Editorial

The Privatisation of Education

One of the issues touched upon in the article in this number with the title 'The Illusion of Choice' is that of the creeping privatisation of education in this country. Tony Blair, Alan Milburn, Charles Clarke and John Reid all seem to believe that it matters little *who* actually delivers education and health, provided there is some evidence of efficiency and economic savings. Yet, quite apart from concerns regarding the erosion of the public service ethos, it hardly seems axiomatic that the involvement of the private sector *does* mean success, efficiency and public approval. And we surely have a right to be concerned about some of the individuals and companies who benefit from the Government's patronage and largesse.

At the beginning of October 2004, it was confirmed that Britain's biggest out-sourcing company, Capita, had been awarded a £177m five-year contract – the largest in education so far – to manage the Government's twin strategies for improving standards of reading and writing in the country's primary and secondary schools.

In a story carried by *The Guardian* with the heading 'Capita's school deal under fire' (2 October 2004), the Department for Education and Skills said that, in assuming complete responsibility for the national primary and Key Stage 3 strategies from April 2005, Capita Strategic Education Services would be expected to help ministers hit their targets for literacy and numeracy. (It is interesting to note that primary schools have still *not* met the levels promised for 2002, an issue on which both David Blunkett and Estelle Morris said they would resign as Education Secretary). The new contract will involve hiring thousands of reading and maths consultants to 'advise' schools and local education authorities on how to deal with 'under-achieving pupils' and how to raise the test scores at ages 11 and 14.

Capita itself has been blamed for the botched introduction of the Criminal Records Bureau – which caused the system for checking the background of new teachers and other staff working with children to break down in the Autumn of 2002 – and for the problematic administration of London's congestion charge in its early days. And the Government seems intent on contracting work out to private sector firms like Capita while the DfES is busy shedding thousands of civil servants' jobs.

Phil Willis, the Liberal Democrat education spokesperson, has said that the award of the new contract also poses issues about conflicts of interest, since Capita is understood to be in the frame as a potential sponsor of a new city academy.

Which brings us neatly to what is probably the most controversial policy in the Government's recently-published *Five-Year Strategy for Children and Learners*: the proposed rapid expansion of the city academy programme. It is intended that the number of such academies – 17 in September 2004 – will have increased to 200 by the year 2010. This is, of course, all part of New Labour's project for enhancing choice, diversity and customer satisfaction in the secondary sector.

Writing in *The Guardian* on the 9 July 2004, Francis Beckett pointed out that the Government's new big idea for education in the form of the city academy has turned out to be the one that the Conservatives invented 18 years ago and then abandoned as a failure shortly afterwards. It is even run by the same man: Cyril Taylor, the entrepreneur appointed by the Thatcher Government in 1986 to create 30 City Technology Colleges.

New Labour has not made the Conservatives' mistake of asking for too much money from the schools' putative sponsors, settling on a figure of around £2m. For this relatively small sum of money, less than a fifth of the initial cost, the business virtually owns the school and acquires the right to put its name and logo on the signboard at the school entrance. It can decide which specialism the school chooses to adopt, and, within the increasingly flexible timetable imposed by the National Curriculum, which subjects are to be taught to older students. It can even impose a particular ideological slant on aspects of the teaching.

In the schools controlled by Sir Peter Vardy, an evangelical Christian who believes in creationism, Darwinism is taught *not* as a science, but as just *one* theory (undoubtedly misguided) of the way the world came into being. It was reported in *The Times* on the 24 July 2004 that this 'millionaire' car dealer had arranged for a document entitled *Christianity and Curriculum* to be available on the website of Emmanuel College in Gateshead which suggested, among other things, that Britain could have been saved from an invasion by Adolf Hitler in the Second World War by an act of God. This document emphasised the importance of using 'a frame of reference in which God is sovereign' when teaching history, going on to say that: 'in this context, it becomes important to consider why Hitler paused at the English Channel in 1940 before embarking on an invasion of Britain. Could it be that God was calling a halt to this march of evil?'

Sir Peter Vardy was one of the affluent individuals featured in a front-page article in *The Independent* of the 8 July 2004 headed: 'Should these people be running state schools?' Others included: Graham Able, the headteacher of Dulwich College in south London, charging fees of up to £20,000 a year; Sir Frank Lowe, the agent for such leading sports stars as Anna Kournikova, Mark Philippousis and Gareth Southgate; and Peter Sutherland, Head of the global investment bank Goldman Sachs. All these individuals seem likely to be running one or more city academies by the end of the decade. The question posed by *The Independent* surely deserves an answer; though it is difficult to see how the Government's policy can be described as anything other than indefensible.

Clyde Chitty

The West African Supply Teacher as 'Other' in London Secondary Schools

KABBIE KOROMA

Kabbie Koroma is a supply teacher from Sierra Leone who carried out the research on which this article is based as part of the work towards an MA degree at Goldsmiths College

Many educational researchers writing on the subject of identity and the issues of marginality in the educational setting (see, for example, Paechter, 1998; Osler, 1997; Troyna, 1994; Gaine and George, 1999) have pointed out that in the educational context there is a multiplicity of 'Others' that are marginalised and stigmatised because of their personal, individual and social identities. This seems to confirm the view that in many ways education can support the 'othering' of certain groups of people (for example: female teachers; black or female pupils and so on) who are disadvantaged because of some social constructs about their sexuality, race and class. Many educational critics have condemned the ways in which some people experience discrimination and social exclusion in the school setting; and factors that cause them are being questioned and challenged in many educational quarters. For example, with regard to the 'othering' of girls, Paechter (1998) has challenged the western traditions that used to believe that due to their gender, girls were what Shakespeare would call 'the weaker vessels'; therefore, they were intellectually and physically inferior to boys. Taking a deconstructionist approach, like many educational theorists (for example: Gillborn, 1990; Osler, 1997), she proposes a framework from which we can question unchallenged assumptions, perceptions and myths about the inferiority and the inequality of certain groups of people that are marginalised and cast to a subordinate level by the hegemonic social (including educational) forces within a school setting. It is in the light of her analytical approach and framework that I write about the ways the educational system in London forms the identities of the West African supply teachers (especially those from former British colonies like Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia) in South East London secondary schools.

I intend to argue that the London educational setting perpetuates racism in the formation of the identities of this category of teachers. I examine the ways in which racism is perpetuated and used as the main source of the discrimination, marginalisation and stigmatisation (or 'othering') of the West African supply teachers in South East London secondary schools. My focus in this essay is the institutionalisation of racism in these schools and how this has been affecting the work of West African supply teachers who are made to conceive of their identity and their status as inferior to that of the permanent staffs in these London secondary schools.

As a supply teacher from Sierra Leone, I draw on school-based practices and my own experiences as well as those of my colleagues to examine critically the dynamics of racism in the supply teaching profession and how these have led to the manifest disadvantages we have been facing in the South East London secondary school setting. In my research I interviewed ten West African supply teachers in order to highlight the 'deeper' picture of racism that they face in the South East London secondary school setting. The case studies share similar themes; therefore, I have selected only six examples of these testimonies, which I shall include later on in this article. For ethical reasons, I shall use pseudonyms when referring to the names of the teachers interviewed. I limit myself to South East London because I live and teach there.

I also refer to educational theories and discourses to examine the reasons and question the factors that often lead to the negative labelling and stereotyping of the West African supply teachers in these schools. While exploring the implications these may have for educational purposes I also consider the possibilities of altering this situation.

Supply Teaching

Supply teaching is a fairly recent phenomenon created by a British educational system that has often faced crises of teacher shortages since the Second World War. Consequently, the teachers who opted for this kind of teaching are now considered to belong to a different class with a set of different identities that are given less status and social value by the educational system that formed them in the first place. From educational perspectives, this has huge implications, especially when certain powerful forces (for example, the school governors, head teachers and senior teachers) in the school setting seem to mask the disadvantages experienced by the supply teachers. Before I delve into these implications, I want to write about who supply teachers are and what supply teaching is all about.

Almost every primary or secondary school pupil in London knows what a supply teacher is, because, owing to the shortage of teachers in London, a lot of their teachers are on supply duties in their schools. However, some of the definitions of supply teachers and supply teaching have particular meanings, which by implication are suggestive of the 'Otherness' of their identities.

Chris Shilling defines supply teachers as 'casual, occasional staff who belong to a reservoir of occasional labour … these supply teachers work when a school's permanent staffs are, for whatever reason, absent. They are temporary substitutes, temporary replacements for full time staff … and once in a school, they can be expected to cover

for different subject lessons in the course of a day and frequently have to adjust to working in different schools over the course of a school week or term' (Shilling, 1991, p.4). In other words, supply teachers can be on short or long term placements in a school. Shilling also maintains that these teachers are a 'taken-for-granted' minority who are placed on the margins of the schooling system and work for 'survival in a marginal situation'. Thus, supply teaching is 'a highly demanding form of labour that is 'second-class' and 'subordinate' in status. Shilling stresses that supply teachers are an 'especially disadvantaged section of the teaching profession …' in which they are classed as inferior. I argue that as Other, the West African supply teachers are the most 'disadvantaged' and 'marginalised' in the teaching profession in London.

To sum up, due to the huge demand for teachers in London the educational system has encouraged the formation of a new breed of teachers labelled 'supply teachers' who have a distinctive set of identities that are considered inferior in terms of status and class. It is in these terms that the West African supply teachers are placed on the lowest rungs of the teaching profession ladder in London.

Traditionally, according to Shilling (1991), supply teachers were employed by the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) as a way of providing short-term cover to schools. As a result of the increase of staff shortages and in-service training for recent curricular developments after the 1988 Education Act was introduced, there was a growing demand for specialist teachers in maths, science, English, modern foreign languages, design and technology and information and computer technology. Since the late eighties and throughout the nineties there have been growing problems of teacher shortages in these specialist subjects in London secondary schools. Thus, the LEAs could not deal by themselves with the use and employment of supply teachers. Consequently, this led to the formation of many Supply Teaching Agencies in London.

As the recruitment drive reached a fever-pitched level and as the problems became serious, LEAs and Supply Agencies started employing supply teachers from overseas to fill in the teaching vacancies in the London secondary schools. Even though the media described this as a 'sticking plaster solution of using overseas supply teachers' (see, for example, *The Guardian*, 24 April 2002; *The Times Educational Supplement*, 17 October 2003), LEAs like Croydon and Southwark, Churches such as the Church of England and the Catholic Church, as well as Supply Agencies like Time Plan and ASA Education have been employing hundreds of supply teachers from former British colonies like India, Pakistan, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Jamaica and the West Indies. Governments in these developing countries have condemned the 'poaching' of their badly needed teachers (as well as nurses) who are being offered better-paid employment by developed countries like the United Kingdom where everything is not always rosy. For example, in the South East London secondary school setting where they are often both 'loathed and desired' (Paechter, 1998, p. 6) West African supply teachers experience all sorts of racial discrimination due to their regional background and skin colour.

Racist myths and impressions about the inferiority of the West Africans' social, professional, intellectual and physical identities have been embedded for centuries in the British psyche. In other words 'scientific racism' and 'social racism' still exist in the British educational setting, and in order to grasp a clear understanding of the dynamics of racism in the schools I shall refer briefly to historical factors.

Historical Background

For more than two hundred years now biological and geographical factors have determined the racial categorisation of people by European anthropologists. At first, the European colonialists believed that the West Africans were primitive and backward 'savages'. Therefore, it was the 'moral duty' of the Europeans to civilise and refine these uncultured Africans' (Conklin, 1998). These actions were justified by the media, which referred to the scientific findings and theories of the European scientists and anthropologists that portrayed stereotyped images of the West Africans as backward and inferior people. As such they became 'objects of study' of 'colonial science' with respect to who they were and how they behaved.

In reality, according to many historians, this was a ploy with a hidden agenda that led to a 'political, social, economic and cultural imperialism and subjugation' of the colonies and the indigenous people (see, for example, Chipman, 1989, p. 229). Moreover, assumptions about physical and mental differences were conflated so that supposed scientific *fact* was used as an explanation of and justification for the exploitation and subordination of blacks by whites. In the European historical context, Michel Foucault called these processes that transformed humans in this way or manner 'objectification'. The exotic Other always comes out of this operation (the constitution of the other) as an oddity lacking something – rationality, control, decorum and propriety – and exceeding in something else such as violence, brute force and barbarism. This 'science' portrayed a picture of a dichotomy between the modern dynamic nations of Europe and the traditional stagnated (West) African tribes.

Based on the assumptions mentioned above, the idea of racial superiority became firmly embedded in Western Society, and today it still feeds the assumptions about the qualitative distinctions of culture, skills, education and training. In other words, as West Africans, we are still considered to be inferior, intellectually, academically and professionally, to white Europeans. It is obvious that in a predominantly white society the factors that often cause these manifest disadvantages and discrimination faced by the West African supply teachers are firmly rooted in the British social system that has socially constructed stereotyped, racist perceptions or assumptions about the collective inferior identity of the West Africans in general. As Ien Ang says, 'racial categories obviously do not exist outside particular social and cultural contexts, but are thoroughly framed by or within them' (Ang, 2000, p. 29).

Even though the colonialists left as they granted so-called independence to West Africa, the Western print and electronic media still perpetuate the theory of racial superiority. It is unfortunate that the media's portrayal adopts and perpetuates these stereotypical social constructs to keep alive the assumptions that black West Africans are inferior. The power of the media and the pervasiveness of stock white cultural images of (West) Africa do not only construct negative stereotyped assumptions of this region, but also help to reproduce and legitimise them. Moreover,

thanks to the media, the London educational system institutionalises these assumptions and social constructs in the secondary school setting. Barbara McKeller, writing about her experiences of 'otherness' as a black female teacher in England, says that in most English schools '… it is often the physical and visual differences which are given prominence and then integrated via cultural and media representations to reproduce the ideologies that maintain the idea of significance difference. An example is the assumption that European standards in beauty are the ones by which to judge all others.' (McKeller, 1989, p. 73).

Structural Position in the School Setting

Although there is extensive research on the issues of racism as experienced by black children in school (see, for example, Gaine & George, 1999; Gillborn, 1990, 1995), comparatively little has been written about the overt racism experienced by the West African supply teachers in the London secondary school setting. The literature which focuses on black teachers' experiences of racism in their careers (Osler, 1997; Troyna, 1994) does not lay much emphasis on the degree of racist stereotyping and marginalisation of the West African supply teachers. In the South East London secondary school setting, black teachers in general are categorised racially and therefore face a lot of discrimination and marginalisation. I would argue that today, compared to the recently-arrived black supply teachers from West Africa, the black or white supply teachers (born and brought up here) command considerable respect and influence (and are therefore less marginalised) in the South East London secondary school setting. However, in most cases compared with their white counterparts, the black British teachers, whether on supply duty or permanent employment, command less respect and influence in South East London secondary schools. The majority of the permanent staff (Head teachers, Heads of Departments and senior teachers) are white. From an educational context it is a cause for concern as most secondary schools in the South East of London have a larger number of black pupils from West Africa and the Caribbean than do most cities in the UK. Therefore, one would expect these schools to have a considerable number of permanently employed teachers from the pupils' black minority backgrounds. Unfortunately, this was not what I discovered in these secondary schools. In fact, what I discovered was that some of the West African teachers who had been initially refused permanent teaching posts by the London school authorities, found placements in these schools through private teaching agencies that employed them as supply teachers.

What is obvious in these schools though is that issues of power/race and prejudice/power have been institutionalised. In other words, white teachers who belong to the hegemonic group that has been accorded more power, status, influence and social privilege than the teachers from the minority groups in the school system, employ exclusionary practices that disadvantage the West African supply teachers as Other because of their race and regional background. In the London secondary school setting, compared with the other marginalised groups of supply teachers (black, and/or white British) West African supply teachers are particularly disadvantaged, marginalised and stigmatised. In other words, as Paechter notes about girls in schools, the West African supply teachers are 'an even more subordinate

section of a group that is already positioned as Other' in the London secondary schools (Paechter, 1998, p. 19).

