accuracy, reliability and semantic significance of current data on violence in schools, there is a clear need for analysis of the nature of violence in schools. While schools can and should initiate their own enquiries and surveys, such studies will be more effective, more generalisable and more outcome based once the conceptual framework has been further developed. One logical step forward is the fusion of the skills of the teachers with those of educational and/or social psychologists in a joint programme of enquiry. Research in university departments is often criticised within schools as being remote and detached from day-to-day classroom teaching, and the onus is on psychologists to work closely with teachers in producing a realistic framework for research into and analysis of violence in schools. One existing link between schools and universities is the research projects carried out by trainee educational psychologists (ie recently practising teachers) as part of their professional training. Such projects could readily include school based studies into the issue of violence.

(ii). Record keeping and data collection.

Current incidence figures relating to violence to teachers are clearly unsatisfactory. Within the framework outlined in Section Four, there is a need for more accurate figures and records, based on agreed definitions, allowing comparisons within and across Local Authorities. A comprehensive, understandable account of the processes underlying violence in schools may not emerge immediately. Nevertheless, the model of data collection presented in the "Safe schools" study indicates the wealth of useful information that can be garnered from the answers to such atheoretical, but "problem solving" questions as to the "where?", "when?", "how much?" and "how often?" of school violence. Individual schools should therefore be encouraged to review their own needs and circumstances. Above all, the Local Authority should monitor the position in respect of all schools, as advocated by the HSC (1990).

Whilst the future for Local Authorities is in some doubt following the increasing shift from local to central (or private) funding of education and other services, the need for more accurate information about the existence, nature and incidence of violence in our schools still remains. Whichever regional or national bodies may emerge to take over LEA functions should be required to take responsibility to monitor this.

B. An agenda for intervention.

One model to help organisations review their own needs and plan appropriate actions is already being developed in other settings (Cox, Leather, Farnsworth, 1991). The major characteristics of this are described in

Table B. This model can be used to distinguish between action and responsibilities at the individual (teacher) and organisational (school/LEA) levels.

Table B.

Preventing and managing violent episodes.

	1. Planning risk reduction.	2. Resolving conflict.	3. Managing the aftermath.
Individual.			
Organisation.			

The above model operates along a time dimension, presuming a period of build-up, in which the risks of actual violence may be reduced (or escalated) by factors within the individual(s), or the organisation. Managing a violent episode similarly has consequences for both the individual and the system. Dealing with the aftermath, the forgotten phase in educational studies, similarly has implications for all parties.

1. Planning risk reduction.

The planning phase deals with prevention, which includes research, management of the psychological and physical environment and training. This starts from answers to school based research questions about the "where, when, how much, how often" already alluded to, and a study of school factors associated with it.

A number of studies have identified training needs (e.g. "Safe schools" and Elton; see discussion in Section Three.) There is general agreement on the importance of the following areas.

For management;	leadership decision making consultation skills systems development personnel/human resource management.
For teachers;	mediation techniques conflict resolution groupwork skills classroom management
For pupils;	mediation techniques conflict resolution social skills

An important aspect of this approach for teachers and pupils is that it shifts the emphasis on violence away from its physical actuality in the corridors, empty classrooms and "no-go" areas, and brings it right into the school organisation and curriculum. The training, educational and developmental needs of both staff and pupils are considered. Responses, to violence, or to other school based concerns, can be generated on a whole school basis, as opposed to within the confines of the aggressor-bully-victim context.

Relevant training, which is translated into practice and procedures within the school offers all particants support, greater involvement in decision-making and an enhanced repertoire of techniques and strategies for preventing situations escalating towards the unmanageable or violent.

2. Resolving conflict.

Returning to the timeline concept, the key ingredients of resolution, (ie, training and planning), should occur at an early stage and, ideally, minimise or eliminate physically aggressive encounters. However some degree of violence does seem to be a characteristic of the "condition humane" in our own and previous times. Planning which is based on sound knowledge of the location and circumstances of violence can improve its management, and minimise its escalation. For instance, teachers who are physically isolated in their work, teaching in blocks not designed to facilitate joint work or support from colleagues may find their vulnerability reduced by changes to the interior design of the "workplace", or in the teaching practices and organisation of timetables and teaching groups. Further, training can help teachers lessen the personal consequences when violence cannot be readily controlled and they need to rely on personal and organisational strategies to preserve their own safety.

3. Managing the aftermath.

The major gap in the studies that have been reviewed is any consideration of the personal and psychological needs of teachers who have been victims of violence. For teachers this is a particularly acute assault on their self-esteem. Teachers generally opt for their profession out of an interest in, and feeling of empathy for, the educational needs of young people. Their work on an individual or group basis with pupils is founded on a confidence in their ability to manage the learning situation by their personal psychological skills. Somewhere within the concept of the teaching relationship is the notion that teachers respect and like, and are generally respected and liked by their pupils. Any physical assault has more profound consequences for the self-image and professional confidence of teachers than for most other professional groups. Apart from special cases such as prison warders or psychiatric nurses, few victims in other other occupations have such a close, identifiable relationship with their potential aggressors.

It is therefore disappointing that dealing with the aftermath of violence has generally been confined to ways of "punishing" the (pupil) aggressor, rather than supporting the (teacher) victim. There is pressure for the pupil to be suspended or permanently excluded from the school, or prosecuted in the courts. There has been no equivalent clamour from the LEAs, unions or schools for supporting the teacher, other than through the courts. It is a very open question whether "supporting" the teacher by a legal prosecution of the pupil is genuinely supportive, or whether it adds further, unwelcome, public levels of stress.

Dealing with the aftermath can be construed as operating on a continuum of need. All teachers who have experienced violence should of course have access to legal and union advice. However policies and procedures which take control out of the hands of the teacher, at the very time when s/he may be having doubts about personal and professional adequacy may well have damaging consequences for the individual, and deter other teachers from reporting such episodes in the future.

Counselling and peer support, already introduced into other settings for the victims of violence, seem a logical and necessary facility for staff. Since teachers provide individual pastoral support for pupils, it seems paradoxical that neither schools nor LEAs provide such help for staff. It is a curious anomaly that no support or professional help is available for teachers experiencing a personal crisis, either work or home based. It is difficult to see how teachers can deliver a fully pastoral, caring service for pupils within a system which does not offer one to them.

Moving further along the continuum of need, we should not forget those teachers identified in the studies and union reports who are regularly and severly victimised, and for whom the only choices seem to be legal redress, retirement on the grounds of ill-health or resignation. If we reframe seriously violent experiences in the light of what we know about post-traumatic stress disorder, it may be possible to generate a more supportive climate and set of option choices for the relatively few but seriously distressed victims. Opportunities for retraining, teaching a different age levels, or help in developing a different role within or outside the education service are seldom available, except, curiously, as part of disciplinary procedures for teachers labelled as "failing".

For the school as an organisation, quite apart from the help in the provision of facilities outlined above, management of the aftermath should also include a review of the circumstances of any violent incident, and of the policies, practicies and procedures that might have contributed to it, along with any previously unidentified training needs.

Teaching is not easy. Numerous researchers have identified the cumulative, daily, exhausting stressors in teaching (Cox and Brockley,1984, Galloway et al 1984, Wheldhall and Merrett, 1988, Kyriacou,1989). In such circumstances it is surprising that levels of violence are not higher than those reported. But it is equally true that any succesful approach to eliminating violence in our schools needs to look at the total demands on teachers arising from the task of managing pupils' learning. However schools are also, and probably always have been, deeply influenced by political and social factors. It therefore seems appropriate to close with a further quotation from a politician, again describing his own experience of serving as a teacher;

> "...when I began teaching in 1950, after active service in the war and four years training, my first two terms in a Lancashire secondary modern were a battle for survival compared with which periods in the war were like a holiday camp." (Boyson, 1970).

Section Six.

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