From a regional perspective the Western media often categorise West African countries as 'third world' which by implication suggests inferiority and backwardness. The media also try to legitimise these assumptions through their portraits of West African starving children, underdeveloped infrastructures and primitive lifestyles in Western television programmes, newspapers and magazines. So, the 'third worldliness' of West Africa and the blackness of our skin portray us as intellectually and professionally inferior in the London school setting where the teachers, pupils and school authorities also use the media's portraits for referral whenever they discriminate against the West African supply teachers.

Thus, from the above, it is obvious that the hegemonic 'in-groups' in the London educational system use regional and cultural backgrounds as well as physical features and looks as pre-determined references to perpetuate the assumptions of the inferiority and backwardness of the black West Africans in general. Our countries are portrayed as inferior and backward, hence the terms 'third' or 'underdeveloped' world. Worse still, like other ethnic minorities we are sometimes categorised into subordinate 'out-groups' that are labelled as 'illegal immigrants', 'asylum seekers', 'refugees' and 'foreigners' with 'alien cultures'. Therefore, in the London educational setting our identities are treated as a deviant and subsidiary case. These attributes and labelling have got derogatory social meanings in the London secondary schools where it is firmly believed that people from other cultures are inferior.

This creates a lot of social and psychological difficulties for us in this educational setting where we are constantly reminded of our otherness. The following testimonies from the West African supply teachers I interviewed seem to suggest that certain powerful forces (such as school governors and administrators who are often influenced by racial prejudices) have deliberately institutionalised racism in a number of London secondary schools.

Experiencing Otherness: case studies

As I have already said, due to our physical features and regional background we face all forms of racial discrimination and stigmatisation in the London secondary school. Our blackness, physical and visual features are not only the signs of the inescapability of our West Africaness, but also the source of verbal and written racist remarks or slurs from London secondary school pupils, teachers and school authorities. The supply teachers (whose names in this essay are pseudonyms) that I interviewed recalled many cases in which pupils in several schools have often used obscene racist remarks about their identity. I have also experienced similar situations in which some secondary school pupils in some South East London secondary schools have racially ridiculed me. For example, pupils told me several times that I was dirty and 'stinky' like a baboon. They have also asked me questions like 'Do Africans live in trees in the jungles? Do they always go hungry and naked?' which by implication are racist questions.

Miss Olu, a Design and Technology supply teacher from Sierra Leone, said to me:

Sometimes, in my presence the pupils would grunt and chant like monkeys or gorillas to upset or ridicule me. I always try hard to ignore it. In one school I reported the matter to the Deputy Head in charge of supply teachers in the school. When asked the pupils denied that they were referring to me. Since I had no witnesses, there was no further investigation, so the matter was dropped. Later, I was transferred to another school where I experienced similar problems. It has always been frustrating and annoying.

Mrs Camara, a supply teacher of science from the Gambia told me:

In one South East London school where I was sent on long-term placement it took a long time for the pupils to get used to me, or build relationships with me. Some gazed at me, others made rude racial comments, while others wanted to know whether I had been painted black. I felt unwanted, insecure and inadequate.

Discipline, which has always been the source of London teachers' anxieties, nagging and apathy, often got worse whenever the pupils had a West African supply teacher. Many supply teachers unanimously agreed that pupils would become deliberately more uncooperative, abusive, rebellious, defiant, irresponsible and disruptive whenever a West African supply teacher was covering for their regular teacher. I discovered in several London secondary schools that this was not always the case with white supply teachers. This has often led to shock, distress and disbelief because the culture of the West African teacher does not condone excessive indiscipline and rudeness from a pupil who is expected to behave responsibly and respect the rights of other people, especially teachers. Mr Turay, a supply teacher of humanities from Sierra Leone told me that most London secondary school pupils do not respect the rights of black supply teachers from Africa. He said:

In most of the schools where I've taught the pupils would deliberately ignore me if I told them to stop being disruptive and noisy. They would only do so if a white permanent or senior teacher came in to maintain order and discipline in the classroom. I often felt inadequate and disrespected.

Due to racial prejudices, the West Africans' cultural features (dress, tattoos, tribal marks, hairstyles, dialects, accents) are sources of insensitive mockery and ridicule of their identities. For many West African teachers, it would seem that their cultural backgrounds do not pose problems because the British type of education they have acquired has partly succeeded in culturally westernising and assimilating them. In other words, they have partly or completed rejected their African culture, as they have been 'civilised' or 'refined' by western education. Having been thoroughly brainwashed to accept the West that can now 'luxuriate in its own taken-for-granted superiority' (Ang, 2000, p. 22), it would now seem easy for the West African teachers to adjust, adopt, naturalise and be accepted in the British society.

But racial prejudices in Britain are used to make us feel really unwanted. For example, in the schools these prejudices mask the reality that the English we speak is acceptably standard. Due to our West African accent, we are found linguistically wanting and inadequate and therefore this is used as another source of racial discrimination, marginalisation, stigmatisation and exclusion. In other words, our accent, which often solicits the question, 'Where are you from?', also serves as another way of categorising our identity as geographically and socio-linguistically inferior. The experiences of many West African supply teachers seem to confirm the views above as they told me that in the schools where they had been sent on placements, students, teachers and Head teachers ridiculed their accents. Dr Odezugo, a maths teacher from Nigeria with a PhD in engineering/maths from Australia, and a PGCE with QTS from a London university explained to me:

Most of the time when I teach, the children will rudely mock at me by imitating my accent. This is disheartening; but you can't blame me for my inability to speak like an Englishman. It's not only the children; in fact, a head teacher had ridiculed my accent in one of the schools where I was teaching. He laughed hysterically at me when I started introducing myself in the staff room. I felt humiliated when the other members of staff burst out laughing mockingly. I felt so bad that I left the school.

West African supply teachers also face discrimination from black pupils in London secondary schools. Mrs Amonoo, a Ghanaian teacher who got her MA (English Language teaching) from a South London university told me how black pupils had ridiculed her accent. She had faced problems of indiscipline mostly from the black pupils born and brought up in London. She said:

Even though I'm black, many black pupils can't identify with me owing to my African accent. Whenever I speak, they react with a sense of shame and disgust at the third worldliness of my accent. Since the black pupils born and brought up in London have internalised negative stereotypes about black peoples from Africa they make life in the classroom very difficult for me. I don't think they'll behave like this to a white teacher. I feel very unwanted indeed.

Compared to Western education, West African education is also considered to be completely inferior. The supply teachers with qualifications from West Africa are categorised as 'overseas' trained teachers. Despite the fact that our qualifications, training and skills are modelled on the British system of education, these are considered to be inadequate and insufficient and therefore do not qualify us to teach permanently in the secondary schools. I still argue that the racial prejudices perpetuated by the secondary school authorities are used as exclusionary measures to bar the smooth entry of the West African teachers into their schools. As far as the secondary school setting is concerned the West African supply teachers are 'children' or 'barbarians' who are still outside the British citadel of civilisation. This clearly suggests that even as a 'noble savage' the West African supply teacher is for Europeans the epitome of the Other, an uncivilised creature, untouched by reason and so less than fully human.

Even where these supply teachers are employed they are stigmatised and often blamed for 'damaging' school

subjects. *The Guardian* (5 February 2002) commenting on the 2002 Ofsted Annual Report says: 'Reliance on supply teachers is damaging subjects such as modern foreign languages, science and religious education, school inspectors warned today'. And then the searchlight is turned on the overseas supply teachers: 'Ofsted reported problems with the use of supply staff … who, either from this country or abroad, often lack training in, and experience of, national teaching programmes and find it hard to fit into a school's well-established programme of teaching'. The Report further says: 'These overseas supply teachers perform less well than any other category of teachers, with less than half of their lessons being good or better …'

Some supply teachers would disagree with this Report and judge it as biased. As for some West African teachers, they complained that some of the Ofsted inspectors' assessment of their lessons had been tainted with racial prejudices. Mrs Smith, a Sierra Leonean supply teacher of modern foreign languages (MFL), who had been trained in France and Spain where she had also taught for several years, told me that an Ofsted Inspector had asked her where she was from, and when she said Sierra Leone, the Inspector's mood changed completely. Despite employing the required modern resources and methods in MFL teaching during the inspection, her lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory by the Inspector. The Head of Department could not believe it and refused to accept the Inspector's judgement. Mrs Smith was later employed as a permanent teacher in the school.

Thus, from the above case studies I can infer that institutionalised racism is rooted in the London secondary school setting where the West African teachers' physical, educational and professional identities are made to appear racially inferior. Racial prejudices in these schools mask the fact that these teachers from West Africa can be very good and therefore useful to the development of education in London.

Fact or Fallacy?

In Western philosophy, literature and religion blackness, or to be black, is given negative connotative meanings. For example, in the Bible it is associated with the evil, dark, malevolent forces of nature and also the inferior, repulsive and horrific. For these reasons many people like those from South East Asia, even when they are dark in complexion, do not want to be described as black (see Gillborn, 1990; Osler, 1997). Assumptions about physical and mental differences still influence people's prejudices. But recent advances in genetic engineering and the biological sciences have discredited the notion of a separate human race. Thanks to recent researches on the human genes, it has been established that all human beings are members of a single species, *Homo sapiens*, which has no meaningful sub-species.

Thus, to say that I am black, and that therefore every thing about me is inferior is not a scientific or biological fact because there is no link whatsoever between physical phenotypes with one's intellectual, mental and moral characteristics. Therefore, it is a fallacy that blackness is a fixed genetic feature of ignorance, inferiority, backwardness and physical weakness. This belief is an assumption, a social construct fabricated by racist elements to perpetuate the notion of the superiority/inferiority of certain groups of people depending on their skin colour or regional background. But in the London educational setting, even though the idea of biologically distinct human races is now discredited, pupils, teachers and school authorities are still fed with the false notions and assumptions that West African supply teachers are inferior physically, intellectually, culturally and professionally due to their blackness and geographical background.

From the views above, I think it is time to do away with certain social constructs that encourage institutionalised racism in the London educational setting as this may breed suspicion, fear, anxiety and more confusion in the secondary schools. As David Gillborn says: 'Ethno-centric judgements of other's behaviour, culture and experience may lead to misunderstandings and even to conflict and control' (Gillborn, 1990, p. 10).

Conclusion

It is obvious from the above analyses that owing to their race, West African supply teachers experience otherness in the London secondary schools where racism is firmly rooted and perpetuated by the school authorities. Psychologically, it saps the morale and motivation of these teachers, most of whom are contemplating abandoning the teaching profession. The London secondary school setting seems to be a hostile racist environment where these teachers feel unwanted, rejected, oppressed, depressed, isolated, disrespected and unappreciated.

Recent newspaper reports have suggested that without supply teachers the secondary schooling system in London would go down on its knees. Steven Timms, a senior official at the DfES, acknowledges this fact when he says in his foreword to the *Self Study Materials for Supply Teachers*:

Supply Teachers play a very important role in ensuring schools run smoothly and that pupils are consistently well taught … I appreciate fully the challenges facing Supply Teachers in our classroom today. Their flexibility in taking on a range of placements in different schools, often at short notice, is a singular demonstration of professionalism. I want Supply Teachers to be confident that they have the skills and knowledge necessary for the full range of possible circumstances they might encounter.

I am not sure whether this official is aware of the race discrimination many West African teachers are experiencing in secondary schools. Whatever 'challenges' or 'circumstances' he means I only hope that tangible steps (such as educating the pupils, teachers and school authorities about the scientific fallacy of racism) will be put in place to eradicate the race discrimination suffered by black African teachers in general. I think at this point in time when London is still facing a crisis of teacher shortages, the educational authorities should abandon their racial prejudices, take the West African teachers on board, retrain them in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum, and recruit them in the schools. Most of these teachers are experienced professionals whose services could be useful in London. Excluding them from the secondary schools would not be helpful to the London educational set-up.

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Who Needs It? Who Wants It? A Critical Investigation into Modern Foreign Language Learning

NEIL WILSON
Having trained to teach in London, Neil Wilson now works as a supply teacher in Leeds.

In this article, I aim to explore the issues surrounding modern foreign language learning. Due to my own interests I will be focussing largely on the French language; other individual languages will have issues of their own, which will not be dealt with in detail although they may be referred to in passing where relevant to the main argument.

The structure of this article is as follows. First of all, I will briefly examine links between Britain and France from an historical perspective. A brief scan of the last millennium will bring us up to date. An examination of current official policy in both England and France will follow.

From official policy the argument will move on to 'real' people. To do this I canvassed the opinions of teaching staff and pupils at schools both in England and France. I also interviewed any adult in England or France who would spare me a couple of minutes to give me their views. Therefore, some of the evidence that I use is anecdotal, and this will be acknowledged where necessary. Some of the responses that I received do appear to be rather frivolous at first glance, but when subjected to serious academic analysis they can tell us quite a lot about attitudes at grass roots level.

Finally, I will attempt to pull it all together and draw some conclusions about modern foreign language learning and why people feel the way they do. Why are British people so introspective when it comes to language learning? What if anything is prolonging this attitude and why? And finally what implications does it have for teachers of modern foreign languages?

Attitudes Towards Foreigners

'*I know only three words of French! Agincourt, Poitiers and Crecy. I do not need or want to know any more' (John). 'We don't like the French; they are ignorant and don't want to speak to us; the Germans are the same' (Martin). 'Foreigners should all speak English anyway.'*

These representative quotes came from members of the Towton Battlefield Society. (Towton is a place in North Yorkshire and the site of one of the biggest and bloodiest battles ever fought on English soil). These men are not unintelligent: they are widely read and some of them are widely travelled. Unfortunately, their views are fairly representative of the majority of adults that I interviewed.

One of the aims of this article is to investigate our attitudes towards our European neighbours and our attitudes towards language learning, as I believe that the two are inextricably linked. I was familiar with the sentiments expressed above long before I had an interest in educational issues. My own interest in France and the French language grew from a passionate interest in the Great War. What I want to explore are our attitudes towards MFL. Who wants or requires MFL? Why is the Government trying to introduce languages into Primary Schools? Why do we feel the way we do? Where do our attitudes towards language learning stem from? Finally, where does the future lie and what can teachers try to do to change attitudes in the future?

I approached this endeavour from a variety of angles in the search for answers. Initially I undertook a brief historical survey. I examined the links between England and France across the centuries to attempt to uncover any reasonable explanations for our attitudes. From the historical perspective, we move up to date and examine our attitudes today. I tried to examine the issue(s) from a variety of different angles (each angle could easily fill an article in its own right). Initially I looked at official attitudes towards language learning in England and France. As my research unfolded I became aware of an even wider context to our attitudes: the European Union and moves towards unity since 1945. From looking at official attitudes, I moved towards the attitudes of ordinary people. To try to gauge this I canvassed the opinions of adults and children in both England and France. This I carried out in schools and by canvassing the opinions of anybody who would discuss the issue with me. The final aspect that I considered was the role of the media and their 'unofficial' attitudes in shaping the way that the British public at large feel about our European neighbours. Is it as the writer Julian Barnes put it in *Something to Declare*: 'We are surrounded by fish on three sides and France and the European mainland on the other. By being the closest to us Europeans represent everything that is foreign and so become the focus of our antipathy.' This wonderful quote does, I feel, oversimplify things a little. Throughout researching this topic, constant questions arose that made what at first appeared to be a straightforward task extremely complex. One of the biggest questions that arose and the one which would provide a research topic in its own right, because nobody could provide an answer, let alone a *satisfactory* answer,

concerned MFL. Why are we focussing on 'high status' European languages, rather than community-based languages such as Bengali, Urdu or Arabic?

Historical Background

One of the issues that I wanted to explore was that of historical links between England and France. I wondered if the past would throw up some deep-rooted explanation for our reticence in learning other languages. England and France have been inextricably linked since the Norman Conquest in 1066. For the next five hundred years the Kings of England were also Kings of large areas of France. All these lands were ruled, certainly in the early days, with England as the junior partner. The eldest son of William the Conqueror took on the Duchy of Normandy, whilst his second son William Rufus became William II of England. That renowned symbol of Englishness, Richard the Lionheart, was a French speaker and very rarely visited England. Henry II ruled England and a massive area of France. The Angevin and Plantagenet rulers often found England of secondary importance to their interests elsewhere. Both Richard 1 and Henry II are buried in Fontevrault-Abbaye, in the Loire valley, and not in Westminster Abbey with many other English monarchs. The link with Normandy was severed in 1204, during the reign of King John. England and France were joined territorially through the monarchy although, as time passed, England grew in stature and the French lands were viewed as secondary. The two countries constantly waged war over disputed territories. England enjoyed some of her most famous victories over France during the Hundred Years War (Crecy 1346, Poitiers 1356 and Agincourt 1415). English influence gradually declined and by the middle of the fifteenth century, only Calais was still in English hands. The final separation of the two countries came with the loss of Calais in 1558.

To move forward, Charles II (1660-1685) spoke only French and allowed only the French language to be spoken at court. The Restoration Period saw what is commonly termed as *the frenchification* of the court and aristocracy. From the middle of the seventeenth century, England and France intermittently waged war all around the world, as empire building and the acquisition of territories began. Although the main concern of this article is focussed on France and the French language, it is worth noting at this point that during this period the hostility between England and Spain was just as vitriolic. Until 1815, England waged war with any country that displayed expansionist ideas and consequently was perceived as a threat to the British Empire. The year 1815 and the Battle of Waterloo saw the end of wars between England and France.

The nineteenth century saw the rise of nationalism throughout Europe. By the end of the century, the unified nation state of Germany was perceived as posing the greatest threat to the British Empire. Nationalism was one of the most divisive ideologies of the nineteenth century as each nation state sought to be perceived as the strongest. Jingoistic nationalism took hold across Europe. In London it surfaced in the works of writers like Rudyard Kipling (*If*) and in many music hall songs. In Europe it was much worse and was a direct cause of the Franco-Prussian war 1870-71. Emile Zola's *La Débâcle* deals with the subject in France. The nationalism of the nineteenth century led to the new imperialism and the Scramble for Africa and then ultimately to the Great War. By the end of the nineteenth century, Britain and France had become allies once again, this time against the perceived threat of Germany. Britain and France have remained uneasy allies for over a century now. They have endured two world wars and many other conflicts between them. The second half of the twentieth century saw the map of Europe redrawn and moves towards European unity come to the forefront of the political agenda.

In England, France has traditionally been perceived as an enemy. But, although the two countries have had a love-hate relationship for the last millennium, does this provide us with a valid explanation as to why we as a nation have not embraced language learning? From the evidence of the rest of Europe I would suggest not. Relationships between other European countries have been much worse than those between England and France. We could consider the enmity between France and Spain, or France and Germany. Other countries such as Belgium or the Netherlands could justifiably feel aggrieved at their treatment at the hands of their European neighbours. And yet all these countries, except England, have embraced language learning. Why?

Can we blame the English Channel? Residing at the periphery, it could reasonably be assumed that the citizens of a given country could feel a sense of isolation or estrangement from the rest of Europe. If this were the case, then the argument would hold true for all countries. Yet attitudes towards Europe and language learning in Great Britain are pretty unique. If we cannot blame history or the English Channel, how can we explain our continuing apathy towards foreign language learning?

Official Policies Today

If we cannot find answers in the past for our attitudes towards language learning, then is it conceivable that the answer(s) lie in an examination of what is happening today? To approach this, I looked at the official policies towards the EU and MFL learning in England, France and the Republic of Ireland. By examining the situation in a number of countries, we can then compare and contrast what is happening in England. One of the main proponents in advocating the teaching of MFL in schools is the European Parliament, based in Brussels. The rise of a European parliament is seen by many as anathema to the British constitution. Particularly those on the Right of the political spectrum vehemently oppose moves towards what many perceive as a federal European super state in Britain. We must bear this in mind as we investigate the events and policies of the last thirty years. The United Kingdom has been an uneasy member of the European Union (formally the EEC) since 1972. The EU has continued to grow in terms of membership and centralised power since then. The EU first turned its attention to compulsory level schooling in 1988. The Commission's Resolution of 24 May 1988 stated that 'Member states should include the European dimension explicitly in their school curricula in all appropriate disciplines'. This, of course, included the provision of MFL learning. This promotion of the European dimension became a formal provision in 1992, under the education article of the Treaty of Maastricht. Young people are now expected to learn not just languages but about the history, geography, culture, common values, political developments and future concerns of Europe and the EU countries. They should also learn about their rights

and obligations as citizens of the European Union, so that they can benefit personally and professionally within it in the future.

These measures direct from the European Parliament have meant that a total evasion of a positive European element in schools can no longer continue. National governments have had to respond to EU pressure and have done so in different ways. If we first look at the responses to these directives in England, then we can compare and contrast England's response with that of other countries, namely France and Ireland.

England's response to the Commission's 1988 Report predictably came rather late. The original National Curriculum made no provision for the teaching of MFL at primary level. In what was perceived as a common curriculum for all, MFL was introduced only at secondary level. The National Curriculum at KS4 was later abandoned as unworkable and English, mathematics and science are the only survivors. Art, design and technology and MFL are no longer compulsory. Currently language teaching is compulsory only at KS3 (ages 11-14). There is also still the notion that language learning is 'elitist' and a middle-class concept. The idea is that MFL for everyone is simply not practical. Teachers are simply not thought able to deliver MFL to all abilities and in large numbers. If a school in a deprived area falls foul of OFSTED, then invariably MFL will be dropped and the teachers redeployed in core subject areas. A 2002 Green Paper and a 2003 Discussion Document proposed that, rather than continue compulsory language learning past the age of 14, the Government would introduce language teaching into primary schools. From 2005 MFL is to be introduced into the KS2 curriculum. And by 2010 it will, in theory, be available to everybody. The Government has, in fact, retained a parental 'opt-out' clause for those who do not wish their children to study MFL. According to *The Independent* (11 March 2004) only one in four English primary schools can offer a report in adequate provision for MFL teaching. We still have a long way to go.

From the above paragraph, it is reasonable to conclude that provision for MFL in England is minimal and that any proposed moves towards becoming more involved in any European dimension are met with inertia. It is interesting to compare the experience of England with that of other countries. In France, following the European Commission's 1988 Report, Lionel Jospin placed English on to the French primary curriculum. On an exchange visit to France, I observed and taught MFL within the French system. What I saw was not particularly good. The English teacher that I met was not qualified and more interested in what she could learn from me than in what I could learn from her. I would conclude that in the French experience the provision is there, but the quality of delivery can be low. It is worth noting that the French also have a parental 'opt-out' clause, which allowed some of the children to take Spanish rather than English. The system for teaching Spanish operated the same as for English. I cannot comment on the quality of Spanish teaching as I never saw it delivered. The final point in relation to France is that ninety minutes a week is a minimum recommendation for primary language learning. This is usually carried out in two forty-five minute sessions and I was informed that this is normal practice in most French schools.

Another country that has taken on board the European dimension and MFL teaching is the Republic of Ireland. In 1992, the Irish Government, aware of a lack of a European dimension in school curricula, published a Green Paper. Its third chapter was devoted to 'Irish Education in the European Community'. This document very closely mirrored the aims and objectives as set out in the European Commission's 1988 Resolution. In 1995, the Irish Government published a White Paper: *Charting Our Educational Future*. Chapter two dealt with the European dimension at primary level. The Irish primary curriculum was completed revised in 1999, the first major revision since 1971. As well as provision for MFL, the curriculum promoted the European dimension throughout. One interesting point looking at Ireland is the fact that it is not obligatory for children to study foreign languages, because Irish education is already bi-lingual. That said, most schools do make provision for language teaching. Even though it is not compulsory to study languages in Ireland, there is a much larger proportion of schoolchildren taking languages to school leaving age as compared to England. In proportion to the respective populations of both countries, 10 times as many pupils take school leaving examinations at the age of 17 in German, and 20 times as many in French.

Survey Results

In researching this article, I wanted to gauge the feelings of ordinary people towards MFL. To do this, I carried out a survey of pupils and teachers at a school in East Leeds and at a school in Leyton, North London, as well as at an École Elementaire in Perigeuex, France. Away from school, I also interviewed any person who would spare me the few minutes to answer my questions. Again, I interviewed people in both England and France. All the quotations I cite are genuine, but to protect individuals I will use only first names. Only a single letter will identify teaching staff. The questions that I posed threw up some interesting answers. Some of these were thought-provoking and would certainly open the door to further research.

As with the other aspects that I looked at, the survey revealed differences in attitudes in England and France. But there was one very significant point on which everyone agreed: the current method of teaching MFL through the utilisation of songs, rhymes and participation is very popular with everybody concerned. What follows is a selection of the responses that I received. They are representative and give a good impression of popular feeling.

I began by canvassing teachers in Leeds for their views. The Headteacher knew about the latest government directive, but was waiting further instructions before acting. When I returned to the School in January, Mr H told me that he had 'begun to test the water'. He had opened up negotiations with the local comprehensive school. What would happen next would depend on who was available and when. The rest of the staff were ambivalent in their feelings towards MFL. Teacher A told me, 'They tell us that we have to do these things, but won't tell us how. I don't speak any foreign languages.' Teacher B said, 'I know basic holiday French, probably enough to get by with. … But the curriculum is already tightly packed; where are we going to fit it in? One of the most common answers I received was 'We will do as we are told. …

But if we have to teach languages we will have to learn them ourselves first!' The responses in France were rather different and much more 'up beat'. Mme A told me, 'It's (MFL) an important opening for the children, that they learn to communicate and interact with people from other countries and cultures. Mme B said, 'I think it's important for the children to enter into the spirit of other cultures and languages. They are curious about languages and are motivated by the methods that we use. What we have to do now is keep them interested long-term.' The fact that French classroom teachers do not have to teach languages, but visiting tutors come in, could go a long way towards explaining the difference in the responses that I received.

The responses that I received from the children were interesting from two perspectives. The initial attitudes of the children towards language learning differed in England and France. The differing responses of the children may have been shaped by the circumstances in which they found themselves. In England I have found an ambivalent attitude prevails. The children I interviewed ranged from a Year two class that I taught for a month and an afternoon French club, both in London, to a range of children across both the primary age phases in Leeds. The following quotes are typical and representative of the attitude of many children in England. Initially I asked them about their feeling towards learning French. Maximillian (age 7), 'I learn French and attend the classes because my mum says I have to.' Yasmin (age 8), 'It's an after school club and something to do before I go home to tea'. These two quotes are very typical of the attitude of all the children that I spoke to. However, I also worked with many of the children away from MFL. Their attitude was the same whatever the subject. The class of nine year olds that I spent a month with in Perigeuex during January 2004 were completely different in their attitude. Language learning was simply an accepted part of their schooling. During my visit to Perigeuex the children were repeatedly asked for their honest opinions. Both their regular class teacher and myself asked the children for their honest opinions, but I suspect that there was an element of trying to please me by being positive.

From their initial opening thoughts the children's answers converged. In their thoughts about why they might need to study foreign languages and then about what they thought about the actual lessons themselves, the answers of all the children everywhere – in Leeds, London or France – were virtually identical. When I asked the children about their thoughts on why they might possibly need to learn foreign languages, the following responses are representative. Aimee (age 7) in London, 'It is good to learn another language apart from English.' Anita (age 9) in France, 'Parce que c'est bien d'apprendre des langues étrangères ça change un peu parce que toujours parler français, c'est agaçant. (It is good to learn another language. It is frustrating to only speak French). Working and travelling also proved important factors in learning another language, Lee (age 11) in Leeds, 'It's good to learn other languages in case you want to go on holiday or work in another country.' Nicholas (age 10) in France, 'Parce que si on va dans d'autres pays on peut parler la langue des habitants du pays.' (Because when you visit other countries you need to speak the language of the people of that country). On the actual lessons themselves, the children were also unanimous about what they thought about the

way they were learning foreign languages. When asked about the way that French lessons were actually being taught, Chanter (age 7) in London said, 'I like the songs and the games and doing things'. In a similar vein, Sarah (age 9) in France (her writing is very difficult to read but key words are discernible), 'J'aime a jouer et chanter parce que on apprend des mots, des phrases et ça vous (permettre?) de (?) parler dans les pays étranges.' (I like to play (the games) and to sing because that enables you to speak in other countries). I think that although the children's initial thoughts on why they were learning a language may have been ambivalent, once the initial barrier was passed they were unanimous in their enjoyment of language learning and wanted to learn more. I would conclude from these survey findings that the current method of teaching languages through games, songs and rhymes is very successful. Even though the children find initial language learning enjoyable, according to the 2000 Nuffield Report, 9 out of 10 English children have completely given up language learning by the time they reach sixteen.

The findings of the Nuffield Languages Inquiry appeared to be borne out when I asked adults about their thoughts on language learning. Ethnic minorities have edged out our European neighbours as the main targets of xenophobia but the majority of adults that I spoke to looked upon the thought of language learning with disdain. The majority views that was presented with (away from the education system) followed the familiar lines of 'Why do we need to learn foreign languages? … all the world speaks English'. 'English is the international language of business and air traffic control.' Although some adults did acknowledge the fact that we are living in a shrinking world – some used the phrase global village – the majority of people to whom I spoke were intransigent to the point of irrationality in their attitudes towards language learning. These feelings of antipathy towards learning other languages were not confined to these shores. On a visit to the Somme Battlefields, I spoke to two young Frenchmen, David and Romain, in a bar in Albert. Both were in their early twenties. Neither spoke English and neither had any inclination to learn any. They only agreed to speak to me because I wanted to learn French and speak to them. Their answers were simple, 'Why should we learn English? We can do everything that we need to or want to in French.' I asked them about new technologies and in particular the Internet. They replied, 'There are plenty of French language websites that we can use.' I began to suspect the forces of nationalism were at play on both sides of the channel. These sentiments are not new. The final novel of Gustav Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (1880) features a scene in which whilst walking along the cliffs at Fécamp, Pécuchet describes an earthquake under the English Channel. All the water is displaced, the land on both sides collapses and England and France are rejoined. Bouvard is horrified at the prospect, not of the earthquake, but of England and France being joined together.

Why then, after such a promising start, are children turned away from language learning? What is going wrong? I think that we need an in-depth study of progression in language learning. This study might indicate what is going wrong and why so many people are turned off language learning, once the initial novelty of the fun and games has worn off.

The Role of the Press and of the Media

Just as our children begin to question the enjoyment and value of language learning, I believe that another potent and negative force comes into play. The popular press and the media generally have, I feel, a major role. I have no desire to overemphasise this role, but I do feel that they play a large part in shaping popular opinion. Dr Philip Taylor at the University of Leeds has carried out some interesting work in this field. Dr Taylor's work explores the role of Hollywood filmmakers in state propaganda. The issues that he discusses range from overt propaganda aimed at swaying the public towards what is perceived as the nation's best interest, to much more subtle forms, possibly at times unintentional, such as the use of traditional stereotypes. We have only to consider how people from various countries are portrayed. Germans are constantly depicted as brutal and barbarous, or as incompetent dolts fit only for the film's heroes to dispatch to eternity. Films such as *The Longest Day* and *Reach for the Sky* are good examples of this. Consider the portrayal of eastern Europeans in the numerous James Bond films: anyone from the wrong side of the Iron Curtain has square features, is as cold as steel and extremely surly. All except the beautiful girls, that is. What of Peter Sellars's portrayal of the bumbling Inspector Clouseau in *The Pink Panther* series? Of the Italians (and the British) in *The Italian Job,* with Michael Caine? The filmmakers constantly reinforce every conceivable stereotype imaginable.

One major aspect of the media that I feel is instrumental in shaping public opinion is the role of the newspapers. Tabloid newspapers, such as *The Sun*, are extremely Euro-sceptic and at times promote jingoistic nationalism. Following the 5-1 England victory over Germany in a football match during the qualifying games for the 2002 World Cup Finals *The Sun* responded with a barrage of anti-German headlines. I did not have to wait long for some up-to-date Euro-scepticism. On 10 February 2004 *The Sun* reported: 'Those dastardly Germans in league with the French are threatening to destroy UK sovereignty with a revamped version of the EU Constitution'. And on 25 February 2004 pages one and two displayed an attack on the Chancellor Gordon Brown for even suggesting that Britain may one day join the Euro single currency. They boasted that the pound was safe purely due to their campaign and printed a picture of a pound coin that filled half of the front page. On page two they launched an attack on the French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, alleging that he had insulted Tony Blair and the whole of the country by suggesting that Britain had become just a part player in the new Europe. Euro-scepticism and crude stereotyping are not restricted to the tabloids. *The Guardian* on 10 February 2004 dubbed the Germans 'Herr Brained' because they wanted to copy the 'Big Brother' television show. *The Independent* on 17 March 2004 published an article by Christine Odone that informed us that in Britain 'We have now taken an interest in big ideas that used to be restricted to Frenchmen in black polo necks'. I would not suggest that the media are solely responsible for shaping our attitudes towards Europe and language learning. The issues are much more complex. But I do believe that forms of media do play a significant role in shaping and perpetuating public opinion.

Conclusions

I began this article in a bid to satisfy my curiosity and search for answers. I will admit right now that this I have singularly failed to do. What I have done instead is to arouse my curiosity even further, because every avenue that I explored and every time that I thought that I might have found answers, all I did was find more questions. Virtually every reason that I considered as providing an answer to our inertia when it comes to language learning would warrant further study in its own right.

History does not provide us with any definitive conclusions, but it may go some way towards explaining the attitudes of some adults. Our past has bequeathed to us a misguided notion of English superiority. Over a century ago Britain ruled an Empire that covered a quarter of the globe. Then the key was standardisation and uniformity. Now the wheel has turned full circle and the great standardiser and centraliser now likes to present itself as a bulwark against 'over-zealous federalism' imposed from Brussels. In taking this stance Britain is becoming an anachronism, particularly when it comes to language learning. We live in a culture and society that is still perceived to be based upon 'high status' western languages. Many subscribe to the notion that our language and culture are superior to the rest of the world and that English is the currency language of the modern world. These views prevail despite there being more speakers of Chinese and Arabic in the world than there are English speakers. To reinforce this view, the IKEA store in Shanghai, China, has all its signs using English characters, not Chinese, thereby devaluing the language of the local economy.

Every child that I interviewed said that they enjoyed learning a foreign language, so why have ninety per cent dropped languages by the age of sixteen? One key factor, I believe, is the lack of a sense of progression in language learning. Any child learning a language will more than likely find that in secondary school they are repeating what they have probably done numerous times before. Consequently they become bored and switched off from language learning. We, as teachers, are ultimately the instruments of change. We assist people to find their orientation in the world by transmitting political and social ideologies. We need to work on the amelioration of the contradictions between the needs of commerce, political thought and popular culture. Today England is a member of the EU. Most of us regularly use the Internet and are familiar with the concept of a global village. But attitudes at grassroots level change very slowly. Idealism and realism are two very different worlds. Great Britain is under pressure from the EU to widen the age range and scope of MFL opportunities in this country. In 2003 Charles Clarke decided to introduce language teaching into primary schools. What we need to look at next is the sense of progression and the links between primary and secondary education to try and suppress the haemorrhage of pupils away from MFL. 'Catch them young' is a well-used phrase. However, a much more focussed study is required to ascertain why, even if we do catch them young, so many then slip through the net and turn their backs on language learning for ever.

Daddies have Wallets and Mummies have Purses: raising gender issues with four- to five-year-olds

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In this article I explore gender issues which arose out of a literacy discussion with children in a reception class. First an account is given of the discussion. This is followed by an examination of gender-related issues amongst fellow practitioners and parents. Here I intend to show the importance of raising gender issues even with children as young as four or five. Throughout the article, I link my personal experiences and observations to the theories and research of various educationalists.

The class I am writing about was a reception class in a primary school in the London Borough of Brent. There were 30 four to five year old children in the class. The ratio of boys to girls was about 1:1, and the children came from a mix of ethnic backgrounds: Afro-Caribbean, Somalian, Bangladeshi, Sri-Lankan, Indian, Pakistani, Kosovo-Albanian, Ukranian and English.

After reading 'Don't Forget the Bacon' by Pat Hutchinson to the class, I encouraged the children to discuss whether the child in the story was male or female and offered them an opportunity to name the child. This activity led to an animated discussion between the 4 to 5 year old boys and girls in my class. Feelings about this subject were strong, with children shouting: 'Boy!' or 'Girl!' at me.

I proceeded by asking one of the children to explain why she thought the child in the story was a girl. 'Because she is going shopping for mummy.' This prompted several children to answer: 'But boys can go shopping too.' And 'I go shopping with my mummy and sometimes with my daddy.'

Next I asked another child to explain why he thought the child was a boy. 'He's a boy because he's wearing jeans.' As the rest of the class remained silent at this answer, I reminded the children that I had worn jeans to school the previous day. At this a girl said, I wear jeans at home. At school I wear school uniform, but at home I wear jeans.' The boy responded, 'But he's wearing a T-shirt.' 'I'm wearing a T-shirt under my school jumper,' piped up a female classmate.

'He's a boy, because he has short hair,' was the next statement. I noticed a number of children looking at their peer group and soon they were shouting out: 'But Indusha and Ardita and Nadia in Class 1 have short hair and they are girls'.

'She's a girl because she's got yellow hair.' This was countered with remarks like 'So has Jamie', 'Adam in Class 3 has light colour hair.' 'I know Jimmy in Class 1 has yellow hair.'

'I know she is a girl, because look at the picture. She's got a purse. One with a clip. Girls have purses and daddies have wallets. You know, like wallets are flat' commented one 5 year-old girl. 'Yeah, but this is a mummy's purse, because he's going shopping for mummy. Mummy gave him the money. He's a boy.'

'Yeah, he's a boy, because he's got a dog', was the next statement, which prompted an angry outcry: 'I've got a dog and I'm not a boy!'

There were no further comments or observations forthcoming; instead the children started to shout out 'Boy!' and 'Girl!' almost as if they had decided that the loudest group would win the argument. It was at this point that I suggested we re-read the story to see if the author told us anywhere in the story whether the child was a boy or a girl. The class listened intently as we went over the story, only to find that there was no answer to our question. To complete this discussion, I asked the children whether it mattered if the child was a boy or a girl. Silence. Would it make a difference to the story if we knew the child was a boy or a girl? After a short thinking pause (in which I could almost see the little grey cells in their heads working), one child ventured the answer, 'No, because boys and girls go shopping with their mums and dads.'

When I first planned to read this popular story little did I know what responses it would provoke and what feeling it would arouse in the children. Some of the other team members were sceptical about the success of this activity as they felt it would be difficult to raise gender issues with this age group. Both Skelton (2001) and Francis (1998) also came across this belief that children were too young to understand the issues. However, Siraj-Blatchford (1994: xiv) reminds us:

We tend to think only of bigger people as citizens or those worthy of teaching important concepts such as

justice and equality. Yet it is during the early years that the foundations for these attitudes are laid.

Some resistance to this activity also came from the belief that gender issues 'are old hat' (colleague comment) and no longer needed to be addressed. Francis (1998: 175) found when researching in primary schools:

that many children are well aware of sexism as an issue and its possible implications for their own lives and future work experiences.

Furthermore, Francis (ibid:176) supports teacher involvement in discussing books and storylines with children:

A pro-equality perspective should be offered to children, and one which actively attacks discrimination; the issue needs to be tackled positively.

One colleague pointed out that boys and girls had equal access to all the activities in her class. After all, the girls now played with construction kits (if somewhat reluctantly at times) and the boys used the home corner. This assumption of equal access has been challenged by many (Edgington, 1998: 60; Burn 1989). In light of this, it may also be worth remembering that:

there is a commonly held assumption that schools provide a neutral environment for children's learning but the teacher's verbal and body language, the classroom procedures, the resources provided are not culture free (Siraj-Blatchford in Suschnitsky, 1995: 220).

The question then arises: are boys and girls truly on an equal footing when it comes to activities that are traditionally seen as part of the male/female domain? I was surprised to be told by a German friend of mine that in her son's primary school there are parents who still believe that it is all right for boys to struggle with reading and writing. When she expressed concern over the fact that her son did not like reading and writing another mother told her, 'I bet he's good at Maths, though'. My friend did not see what that had to do with anything, so this mother told her, 'Well, why worry? He's just a typical boy'. A German secondary school Maths teacher told me that she had indicated to the parent of one of her pupils that extra tuition for a term might help her daughter catch up and improve in Maths. The mother responded by pointing out that Maths was not a 'girls' subject and therefore she was not concerned over her daughter's inability to do Maths. Her daughter was set to study languages. So why did she need Maths anyway? English colleagues with whom I have shared these observations have confirmed a similar attitude in this country and one colleague informed me that she had come across similar comments in the English press. In my view, all these examples clearly highlight the need to use opportunities to discuss equality and gender issues with children. Moreover, the Foundation Stage Curriculum (2000) and the National Curriculum (1999) stress the importance of challenging discrimination and stereotyping. The Foundation Stage Curriculum reminds practitioners that in order to meet the diverse needs of the children in

their care and to ensure their best possible progress, they should:

provide a safe and supportive learning environment, free from harassment, in which the contribution of all children is valued and where racial, religious, disability and gender stereotypes are challenged.

The 1999 National Curriculum states that the school curriculum: … should promote equal opportunities and enable pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping.

The observation of the gender discussion and the comments by colleagues and parents show very clearly how gender is still seen in stereotypical terms. Both Skelton (*ibid.*) and Francis (*ibid.*) argue for the need for more gender equity work in primary schools. Their researches also showed the continuation of sexist beliefs and practices within the primary school. Skelton (*ibid:* 173) states that practitioners need to:

… encourage children to think about their own position – to get them to question some of the more taken-for-granted aspects of what they see, hear, read, think, say and act out.

The Report 'Growing up Female in the UK' (Women's National Commission, 1996) explored and highlighted many areas that reinforce stereotypes. Re-reading it only a few weeks ago I became aware of how little has changed since the Report was published. One of the starkest examples is advertising and the toy industry. For anyone who believes that stereotypes no longer influence children I recommend a look at the toy section in most of the popular catalogues. As my fifteen year-old son commented: 'All these prissy little girls in their prissy little dresses with their prissy little hats pushing their prissy little prams. Enough to make anyone sick, mum'. Connelly (1998: 187) in his study of 5 to 6 year-olds found:

… some young children were able actively to appropriate, rework and reproduce discourses on 'race', gender and sexuality in quite complex ways.

He found these young children were acquiring '*relatively sophisticated and active understanding of their social worlds.*' This included the development of racist and sexist ideas. So whilst these 5 to 6 year-old inner city pupils were actively developing their gender identities, racism also featured as part of their identity constructions.

As education practitioners we have to ask ourselves: Is there really such a thing as a typical boy or girl? Can equality exist as long as we hold stereotypes to be true? If we as educators want to make a difference then these stereotypes have to be challenged and what better way than through discussion in the classroom? After all, the Women's National Commission (WNC, 1997: 41) reminds us:

As they grow up, children are surrounded by images which tell them how women and men behave, what we should look like, what we are 'good at' and, perhaps more directly, what we can and cannot do.

In my view the gender discussion that I encouraged provided a good vehicle for four to five year-olds as an introduction to such a debate. The children had to listen to each other and form their own opinion, express their own observations and counter arguments. It provided a rich, meaningful context for speaking and listening on a subject (Gender) that seems to be of importance to many children at this stage of their development, where they begin to form more detailed self-images (Romberg, 1999). As their identity and image of self become more sophisticated, they start to express gender related observations and demonstrate the range of stereotypical views that they still come into contact with (Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke, 2000: 8). Rather than shying away from discussing these issues with children (and with colleagues) Siraj-Blatchford and Clarke remind us of our responsibility to '… *extend children's identity and break down stereotypes*'. For: as long as stereotypes exist and human beings are not seen as individuals with individual needs, wishes, aspirations and dreams, exploring and discussing issues such as gender remain essential if we are truly committed to create a world of equality and tolerance.

Note

Don't Forget the Bacon was written and illustrated by Pat Hutchinson and was first published in the UK by The Bodley Head in 1976. The synopsis for the Book reads: 'Eggs, a cake, peas and bacon – a simple enough shopping list – and, of course, the easiest way to remember it is to repeat it, over and over again!'

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The Problems of Teaching the Holocaust in the History Classroom

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We should teach the Shoah [1] in schools. But I do not think that history teachers will really do so effectively until we have removed it from its quasi-mystical associations and clarified our own objectives. I think we have to start and end with what happened and why, with the Shoah as history. (Kinloch, 1998, p.46)

The topic of the Holocaust has been included in successive versions of the National Curriculum for History where it is currently one of only four named historical events that must be taught in Key Stage 3 (KS3), the other three being the two World Wars and the Cold War (DfEE, 1999). Initial drafts of the 2000 Order for History included the Holocaust as the only mandatory content (Haydn, 2000). However, teaching the Holocaust in history is not easy. In addition to the usual considerations of lesson planning and resourcing, the topic of the Holocaust requires sensitive handling: how much detail should be gone into? How will students react? Should Holocaust denial be discussed? There is support and advice for teachers approaching the topic of the Holocaust (for example, Davies, 2000; Supple, 1998). Rather than discussing the difficulties addressed in such literature, this article sets out what appears to be the fundamental problem for history teachers: is the rationale behind the inclusion of the Holocaust on the National Curriculum for History historical, social or moral? This problem was made manifest in September 2001 with the publication of a special edition of the journal *Teaching History*. This edition, unusually, focused solely on teaching the Holocaust in history and was evincive in its deliberate range of contrasting perspectives and views on this topic. While Nicolas Kinloch (2001) argued forcefully that the Holocaust should be taught from a purely historical perspective, Paul Salmons (2001) argued that teaching the Holocaust involved an emotional link with the history, and Paula Mountford (2001) related the Holocaust to social and moral issues.

As a history teacher I found teaching about the Holocaust challenging. During a lesson about the Nuremberg Laws, I began to reflect on exactly what I was trying to achieve. It was a difficult lesson. Some of the Year 9 students had not grasped what it meant to be Jewish; I was fielding questions such as, 'why didn't the Jews convert to another religion?'. For me, the question was, 'why do we teach the Holocaust?'. A range of possible historical, social and moral objectives came to mind: to encourage empathy with the Jews and a realisation that racism and prejudice is wrong; to provide some context for World War Two; to impart an awareness of the events that took place in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s; to remember the victims; to help students to understand that certain social, economic and political situations can give rise to racism and prejudice; to produce 'good citizens'; to prompt students to consider and protect the democracies they live in; to encourage students in the view that war criminals should be tried despite the passage of time.

In September 2003 I sent forty multiple choice questionnaires to history teachers at twenty schools.[2] Follow up interviews, designed to probe their approach to teaching the Holocaust, were conducted with ten teachers of history in eight secondary schools in South East Kent. Seven were Head of Department. There were six men and four women. A system of selection continues to operate in Kent: students sit a county wide examination at the age of 11. One of the schools in the sample was Roman Catholic and drew students from across the ability range; one was independent; two were single sex girls' grammar schools; one school had recently become a technology college and drew students from across the ability range; one was 'comprehensive' [3] and two were secondary modern schools which faced extremely challenging circumstances and an uncertain future. The data base for this part of my research, while small, provided an indication of current practice, and has aided my reflections on the issue of teaching the Holocaust in history.

When Kinloch (1998) asked history teachers why young people should be taught about the Holocaust their responses included: it is possibly *the* critical event of the twentieth century and it changed the way we view Germans, Jews and human beings' capacity for destructiveness. The teachers Kinloch spoke to believed important moral, social and spiritual lessons could be drawn from the Holocaust and thought that studying the Holocaust would improve students' ability to recognise and respond appropriately to similar events (Kinloch, 1998, p.44). The Holocaust is an emotive topic. It took place within living memory, in a modern, industrialised country in Europe. It is unsurprising therefore that teachers' treatment of the Holocaust includes social and moral issues. All the same, Kinloch notes the problem with the above objectives is that they are 'a dangerously non-historical set of assumptions':

History teachers don't in my experience, approach the Shoah as a historical question. They deal with it…as

a moral, social or spiritual one. Implicit in much teaching of this topic is a metahistorical approach: an acceptance of the Santayana cliché about those who fail to understand the past being condemned to repeat it. This is the Shoah as a paradigm or analogy, and history in schools as a crude piece of social engineering. Sympathise with, empathise with the victims, says this approach; and students will find it impossible to become Nazis themselves.

(Kinloch, 1998, p.45)

This metahistorical approach to the Holocaust was reflected in the comments of sixty percent of the sample. Six out of the ten history teachers I interviewed talked about the moral lessons of the Holocaust being of *primary* importance. One teacher, Hank [4] quoted Edmund Burke, 'the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing' and another –Tom – Santayana. Hank went on to say, 'I probably spend 3 or 4 lessons on the Holocaust. The first gives some background and is historical but the others are from a moral point of view. Every year I get a couple of girls who cry…I set the scene and I'm very graphic'. For Hank, teaching the Holocaust is moral and emotional. Tom approached the Holocaust from the perspective of genocide prevention – 'I think if you can get that moral perspective across that may well prevent any future atrocities' – as did Walter and Mike, though none of these teachers 'had time' to look at any other example of genocide in addition to the Holocaust. Their approaches were moral and social, but rooted in history. Meanwhile Barbara took a moralistic approach:

I don't think you can look at what happened and why without looking at it from a moral perspective. I don't think you can address the issues of mass genocide and what happens in the world today without looking at whether it should have happened or not. (Barbara)

Marie claimed that she taught the Holocaust from a moral perspective:

I want to teach the Holocaust from a moral point of view, not a historical point of view. I play the part in Schindler's List where people are going into the gas chambers without any volume but with Enrique Iglesias' Hero playing very, very loudly. I tell pupils just to listen to the words and not to sing along and its actually quite powerful sort of stuff. I've found it works really well. It gets me every time, I have to turn away. I can't watch it. (Marie)

Though Marie claimed to be adopting a moral approach I would argue that the activity described here is purely emotional: this experience contains no historical or moral or social lessons for students, the objective is simply to gain an emotional reaction. Marie's approach seemed particularly confused. She identified three objectives on her questionnaire: to give students the skills to detect discrimination, prejudice and racism; to remember the victims; and to consider and protect the democracies students live in. I asked Marie whether she found it difficult to plan lessons in the time available which achieved these three objectives:

Last year … it was a little bit easier because I taught RE to exactly the same Year 9 group so we did quite a lot in RE about democracy and communism. I think you can tie in together objectives like protecting democracies and detecting the skills to recognise [state sponsored] prejudice and racism. I always teach the Holocaust from the victims' point of view. I literally launched straight in because I only had two lessons so we didn't go through the whole, why did it happen or the consequences. I just said 'this happened'.

So you didn't teach about Hitler's rise to power or his policies?

No. (Marie)

The disparity between what Marie believed were the key objectives of teaching the Holocaust in history and what she was actually teaching in the classroom is evident. While Marie believed it was important to teach the Holocaust in order for students to consider and protect the democracies they live in, she failed within her history lessons to teach her students anything about Hitler's rise to power, his policies, and why these might have appealed to the electorate in Weimar Germany.

The views of these teachers put me in mind of a comment made by Ann Low-Beer, a member of the original History Working Group which devised the National Curriculum for History. In response to my request for an interview she noted that the Holocaust was an interesting but difficult issue because it 'has become overlaid with non-historical issues. Or it can be seen in layers, the past entangled with the present' (correspondence, 14/6/2002). There were teachers who approached the Holocaust from a historical perspective however, including Leonard who highlighted the problem with an emotive approach to teaching the Holocaust: it is easy to get an emotional reaction from students, but how much understanding will they have? What was interesting about Leonard was that he did not always teach the Holocaust if he did not feel he had sufficient time to teach it adequately.[5] Indeed, Short has noted, 'it is debateable whether covering the Holocaust superficially is preferable to not covering it at all' (Short, 1995, p.187). Leonard also stressed the issues of the complexity of the topic and the fact that history teachers have to teach this to Year 9-13 and 14 year old students – who do not necessarily possess the emotional or historical maturity to cope with such a study. Two other teachers who took part in the study also emphasised the importance of teaching the Holocaust from an historical point of view. Harold wrote at the end of his questionnaire return:

I feel strongly that History should be taught as an academic enquiry and not in the first instance as a tool in pursuit of other goals. However, it must remain that its teaching is about 'collective memory' and many of the skills learned are transferable into other walks of life. To teach history for political reasons will surely lead to horrors just like the Holocaust, even if those purposes at first sight might seem benign.

Anne had recently become head of her department. She alluded to differences between her approach and that of her former head of department, who took 'a much more

emotive approach'. Anne on the other hand was firmly of the opinion that the Holocaust should be taught from an historical point of view, allowing students to draw moral and social lessons for themselves:

> *If you try to remove the morality issue then you are going to get a proper study of history. The morality can come in later when you have all the information in front of you and you've discussed the sources and you have a personal opinion. But to cloud the judgment of students, who should be fairly open to that, is very dangerous. We don't teach history in that way for any other topic. And we shouldn't be teaching it that way for the topic of the Holocaust.*

Interestingly, Anne was the *only* teacher to discuss the work of an academic in relation to her classroom practice, 'I keep in contact with [the work of] Dr Fox…He taught me when I was at University'.

Prior to my research I understood the term 'Holocaust' as a generic term for National Socialist genocide. There are those who support such a view, Alan S Rosenbaum for example refers to 'the Nazi-engineered Holocaust against the Jews, Gypsies and millions of others' (Rosenbaum, 1996, p.1). However this interpretation of the Holocaust is contested, increasingly it has become a term which refers explicitly to the Jewish experience; the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum is an example of this. This is an area of academic debate connected to the question of whether the Holocaust is unique. While these issues have been thoroughly debated by academics; they do not seem to have been worked through by history teachers. Anne was also the *only* teacher who raised the issue of terminology:

> *I don't like the word 'Holocaust'. I haven't liked the word ever since I studied it at university. It is a study of genocide. And the Holocaust is part of that genocide…And I much prefer to talk about genocide. I do make a point, when we first start studying the topic, of explaining to kids why I will be saying genocide, and using 'Holocaust' as a term in certain cases as opposed to all the time.*

So how would you define the term Holocaust?

> *I would take that as meaning the execution of the Jews.*

And then genocide?

> *As a broader issue encompassing all groups. And I would always try to make it clear to the students that the Jewish issue is genocide as well. And I always try to link it to, for example, Somalia and more recent conflicts and try and show them how ethnic cleansing is not just about picking one group of people throughout the whole of history, but about the development of conflict with different groups of people. When teaching Nazi Germany I always try and get the issue of Aryan Race through. I try and*

feed the two lines together. It's not about what's not acceptable, it's more about what is perfect or should be protected. What I refuse to do is spoon feed them what is traditionally a party line to some degree. I'd much rather pupils saw it for themselves and drew their own conclusions. And most of them are more than capable of that if you give them the raw sources. And they'll pull it to pieces because they are not under pressure to be politically correct in that classroom.

Anne is clear and confident in her approach. What we see in her comments is an out and out rejection of an explicitly emotional presentation of the Holocaust in school history.

Stephanie articulated her philosophy less clearly. Her objectives were: to give students the skills to detect discrimination, prejudice and racism; so that students are aware of this key event in twentieth century history; to teach students about humanity and the capacity for evil within all human beings, so that students can recognise and respond appropriately to similar events, to prompt students to consider and protect the democracies they live in. Given that all but the second of these objectives is moral and social, Stephanie's reply to my question of how she would respond to Kinloch's view that history teachers should 'start and end with what happened and why' (1998) is interesting:

> *I would largely agree with that view. I think it can be very dangerous for individuals, or individual teachers, to try and impose their own moral views on pupils…We look at the historiography. (Stephanie)*

Her practice in fact reflected Meagher's (1999) view that through the historical, students clamber into the moral.

The illustration below demonstrates visually the range of opinion among teachers interviewed.

Historical	Social and Moral	Emotional

⟵⟶

Harold, Anne, Leonard, Stephanie, Mike, Hank, Walter, Barbara, Tom, Mark

There is a general lack of clarity among the profession where history teachers hold differing views as regards to the rationale behind the inclusion of the Holocaust on the National Curriculum for History. It seems likely that this stems partly from differing views regarding the purpose of school history, as well as from a general lack of clarity regarding the central aim of teaching the Holocaust in history. I began this article with a quotation from Kinloch. Until history teachers have the opportunity to collectively discuss and theorise the fundamental questions: how do we define the term 'Holocaust'?; what is important about teaching the Holocaust in history?; and how do we teach the Holocaust?, teaching objectives will remain unclear.

Notes

[1] 'Shoah' is Hebrew for 'a great and terrible wind' preferred by some over the term 'Holocaust'.

[2] I was interested in talking to teachers who taught in the same department in order to gain an insight into how clear objectives were within the same history departments. However, only on two occasions was I able to interview two members from the same department.

[3] As noted, Kent is selective and therefore while this school called itself a comprehensive it could not be described as fully comprehensive.

[4] Teachers' names have been changed.

[5] The amount of time spent teaching the Holocaust varied enormously. While Leonard did not always cover the topic, others had between two and four hours to teach about the rise of Hitler and the Holocaust. However, Barbara and her department spent sixteen hours teaching about the Holocaust, having *already* taught the rise of Hitler and looked at his policies. Similarly Anne devoted between ten and twelve fifty minute lessons to the Holocaust having already completed work on the rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany.

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Inside the Foundation Stage: a good life for four- and five-year-olds?

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Once upon a time, a long time ago, there were no four year olds to be found in infant or primary schools. The statutory school age of five had been established in 1870, after a hurried and confused debate in the House of Commons; one hundred years later, it was a regulation still honoured in practice. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, when I was a classroom teacher, children started school in the term after their fifth birthday. Termly admission to a reception class was the rule, not the exception. But by the mid 1980s the picture was changing. For example, in Sheffield, in the infant school without a nursery where I worked at the time, the LEA grudgingly allowed the early entrance of four year olds, on certain conditions. One was financial: these children came in unfunded, without a penny-piece of capitation. Other conditions were, perhaps, more principled; the under-age, nursery-age children were not to attend assembly, or to use the traditional concrete playground at the same time as the other infants (middles and tops, as they were then). These minor restrictions were not enough, self-evidently, to bring our provision up to the level of the nursery class we did not have and could not staff; we all knew – parents and staff alike – that what we provided was very much a watered-down version of best nursery practice, but we tried hard and accepted that worrying about quality was a necessary condition of providing for four year olds.

By 1987, these worries had become widespread. In that year, at a national seminar focussing on 'The First Year at School', organised by the short-lived successor to the Schools Council, the School Curriculum Development Committee, six leading researchers presented papers, each identifying areas of serious concern (NFER/SCDC 1987). One of these, by Caroline Sharp at NFER, reviewed current admission policies and practices across 90 local authorities. It was the first public acknowledgement of the increasing trend towards the admission to primary/infant school of children still of nursery school age. Sharp made good use of the recent Select Committee Report (1986), in particular its recommendation that conditions for four year olds in infant classes 'should compare in all respects with requirements for nursery classes'(para 5.45). She presented a series of powerful arguments for major improvements in provision. The delegates left the seminar with a mixture of feelings, ranging from cautious optimism to deep despondency, but our concerns outlived our optimism as the trend towards early admission into inappropriate provision continued apace.

During the 1990s I was commissioned to carry out evaluations of early admission policies in Bedfordshire, Hampshire and Hertfordshire. The same worrying issues kept appearing: an emphasis on particular and limiting aspects of literacy (paper, pencil and colouring-in), the absence of practical, purposeful mathematical activities (but plenty more paper, pencil and colouring-in), the lack of sustained, meaningful talk, and the infrequency of prolonged passages of complex imaginative play. These concerns were echoed in the work of other researchers, published throughout the 1980s and 90s: for example, Bennett & Kell (1989), HMI (1989), Cleave & Brown (1991), OfSTED (1993), Dowling (1995). Every one of these studies spelled out the same warning: all was not well in the reception classes of England.

It is against this historical background that we can understand the early years community's enthusiastic welcome for the introduction of the Foundation Stage for three to five year olds. We especially welcomed the opportunity to reconceptualise the priorities of the reception year, which was now to be seen as the culmination of a new and separate stage of education, based on the distinctive principles of early years education. We hoped that the findings of those earlier studies, documenting serious weaknesses in reception classes, would now be rendered obsolete. We looked forward to the re-classification of four and five year olds as the oldest children in this distinct new stage, rather than the youngest children in Key Stage 1. We imagined that these new structures would free four and five year olds from the damaging pressures of the Year 2 SATS, and the inappropriate expectations of early success in particular aspects of literacy and numeracy. We were enthusiastic about the possibility of continuity and coherence right across the Foundation Stage. In short, optimism was back on our professional agenda.

And indeed it was with a returning rush of optimism that I responded to an invitation from the Association of Teachers and Lectures (ATL) to work with Professor Janet Moyles on a small-scale enquiry into what was going on 'Inside the Foundation Stage'. The first phase of this enquiry, led by Sian Adams and Janet Moyles, was a questionnaire and interview survey of headteachers, reception class teachers, learning assistants, Foundation Stage governors, and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership personnel from across the country. The second phase, on which I took the lead with my colleague Elise Alexander, involved miniature case-

studies of a small sample of selected reception classes, recommended to us for their good practice by local authority inspectors. In the rest of this article I present a few of the issues that emerged from the second phase. As you will see, my optimism was short-lived.

First, the good news. The nine reception classes where we observed were safe, friendly welcoming places for young children to be. Relationships between adults and children were warm, affectionate and open. The children were both cared for and caring; their emotional well-being was assured. However, positive relationships are not enough. The second year of the Foundation Stage asks more of its educators than that they should build a harmonious community. It demands that they create and rigorously evaluate a challenging and worthwhile early years curriculum, in which children's learning is a priority, just as much as their well-being.

And this is where the bad news begins. We did not find what we were looking for: the extension of the best early years practice for three and four year olds in nurseries and family centres, to four and five year olds in primary/infant schools. On the contrary, we found a demonstrable gap between the quality of children's experiences in the reception classes in our small sample (the second year of the Foundation Stage) and the quality of their experiences in the first year of the Foundation Stage, as documented in, for example, Whalley (1994) and Bertram et al (2002). We saw too many reception classes that, far from mirroring excellent nursery practice, conformed much more closely to the typical Year 1 classroom, dominated by lessons, subjects, timetables and tightly defined learning objectives. The daily rhythm of classroom life that we observed (with a few honourable exceptions) was made up of long, inactive plenary sessions working through a list of learning intentions, an over-riding emphasis on literacy and numeracy (usually taught in the mornings) and limited and time-tabled access to the outdoors.

We saw the educators in these reception classes engaged in detailed planning, closely based on the QCA Curriculum Guidance document (QCA 2000), which was treated as if it were more than guidance – as if it were the curriculum itself. There seemed to be an assumption that the text under the heading 'What does the practitioner need to do?' was an official prescription, to be followed to the letter, saying all there is to say about pedagogy. The 'Stepping Stones' and Early Learning Goals appeared to constitute the official last word on what four and five year olds should learn.

In our view, all this is a profound mis-reading of the purpose and promise of the Foundation Stage and the reception class within it. We found little evidence of the changes in practice we had hoped for, or of educators re-thinking their priorities for children, and we set about reporting our findings with heavy hearts and a sense of disappointment. For encouragement we turned to the work of Peter Moss and Pat Petrie (2002), who have eloquently argued for the re-conceptualisation of *services* to young children in terms of *children's spaces*, or, as they put it in their extended commentary, as 'places for children to live their childhoods'. They contrast the instrumental approach of the policy-maker who asks 'What works?' with the need to ask deeper, more philosophical questions, in particular 'What is a good childhood?' This question, and others like it, (Is this place good enough for children's childhood? Are children leading a good life in here?) were ringing in my head throughout the writing of our report. But the answers to these questions are far from encouraging.

In too many reception classes the life of childhood is simply not good enough. There is more to being five years old than hitting all the literacy targets and knowing the number bonds to 20. There is more to a good childhood than phonemes and prepositions. In a good childhood children encounter, every day, at first hand, vivid and engaging elements of our mysterious, beautiful world; they engage in sustained, shared purposeful talk; they are absorbed in complex, divergent, imaginative play. If all this can happen in the first year of the Foundation Stage, and it does, can't it happen in the second year of the Foundation Stage, the reception class? Of course it can.

Meanwhile, all is not lost. Our original optimism has given way to determination. If the ambitious programme of the Foundation Stage has not yet been realised, then there is urgent development work to be done. So it is very good news that we found that in the majority of our sample schools the staff were aware that they were on a developmental journey and that the Foundation Stage was work in progress, rather than a mission accomplished. One especially articulate and visionary primary headteacher claimed that this work in progress would spread upwards, through the whole school. She commented 'We were coming to a point where we could see it wasn't right...at long last we've got the go-ahead to do what we've always believed in...the Foundation Stage reflects what we *all* needed to do on the active, first-hand curriculum...We're working on it and we're moving on'. In schools such as this, the staff group's current dissatisfaction could well be a powerful motivator for change. We hope that our report too, for all the disappointment it conveys, might also be a motivating factor in the pursuit of excellence.

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The Illusion of Choice

CLYDE CHITTY

Both New Labour and the Conservatives are keen to emphasise choice and diversity in crucial areas
of public provision – and particularly with regard to education and health. In this article,
FORUM co-Editor Clyde Chitty concentrates on recent proposals by the two main parties
for promoting greater choice in secondary schooling in England.

Choice is one of those 'motherhood' and 'apple pie' concepts that most people will say they believe in, without necessarily giving the matter very much thought. A recent MORI poll conducted for the Radio Four *Today* Programme, which featured it as a news item on the 7 July, found that most people were prepared to accept the idea of choice and the *language* of the private sector in matters relating to the delivery of public services. Of those polled, 79 per cent said they wanted public service providers to start treating them as 'customers'. Asked what they thought more choice would do to the National Health Service and the state education system – would it benefit everyone, or just the 'better-off' and the 'better-educated'? – three out of four respondents said they thought more choice would benefit everyone. At the same time, somewhat confusingly, around half of those polled said they would be happy to pay more tax in order to ensure a 'good quality' hospital and 'good quality' schools near their home. And many people were still uneasy about profit-making companies actually *delivering* public services. Of those polled, 37 per cent said private companies should not be involved in public service provision under any circumstances.

This article sets out to analyse the attitudes towards choice in education in two recently-published and widely-reported political documents: *Right to Choose*, published by the Conservative Party on the 29 June and *A Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*, published by the Department for Education and Skills on the 8 July.

Conservative Education Policy

The Introduction to *Right to Choose* contains a decidedly gloomy analysis of the current educational scene, arguing that after seven years of a Labour government, and despite a 40 per cent increase in public spending, 'standards in education remain unacceptably low'.

It highlights the fact, revealed in a MORI survey for the General Teaching Council published in January 2003, that a third of today's teachers believe they will no longer be teaching in five years' time. According to the Survey, there are *two* principal reasons why teachers are anxious to leave the profession after a relatively short period of time. The first is the workload resulting from 'unnecessary bureaucracy'. Every year, schools receive more than 2,000 pages of instructions, regulations and circulars from Whitehall – twelve pages for every working day. The second reason given by teachers is 'worsening pupil behaviour'. Around two-thirds of teachers apparently believe that standards of discipline, particularly in secondary schools, are falling.

The Conservative publication goes on to claim that parents respond to declining school standards, exacerbated by high staff turnover, by adopting one or other of a number of viable strategies. Some are able to move house into the catchment area of 'a good school'. Others find they are lucky in the lottery of the admissions appeal system. Some take the decision to leave the state system entirely. This leaves millions of pupils trapped in 'under-performing' schools – left behind while 'their more fortunate peers get the start in life that should be the right of *all* British children'.

Following on from this analysis, *Right to Choose* is chiefly concerned with *three* problems a Conservative government would aim to solve. First, parents are not allowed to be in charge of their children's schooling. Choice is restricted to the few, and the majority of children have to go to the schools chosen for them by the local council. Second, heads and teachers are not given the freedom to run their own schools. According to a nationwide survey of teachers, conducted for the Conservative Party by Opinion Research Business and published in June 2003, 92 per cent of teachers think that the amount of red tape they have to comply with reduces the amount of time they have for preparing lessons. At the same time, they are not allowed to tailor their lessons to the children in their charge. Third, the supply of schooling continues to be controlled by central government. The attitude persists that all children must be educated together in large, 'one-size-fits-all', state institutions, and no account is taken of the diversity of interests and aptitudes of our children.

Bearing all these problems in mind, Conservative education policy is now said to have *three* main elements: the Right to Choose, Freedom for Professionals and the Right to Supply.

Taking each of these elements in turn, the first of them means that under a Conservative government, the parents of all school-age children – at primary, secondary and sixth-form levels – will have the right to choose 'the best school for their child'. In effect, parents will be able to spend a notional sum of around £5,500 a year as they see fit. This could go towards the fees at a private school or be used at an existing or newly-established state school of their choice. Those schools which persistently fail their pupils will be taken over by new management – or lose their right to taxpayer funding.

The section on Freedom for Professionals contains a number of specific policy proposals. Schools will receive a 'per pupil tariff', including a capital maintenance element and an adjustment 'to take account of specific local and pupil circumstances'. Heads will know their budgets at the start of the school year and 'will be able to set their budget priorities based on the needs of their school and not on the preferences of ministers'. A Conservative government will scrap targets on schools imposed from Whitehall. It will also end the Surplus Places Rule whereby popular schools

are forbidden to expand while there are empty places at other local schools. Appeals Panels will be abolished so that 'headteachers are once again in charge of discipline policy and are able to establish their authority in the classroom'. Heads and governors will be able to vary the pay and conditions of staff, and, perhaps of even greater significance, will be free to determine their own admissions policies.

Under the section on the Right to Supply, any school, charitable or commercial, that can show itself capable of providing a good education for the same cost as a state school will be entitled to receive taxpayer funding. This means a Conservative government will break the link between state funding and state provision, allowing the creation of new schools run by a variety of providers, including faith groups, parents and private companies.

The policies outlined above give rise to a number of obvious questions, and for the purpose of finding some answers, I recently interviewed Sir Robert Balchin, former Chairperson of the Grant Maintained Schools' Trust and currently one of the major architects of Conservative education policy.

Question One: If *all* parents are to be given the right to choose the 'best school' for their child, is there not likely to be a problem over the provision of a sufficient number of places at popular and oversubscribed schools, particularly at the secondary stage, even if such schools are allowed to expand and the Surplus Places Rule is abolished?

Sir Robert conceded that it was probably impossible to devise a viable system which would guarantee *all* pupils access to the school(s) of their choice, but he was confident that there could be a big enough increase in the number of 'good schools' and/or places at 'good schools' to go a very long way towards satisfying parental demand.

The Right to Choose itself outlines *four* possible solutions to the problem:-
1 Popular schools will be able – and will be given a financial incentive – to expand.
2 New schools will be able to set up wherever there is parental demand.
3 Underperforming schools will come under real pressure to improve, since they will face competition for their pupils from new or better schools.
4 Underperforming schools will be forced to improve by being taken over by new management.

It is also pointed out that according to statistics published in *The Times Educational Supplement* of 26 March 2004 and in *The Daily Telegraph* of 27 March 2004, there are now 150,750 grammar-school pupils in England, representing 4.6 per cent of the secondary school population, compared with 111,848 pupils, representing 3.8 per cent, in 1993. This 35 per cent increase in places – equivalent to the creation of 46 new grammar schools – has been achieved solely by the expansion of grammar schools on existing sites. According to *Right to Choose*, 'this shows what can be done when there is a real appetite for creating new places'.

Question Two: Is there not a contradiction between giving all parents the right to choose and giving schools greater control over their admissions policies? What would happen if a secondary comprehensive school opted to become selective?

This is a question that has been regularly directed at right-wing education thinkers since the Conservative election victory of 1979. In 1986 the Hillgate Group failed to understand (or found it convenient to ignore) the sheer absurdity of putting two mutually contradictory propositions together in its widely-publicised pamphlet *Whose Schools? A Radical Manifesto*. On page 14, we read that parents should be free to send their children to any school of their choice; and this is followed by the statement that schools should have the right to control their own admissions.

In an interview with *The Times*, published on 3 February 1992, Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach, former Head of the Downing Street Policy Unit and at that time Chairperson of the School Examinations and Assessment Council, conceded: 'even if you set out to give parents real choice in the education system, it is inevitable that the schools themselves will demand to choose the kind of pupils that come' – a remark which would seem to bear out the view often expressed on the Left that in a market system, *schools choose parents*, not the other way around.

In response to this dilemma, Sir Robert Balchin argued that the rights of parents and the rights of schools must be allowed to come into balance and that local headteachers and governors must be trusted to behave sensibly to take account of local circumstances. The Secretary of State could be given reserve powers to arbitrate on supply in local areas where necessary. Sir Robert did not foresee a situation where a significant number of comprehensive schools would wish to become selective.

Question Three: If charities and businesses are allowed to set up new schools for taxpayer-funded pupils, is it not possible that some 'undesirable' or 'unsuitable' individuals will be running state schools with government backing?

Sir Robert pointed out (fairly) that this was also a problem which faced New Labour, with the proposed expansion in the number of city academies. Indeed when I posed the question, I was, in fact, thinking particularly of the evangelical Christian Sir Peter Vardy whose creationist beliefs already influence the curriculum of Emmanuel City College in Gateshead and who wants to play a leading role in the Government's city academy programme. A Conservative government would apparently make sure that privately-sponsored schools were regularly inspected and that the curriculum of such schools could bear close scrutiny. It is, of course, fair to point out that in any market system of schools, parents have the ultimate right to withdraw their children.

New Labour Education Policy

Turning now to the New Labour *Strategy* Document, it is argued in the Introduction that the central characteristic of the new education system which the Government is planning will be 'personalisation' – 'so that the system fits to the individual rather than the individual having to fit to the system'. There will be more choices between types of provider so that there really are different and personalised opportunities available. The goal(s) specified at the start of Chapter Four concerned with the reform of secondary schooling is: 'More choice for parents and pupils; independence for schools'.

The *Five Year Strategy* highlights an increase in the numbers of two types of school, specialist schools and city

academies, as the chief means of enhancing choice and diversity in the secondary sector. The number of specialist schools and colleges has already increased from 196 when Labour came to power in 1997 to 1,955 in September 2004; and it is envisaged that there will be a further massive expansion over the next four years. The number of city academies – 17 in September 2004 – will have increased to 200 by the year 2010. And it is hoped that 95 per cent of state secondaries will be either independent specialist schools or city academies by the year 2008.

This concern to promote choice and diversity which occupies such a prominent place in the Government's programme has to be viewed in the context of its remarkably hostile attitude towards the idea of the comprehensive school so increasingly apparent in the seven-year period since its 1997 election victory. And this has been accompanied by a total refusal to contemplate the possibility of ending the selection procedures adopted by the 164 surviving grammar schools.

Back in 1995, while he was attempting to pacify a restless audience during the lively education debate at the October Labour Party Conference, David Blunkett made the now (in)famous statement: 'Read my lips. No selection, either by examination or interview, under a Labour government'. It later turned out that what he had actually meant to say was 'no *further* selection', and this gave his declaration a totally different meaning. The phrase 'no selection' signified an end to all existing grammar schools; 'no *further* selection' was, in effect, a guarantee of their retention.

Then on 12 March 2000, two days after the announcement of the voting figures in the Ripon ballot which guaranteed the future of Ripon Grammar School, Blunkett gave a frank interview to *The Sunday Telegraph* in which he argued that it was time to 'bury the dated arguments of previous decades' and reverse 'the outright opposition to grammar schools' that had been 'a touchstone of Labour politics for at least 35 years'. He went on: 'I'm simply not interested in hunting the grammar schools. In fact, I'm desperately trying to avoid the whole debate in education once again, as was the case in the 1960s and 1970s, concentrating on the issue of selection, when it *should* be concentrating on *the raising of standards*. … Arguments about selection are part of a past agenda.'

In a speech he gave to a group of modernising New Labour activists in Bedfordshire in September 2000, Tony Blair himself said that the debate about eleven-plus selection was part of the agenda of the 1960s and 1970s, and he attacked the comprehensive schools for adopting a 'one-size-fits-all' mentality. In his view of these schools, there was 'no banding or setting, uniform provision for all, hostility to the whole notion of specialisation and of 'centres of excellence' within areas of the curriculum'.

In February 2001, the Prime Minister refused to distance himself from the claim made by his Communications Director Alastair Campbell that 'the day of the bog-standard comprehensive' was over. This was at the time of the publication of the 2001 Green Paper which Blair said was ushering in 'a post-comprehensive era'. It was the principal message of the Green Paper that 'promoting choice and diversity was synonymous with 'raising standards and achieving results'.

As we have already seen, far from securing an *end* to eleven-plus selection, which obviously entails thousands of pupils being consigned to second-class secondary modern schools, the Labour Government has actually presided over a large and continuing *increase* in the number of grammar-school places. According to statistics already cited, there are now 150,750 grammar-school pupils in England, representing 4.6 per cent of the secondary school population, compared with 111,848 pupils, representing 3.8 per cent of the school population, ten years ago.

Turning now to the emphasis on specialisation as a significant part of the drive to promote choice and diversity, this is *not* a new phenomenon, but dates back to the early years of the 1990-97 Major administration. In July 1992, the then Education Secretary John Patten wrote an article for *New Statesman and Society* in which he argued that 'selection should not be a great issue for the 1990s as it was in the 1960s. The new S-word for all Socialists to come to terms with is, rather, 'Specialisation'. The fact is that children excel at different things; it is foolish to ignore it, and some schools will wish specifically to cater for these differences. Specialisation will be the answer for some – though not all – children, driven by aptitude and interest, as much as by ability' (*New Statesman and Society*, 17 July 1992).

The idea of 'selection by specialisation' has certainly not endeared the specialist schools policy to Socialists and other supporters of comprehensive education. Yet there is evidence that this policy is now growing in popularity, and it will not be easy to reverse this initiative. This is especially the case now that the right to acquire specialist status will no longer be restricted to an elite group of schools. There are, however, a number of problems associated with the scheme which need to be kept under constant review. Although only six per cent of such schools choose to do so, it is currently possible for schools specialising in technology, languages, sports, arts and music to select up to ten per cent of their pupils on the basis of aptitude. This raises the whole issue of how one can distinguish 'aptitude' from 'ability', except possibly in such areas as sport and music. There is also the point that in our class-divided and highly competitive society, specialisms can *never* be equal: they rapidly become ranked in a hierarchy of status. There is a very real danger that the proliferation of specialist schools will exacerbate the already steep pecking order of secondary schools – and particularly in urban areas where the concept of choice often has no real meaning.

But more worrying than all of this is the Government's policy of encouraging the spread of city academies. The idea of these academies is clearly modelled on the Conservatives' City Technology Colleges Project, announced by the then Education Secretary Kenneth Baker at the 1986 Conservative Party Conference. It was the original aim of Mrs Thatcher's Government to see a large network of CTCs established in inner-city areas throughout the country, but the programme was abandoned with the creation of a mere fifteen. New Labour has clearly learned from the Conservatives' mistakes. For example: whereas Kenneth Baker announced that business would pay 'all or most' of the estimated £10m cost of setting up a new CTC, the Labour Government wants only about £2m from each of the sponsors. Of course, one of the chief problems with any such scheme of privatisation is that wholly unsuitable individuals will gain control of schools. As mentioned earlier, the obvious example here is Sir Peter Vardy who already sponsors Emmanuel City College in Gateshead and

a second college in Middlesbrough and who plans to open a third college at Thorne, near Doncaster, in September 2005.

The really ironic thing about all this experimentation with choice and diversity is that it is taking place against the background of a remarkable story of *comprehensive success*. As measured by those entering and passing public examinations, standards have been steadily rising since the comprehensive school first became national policy in the mid-1960s. In 1962, when 20 per cent of eleven-year-olds were selected for a grammar-school education, only 16 per cent of pupils obtained five O Level passes. In 2003, 53 per cent of sixteen-year-olds achieved five or more A* to C passes at GCSE. The A Level Examination, originally designed for less than ten per cent of the school population, was achieved in two or more subjects by 37 per cent of young people in 2001. Numbers in all forms of higher education have increased from around eight per cent of the relevant age group in the early 1960s to 43 per cent today, with a government aim of increasing this still further to 50 per cent by the year 2010.

Government education policy has provoked criticism from those who are knowledgeable about its shortcomings. The Report of the cross-party Education Select Committee on Secondary School Admissions, published on 22 July 2004, argued that 'the Government needs to explain how it reconciles its insistence that there will be no return to selection with its willingness to retain and increase selection where it already exists'. It raised concerns that parents in many parts of the country were struggling with an unclear and poorly regulated admissions system. In the words of the Report: 'the school admissions process, founded on parental preference, can prove a frustrating and time-consuming cause of much distress in the lives of many families' (reported in *The Guardian*, 22 July 2004).

In the midst of profound anxiety about the future, there is at least one cause for optimism. In a speech to the Annual Conference of the Professional Association of Teachers, delivered on 27 July 2004, Schools Minister Stephen Twigg gave a strong indication that specialist schools would soon lose their right to select up to ten per cent of their pupils on the basis of 'aptitude'. It was possible, he said, to have 'a kind of natural aptitude for sport and music', but there was 'less of a case for other subjects' (reported in *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 July 2004).

It would be really exciting (though very surprising) if Labour ministers could (re)discover a belief in human educability which was, after all, the original basis of the comprehensive reform. When this Government interferes in the *internal* organisation of schools, it does so in order to encourage setting by ability, even in the primary school, and the pinning of ability labels on pupils from an early stage. In other words, we apparently need differentiation *within* schools as well as differentiation *between* schools – which is what the late Sir Keith Joseph was arguing for in an interview with Brian Walden on ITV's *Weekend World* programme back in February 1984. Ministers really ought to find time to read the recently-published *Learning Without Limits* (reviewed elsewhere in this number of *Forum*) which is a record of the experiences of a group of classroom teachers who have rejected the concept of 'fixed ability'. This book has already received ecstatic reviews, notably by Professor Tim Brighouse in *The Times Educational Supplement* (4 June 2004). It is vital that we get across the message that it is only when we dismantle all the structures rooted in the fallacy of fixed ability or potential that we can have a truly effective state education system. And this would be one in which 'choice' ceases to be the overriding buzz-word.

History Matters

DEREK GILLARD

Student teachers are no longer required to know anything about the history of education in England. Derek Gillard suggests that this is a sad – if not dangerous – omission. He explains how he came to write his website article on the subject and reviews Clyde Chitty's new book which looks at the history of education from a political perspective.

Education in England: a brief history
DEREK GILLARD, 2004
www.dg.dial.pipex.com/educ19.shtml

Education Policy in Britain
CLYDE CHITTY, 2004
London: Palgrave Macmillan, £16.50, 231 pp., ISBN 1 4039 0222-4

History has never enjoyed a very good press. Voltaire said it was 'nothing more than a tableau of crimes and misfortunes', and more recently Henry Ford famously described it as 'more or less bunk'.

The subject has fared little better as a component of the school curriculum in recent years. While lip-service has often been paid to its importance, it has enjoyed – or perhaps endured – a rather chequered career. After the Second World War it was often variously treated as part of social studies or integrated studies. Later, as a National Curriculum subject, it suffered interference from a variety of groups with political axes to grind, and more recently it has been effectively relegated to playing a small part in citizenship education.

So perhaps it is not entirely surprising that when it comes to educating teachers, the history of their enterprise is treated with an equal lack of interest and commitment.

In researching this article I spent a fairly fruitless couple of hours trawling through the websites of university education departments, trying to find some mention of the history of education in their initial training courses. I could not find one. The colleges are not to blame for this: the content of their courses is effectively set by government policy.

I did find two courses with a historical perspective. The *MA in History of Education* course at London University's Institute of Education requires the study of 'childhood in historical and comparative perspective, and research methods for social, historical and educational inquiry.' It offers optional modules in 'educational provision and practice in nineteenth-century England, and politics and education in twentieth-century England.' And the University of Birmingham's School of Education has a new BA course on *History and Education* which 'combines a study of modern history with an analysis of education theory, practice and politics.' It offers modules including one on the 'History of Schooling'. But neither of these courses is an initial teacher training course.

So we can fairly conclude that when it comes to educating teachers, the history of schooling is virtually ignored. Yet there is clearly a desire for information about how we got where we are now, as my experience with my website shows.

In July 1998 I was invited to give a talk to a group of American student teachers visiting Oxford for a summer school. I was asked to give them a brief account of the history of education in England. The lecture was to become an annual event, and when I set up my website in October 1999 I included the notes I had compiled for the American students.

In 2001 I rewrote these sketchy notes, turning them into a reasonably coherent essay of around 5,000 words. I also added a timeline listing major education acts, reports and other significant events.

The number of readers steadily increased and I began to get emails – mostly from student teachers in the UK – seeking further information. It was one of these emails which, in March this year, convinced me it was time to do a major rewrite. Two months later the completely revised and updated *Education in England: A Brief History* was uploaded. It is now 15,000 words long and there is also a text-only version suitable for printing, a more comprehensive timeline and a glossary which explains commonly used terms and acronyms (designed especially for non-UK readers).

A Brief History is now being read more than two hundred times a week, indicating that there is a demand for information about the history of our schools and that there appear to be few places where such information is available.

Education in England: A Brief History

A Brief History traces the establishment of the earliest schools in England, the development of the curriculum in the seventeenth century and the debates about whether the masses should be educated at all. It notes that it was the industrial revolution which finally convinced politicians that an efficient workforce would need more than basic skills in reading and writing. It shows how, in the nineteenth century, education in England developed on the basis of class divisions and describes the style of education offered in the elementary schools.

It looks at early twentieth century developments in secondary education and lists some of the influences which shaped the style of teaching in the new primary schools. It outlines the main provisions of the *1944 Education Act*, particularly in relation to the government of education and the 'tripartite system' of secondary schools, and chronicles the post-war establishment of the welfare state, the provision of school meals and milk, and the expansion of further education.

It notes the mood of progressivism and expansion in the 1960s, with moves towards comprehensivisation, the

establishment of middle schools and the publication of the Plowden and Robbins Reports. It contrasts this mood with that of the 1970s, which saw the failure to establish a fully comprehensive secondary school system and the growing disenchantment with education characterised by the 'Black Papers', the William Tyndale affair, Callaghan's Ruskin College Speech and the 'Great Debate'.

It describes how, in the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher's administrations began creating an 'education market place', transferring power from the schools and the LEAs to parents and central government, outlines the provisions of the 1988 Education 'Reform' Act, explains why LEAs began closing their middle schools and notes John Major's call for more grammar schools.

It recalls that the mantra of Tony Blair's first administration was 'standards not structures' and describes how, with David Blunkett reneging on his promise to end selection, the assault on the comprehensive school began. It reports the Blair Government's current obsession with privatisation, diversity and 'faith schools'.

It concludes with the suggestion that we have now come full circle. 'With the government determined to maintain selection and elitism (mirroring the class divisions of the 1860s); with teachers' pay once again linked to performance (a reflection of the 1862 'Payment by Results' scheme); with unqualified classroom assistants taking on more of the teacher's role (reminiscent of the monitorial system in the elementary schools); and with the National Curriculum evermore utilitarian in content and purpose (resembling the 1904 Secondary Regulations); many would argue that the public education service in England has now come full circle. One can only look back on the optimism and progressivism of the 1960s and hope that one day inspiration, creativity and a genuine commitment to equality may once again become the hallmarks of education in England.'

Education in England: A Brief History includes links to related articles on the faith schools debate, 'creationism' masquerading as science, New Labour's values and the Plowden Report. It forms part of my *Education Archive* which contains more than thirty articles and book reviews, many originally written for *Forum*.

Education Policy in Britain

Clyde Chitty's new book covers much the same ground but, as you would expect, it does so in considerably greater depth and it explores many areas of education policy-making which are not covered in *A Brief History*. It also includes information about education in Scotland and Wales.

In his *Introduction*, Chitty stresses the importance of the historical approach but warns that history must not be treated as a 'succession of chance events or as just 'one thing after another'.' He argues that 'policy-making is always influenced by what has happened in past decades and that the historical account must always be presented within a coherent explanatory framework stressing the key themes underpinning political and social change.'

In Chapter 1 he puts forward arguments as to *Why education matters*. He notes that, though all politicians talk of the need to 'raise educational standards', there is less agreement about what that means in practice. He points out that the very concept of mass education is a comparatively recent phenomenon, quoting Samuel Whitbread, who told

the House of Commons in 1807 that 'giving education to the labouring classes of the poor ... would ... be prejudicial to their morals and happiness ... it would teach them to despise their lot in life.'

He argues that education is increasingly seen in utilitarian terms. He quotes, for example, the 1985 White Paper *Better Schools*, which reminded schools that 'preparation for working life is one of their principal functions.' He laments the lack of importance attached to the social function of schooling and suggests that social reconstructionism is an appropriate ideology for the future. 'We must promote a form of education which is ... open to new ideas and prepared to challenge past orthodoxies. Above all, it must surely be one of the social functions of schooling to tackle issues of equity and social justice and help create a truly inclusive society in which all forms of diversity – cultural, racial, religious and sexual – are celebrated and endorsed.'

Chapters 2 to 4 present a chronological history of education policy-making from 1944 to the present day.

Chapter 2 *The rise and fall of the post-war consensus* describes the assumptions underpinning the post-war consensus which began to break down in the 1970s 'when economic recession fundamentally altered the map of British politics and led to the questioning of many of the assumptions of the post-war era.' In education, two assumptions in particular began to be questioned – the agreement, based on the 1944 Education Act's 'national system, locally administered', that politicians would not get involved in the school curriculum, and the effectiveness of the 'tripartite' system of secondary schools.

Chapter 3 covers the period from Callaghan's Ruskin College Speech in 1976 to John Major's call for more grammar schools in 1997. Chitty suggests that accountability and control were the twin themes which underpinned the Callaghan Administration's approach to education. These themes had become increasingly dominant as employers criticised teachers for being 'overtly hostile to the capitalist ethic', the writers of the 'Black Papers' attacked 'progressive' teaching methods and the William Tyndale Affair legitimised (unfair) criticism of the Plowden Report. Despite all this ammunition, Margaret Thatcher's first two administrations, he argues, were 'notable for a remarkable degree of caution in the actual implementation of radical or innovative social policies.' This was all the more surprising, given the number of right-wing think tanks and study groups (the 'New Right') which were seeking to influence the Thatcher Governments. The big changes in education were to come in the 1988 Education 'Reform' Act which, Chitty suggests, 'made the decisive break with the principles which had underpinned the education service since the Butler Education Act of 1944.'

He describes the educational philosophy of John Major, Thatcher's successor as Prime Minister, as 'an interesting mixture of a concern to promote Thatcherite privatising measures and a more traditional Conservative belief in the self-evident values of a meritocratic society.' One of the policies which resulted from this was the promotion of selection by specialisation.

In Chapter 4 *Education and New Labour*, Chitty draws attention to the 'obvious contradictions involved in affirming a commitment to 'social justice' and 'community' while, at the same time, pursuing competitive market policies.' He points out the discrepancy between the

Blair Government's mantra 'standards not structures' and its first education act which was 'chiefly concerned with structures'. He notes David Blunkett's 'slip of the tongue' announcement of a change of party policy on selection and provides a critique of the Government's attack on the comprehensive school (including the problems it caused Education Secretary Estelle Morris) and its 'single-minded determination' to pursue specialisation, choice and diversity at the secondary level.

Having set out a chronological account of events from 1944 to the present in Chapters 2-4, Chitty turns his attention in Chapter 5 to some of the themes that run through the period, and in Chapters 6-9 to the role of policy-making in relation to the curriculum, thus following his own rule that 'the historical account must always be presented within a coherent explanatory framework.'

In Chapter 5 *The changing worlds of educational policy* he analyses the policy-making process itself and in particular the shift from the post-war tripartite partnership to central authority. He describes in some detail the tensions between the DES bureaucracy, Her Majesty's Inspectorate and the Downing Street Policy Unit and reports the political manoeuvrings and machinations behind the 1988 Education 'Reform' Act. He concludes with sections on policy-making in Scotland and Wales.

Chapter 6 *The evolving curriculum from 5 to 14* looks at how 'control' of the curriculum was taken away from teachers through the move from an ethos of partnership to one of accountability, and analyses the problems created by competing definitions of the school curriculum as central government took control. He laments the crude watering-down of the National Curriculum in the early 1990s and argues that developments since 1997 have resulted in its further diminution.

Chapter 7 *The 14-19 continuum: issues and policies for education and training* traces policy-making for this age range from before the raising of the school leaving age in 1972-3 to the 2003 14-19 discussion document. The debates about the status of vocational qualifications, GCSEs and A Levels are all presented and analysed. Chitty suggests that 'It seems clear that 14 is now the age at which all young people have to make all-important decisions affecting their future education and career prospects.' For the sake of a common 'entitlement' curriculum, he urges the government to 'accept the concept of breadth over time and concede the need for a modular approach to 14-19 curriculum planning.'

In Chapter 8 Chitty traces the development of policy in the areas of *Pre-school provision, higher education and lifelong learning*. In relation to the first, he describes the debates which have surrounded the place of play in the nursery curriculum and raises concerns about the increasing level of private provision of nursery places. The section on higher education traces policy-making from Robbins to the 2003 White Paper with its controversial proposal for variable university top-up fees. Differing views of a learning society are presented in the final section, which notes that 'Much of New Labour's attitude towards lifelong learning was ... based on so-called human capital theory,' and that the government's record in this area 'has not been one of undiluted success.'

Chapter 9 *Issues of diversity, equality and citizenship* deals with policy-making over a range of social issues. It explains the historical background to the citizenship debate and outlines the recommendations of the 1998 Crick Report. It stresses the importance of combating prejudice, especially in the areas of race and sexuality, reviews the current debate about gender and educational achievement and looks at the arguments surrounding segregation or integration in relation to boys and girls, children with special educational needs, black children and faith communities. Chitty concludes 'It would seem axiomatic that all primary and secondary schools have the twin functions of promoting the achievement of all their pupils and, at the same time, challenging prejudice and intolerance in all their various forms.'

In his final chapter, Chitty draws on international comparisons to assess the effectiveness of New Labour education policies. He looks to the future structure of secondary schooling and is sceptical that proposals for groups of schools working collaboratively – 'collegiates' – will 'remove all the more harmful and divisive effects of the Government's programme for selection and specialisation.' He suggests that, for the most part, New Labour has continued to pursue Tory education policies, and he ends with a warning of the dangers inherent in overaccountability.

I suggested earlier that Chitty's book 'looks at the history of education from a political perspective'. It would be equally true to say that it 'looks at the politics of education from a historical perspective'. The two perspectives need to be interwoven if sense is to be made of either. Chitty's book does exactly that interweaving.

Nothing – especially in education – is entirely value-free, and Chitty's book is no exception. He makes no secret of his support for a fully comprehensive school system or his concerns about Thatcher's promotion of the market place and Blair's dedication to 'diversity' and religious schools. At the same time, he presents the facts fairly and authoritatively.

I began by suggesting that the history of schooling gets scant attention when it comes to training tomorrow's teachers. Their education, sadly, now appears to be almost entirely utilitarian. A knowledge of the content of the National Curriculum – and some idea how to 'deliver' it – seems to be pretty well all that is required. This is simply not good enough. The education of young teachers is about much more than assimilating a list of facts to be taught or acquiring some skills in classroom management, useful though these may be. Young teachers need to take an active part in the debate about the nature and purpose of education, something they can do only if they have some understanding of its history and the politics which have shaped it.

Much of the late Brian Simon's work – including the establishment of the History of Education Society and the journal *History of Education* – was dedicated to illustrating the inseparability of history and practice. Clyde Chitty's *Education Policy in Britain* is a fitting continuation of that work.

Both Chitty's book, and, in its more modest way, my *Brief History*, seek to provide information for those who want to understand how we got to where we are now, and to stimulate an informed debate about where we go from here.

Note

The History of Education Society website can be found at
   www.historyofeducation.org.uk

Learning without Limits

CHRIS KEARNEY
Chris Kearney teaches in the Department of Educational Studies, Goldsmiths College.

Learning without Limits

There is a great deal I can identify with in this wonderful book. During my time as a classroom teacher and later an advisory teacher in Hackney and Tottenham in the seventies and eighties my practice was informed by the principles of 'transformability' outlined in this book. Many of my generation of teachers were committed to mixed ability teaching and were keen to find ways of translating our ideals of social justice into classroom practice. Although there were constraints we were given sufficient autonomy to experiment. Educational drama provided the cornerstone to my own work and it was here that I realised that it was possible for young children to work on very sophisticated concepts and realise their true potential. I also found that Rosenthal and Jacobson's view that 'teacher expectation' had an enormous impact on children's capacity for learning was borne out in practice. More significantly I discovered that it was not always the children who fared best in the conventional academic areas who provided the best ideas or solutions in the drama. It often gave voice to those who had previously thought they had little or nothing to contribute. It also contributed enormously to the social health of the group. However, over the past two decades we have seen the dramatic erosion of teacher autonomy. Over-prescription in terms of curriculum and very narrow models of 'good practice', policed by an inspectorate, whose autonomy is similarly constrained, has severely limited such experimentation. These policies are often underpinned by a notion that quality in education can be ensured only by everyone having access to an identical curriculum. Increasingly they are premised on the notion of biologically innate ability. However, the concept of 'fixed ability' seems to be losing ground even among supporters.

In his recent column in *The Independent* (20 August 2004) Raj Persaud, consultant psychiatrist at the Maudsley Hospital and pop TV pundit tackled the subject in his search for an explanation for the seemingly unstoppable improvement in results at GCSE and A level. Drawing on quantitive research by James Flynn and (unspecified) cross national surveys he asserts that throughout the industrialised world average IQ levels have risen since the 1930s; 'with the average increase in the intelligence of children the same age being three points per decade.' Flynn showed that since the 1970s this has increased by 3.5 points per decade. Raj continues, 'possible explanations for this startling effect include...' What does Raj suggest?

More effective teachers? The success of mixed ability teaching and comprehensive education? No, I'm afraid that he settles for answers that has nothing to do with teachers:

> ...*better diet and health, which have raised average height since 1945, smaller families ensuring more parental attention per child and higher levels of environmental stimulation.*

I quote Raj at length not so much for his penetrating analysis of contemporary life, but to demonstrate how deeply this 'common sense' notion of IQ is embedded in our culture.

In such a context, this is an important, timely, courageous and optimistic book. It describes a unique project involving academics, classroom teachers, their colleagues and their pupils. Drawing on wide ranging evidence from the 1950s onwards, the academics begin by systematically discrediting this widely held, 'common sense' notion of IQ. They make it clear that the fatalistic view of human potential colours most aspects of current government policy and many officially sanctioned models of 'good' practice. But the authors do much more than debunk this myth. They unmask the different conceptions of learning and teaching which lie behind such assumptions. The authors demonstrate how the obsession with testing and sorting children by ability has distorted or constrained both teachers' and children's creativity and inventiveness; even those children who are deemed 'successful'.

Moreover they demonstrate how these approaches have been translated into the 'standards agenda' which has eroded teachers' autonomy over the past two or three decades. The idea of innate intelligence has re emerged in recent years in the push for 'school improvement'. What particularly rankles is that, as a result of this 'new' approach, secondary schools now direct resources and energy to support those who they believe will achieve five A-C passes at GCSE. Gillborn and Young note that schools categorise their pupils as 'safe', 'underachievers' and 'without hope'. They discovered predictably that 'boys, students receiving free school meals and Black students were overrepresented in the 'without hope' group.' I guess similar findings would emerge for primary schools where a growing number of schools are 'setting' for English and maths. It makes a mockery of the idea of 'inclusive' education and the comprehensive ideal.

The authors arc candid about their own position. From the outset they declare their commitment to 'learning without limits'.

> ...*learning free from the needless constraints imposed by ability-focussed practices, free from the indignities of being labelled top, middle or bottom, fast or slow, free from the wounding consciousness of being treated as someone who can aspire to only limited achievements. Learning without limits becomes possible when young people's school experiences*

They have a different interpretation from people like Raj Persaud of what went wrong in the decades prior to 1988 and have a more optimistic view of human educability. They feel that not enough attention was paid to 'the crucial pedagogical task of developing and elaborating approaches to teaching free from the constraints imposed by ability labelling.' What is special about this book is that it puts forward viable alternatives drawn from the work of eight practising teachers committed to the ideal of 'learning without limits'. The authors' optimism has both feet firmly planted on the ground.

Not only is this an accessible and highly readable book; it is an exemplary research project. The eight teachers chosen to participate work across the entire age range of compulsory education. They also represent a wide range of institutional settings and their children are a true cross section in terms of the diversity of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. Vivid accounts are given of the teachers' day-today practice and the reasoning behind their very individual approaches is explored in depth and detail. Unlike much of the official exemplification of 'good practice' we are given a sense of real teachers in real classrooms with real children managing a complex and human process. The miracle is that they are achieving their successes under the galling constraints of current policy. That shows real commitment.

The academics from Cambridge University really 'walk their talk'. They are keen that their accounts are co-composed with the teachers. Each teacher 's practice is given a separate chapter. (One of the teachers wrote her own account) They are fascinating descriptions of their work. The university staff provide sensitive and honest commentaries on this practice, sometimes relating it to educational theory. In this way they capture the complexity of the teaching and learning processes; examining it from many perspectives. Not only did they observe and ask the teachers to discuss their own practice in depth, they also ask the children for their views. This vividly illuminates the teachers' approaches and stands as testimony to their success. It also considerably strengthens the authors' arguments.

What is interesting is that although the teachers' practice have similar values and approaches, their teaching styles and individual priorities are varied and linked to their own histories and identities.

Similarly they all attempt to include the histories, opinions and identities of their pupils into their own work. Moreover, they all stress the importance of the emotional aspects of learning and believe that it is only through feeling safe and secure in the classroom that children will be able to take the risks necessary for real learning. They see it as their duty to discover ways of making the things they choose to focus upon interesting and accessible to all children. For this they create open ended and problem solving activities. Equally they stress the social nature of learning and encourage collaborative learning in the classroom and sometimes the school. In one institution the older children were asked to plan and teach lessons with younger children, with the support of the teacher; a very profound learning experience for everyone.

In the third part of the book the University staff abstract some general patterns and principles from the teachers' accounts. This is where the book really breaks new ground since the authors reveal the common underlying patterns without rendering them simplistic or banal. They coin the term 'transformability' to stand in opposition to the current approaches encouraged by the government through their Strategies, SATs and CATs, which has more in common with what Douglas Barnes used to refer to as the 'transmission' model of education and Friere called the 'banking' model. They are clear that teaching and learning cannot be reduced to a set of predictable routines. Transformability is the potential for transforming learning capacity and the teachers highlight several purposes which inform their approaches and provide a climate for active and effective leaning (affective purposes, social purposes, intellectual purposes). In turn these purposes are achieved through three key pedagogical principles of Co-agency, Everybody (they deliberately avoid that much abused word 'inclusion') and Trust. These principles guide the teachers' decision making about what to do and what not to do.

The concluding section of the book draws together all the different elements and uses their findings to reconsider some of the research in the area. They examine the work of Benjamin Bloom, Vygotsky, Bruner, Bourdieu and Slavin as well as the Reggio Emilio approach in the light of their own research. While accepting some of the ideas from the American approaches (Bloom and Slavin) the authors find that certain elements are too prescriptive and exhibit too tight a control over classroom teaching and learning. The Reggio Emilio approach proves much more amenable and more closer to their own vision.

Among the most striking is the principle of trust, expressed in their unassailable belief in the 'rich, strong and powerful' child. This position explicitly rejects, as we do, the use of categories of relative or fixed ability as an appropriate basis for education. We may also note the Reggio emphasis on relationships and their significance for pedagogy; their conception of community of learners, engaged in reciprocal and co-operative acts of meaning making, mirrors our principles of co-agency and the ethic of everybody. And finally we share with the Reggio educators an optimistic vision of the future, and our capacity to transform it.

The book concludes with implications for teachers and policy makers which are straightforward and achievable. We need more such books which discredit the approaches of the number crunchers and spirit crushers currently in charge of education and exhort us take more note of the dreamers and pioneers who really inspire us. If *all* children are to achieve their true potential, governments will have to learn to trust teachers, once more.

Towards the end of the book the authors quote Loris Malaguzzia, a dreamer and pioneer who helped make creative approaches to learning a reality for the teachers and children of Reggio Emilia. He eloquently articulates the authors' own vision:

The continuing motivation for our work has been an attempt ... to liberate hopes for a new human culture of childhood. It is a motive that finds its origin in the powerful nostalgia for the future and for mankind.

Inspiring stuff. Let us work for it.

Letter to the Editor

Chalfont St. Peter
Bucks

21 October 2004

Dear Editor,

I am very surprised at the lack of clarity in Natalie Heath's article 'Comprehensive Schooling: in need of definition ?' Far from being an exercise in 'analytic philosophy' the aim of which in Wittgenstein's phrase is 'to shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle' she ensnares it in a web of word-spinning.

The classic 'The Comprehensive School' by Robin Pedley quotes the 1947 Ministry of Education's definition : 'schools intended for all secondary pupils in a district'. It is true that Benn and Chitty's 'Thirty years on' characterises this and the definition in the 1976 Act , 'one where no schools were entered by selection', as negative definitions but they are clear. We do not need to justify comprehensive secondary schools any more than we need to justify comprehensive primary schools : it is for those who want to segregate children on the grounds of ability, race, sex or religion to justify it and there is no justification forthcoming. We should not let them off the hook.

Of course we want equality of opportunity, balanced intakes, inclusion, a cross-section of society, a broad and balanced curriculum but they do not define a 'comprehensive school'. As aims they can only be pursued in a comprehensive system but they may need other changes in society to be achievable. We need to keep our objective absolutely clear or we will fall prey to the many and powerful enemies of comprehensive education; we wish to see our secondary schools, like our primaries, catering for all children in the locality. We need no other definition.

Yours sincerely,
Malcolm Home,
General Secretary, Socialist Educational Association

A TRIBUTE TO

caroline benn

Education and Democracy
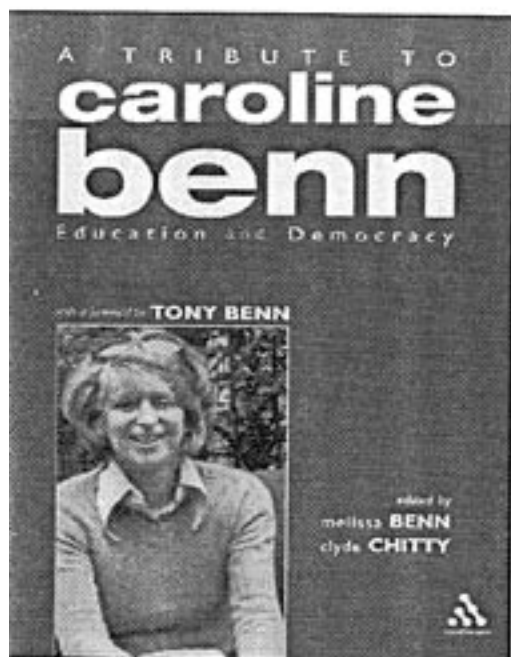
'This fine book will serve both as a fitting tribute to the life and work of Caroline Benn and as a means of furthering the educational causes she championed.'
Richard Aldrich, Emeritus Professor of History of Education, Institute of Education, University of London

'This substantial collection of papers celebrates the strength of Caroline Benn's commitment to lifelong comprehensive education. The diversity of contributors demonstrates the extraordinary range of her activities, the bringing together of the personal and the scholarly being a fitting tribute to the exceptional quality of her work.'
Tony Edwards is Emeritus Professor of Education, Newcastle University

'Caroline Benn made an immense contribution to public life through her work on educational politics and the comprehensive movement. She was a committed democrat, socialist and internationalist and this book of essays dedicated to her life and work was the idea of Professor Clyde Chitty, her friend and colleague over many years, as a labour of love and to recognise her achievements. The fact that so many people in her field have contributed chapters is evidence of the influence she had on those who knew her and worked with her.'
Tony Benn, from the Foreword

MELISSA BENN
CLYDE CHITTY

with a foreword by
TONY BENN

Melissa Benn, daughter of Caroline and Tony Benn, is a writer and journalist who contributes regularly to *The Guardian* and other national newspapers and magazines. Her books include *Public Lives* (a novel) and *Madonna and Child: Towards a New Politics of Motherhood*.

Clyde Chitty is Professor of Policy and Management in Education and joint Head of the Department of Educational Studies at Goldsmith's College, University of London. He has written extensively on education, including *Thirty Years On* with Caroline Benn.

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