
Personalised Corruption: testing, cheating and teacher-integrity

PATRICK YARKER

ABSTRACT The government's plans for students in KS2 and KS3 to be 'tested when ready' mark an attempt further to embed instrumentalist views of education. 'Testing-when-ready' is seen as an intensification of the harmful regime of testing, targets and League Tables which Mansell (2007) labels 'hyper-accountability'. Highlighting aspects of Mansell's book together with recent research into teacher-'cheating' and resistance to high stakes testing in the USA, this article concludes with a call for teachers here to safeguard their willingness to consider and understand the learning which tests don't see.

The danger... of what we might call 'hyper-accountability' in public services is that the response is token compliance, or even worse, that you destroy elements of collegial self-regulation and turn responsible professionals into cheating regulatees.

(Professor Christopher Hood, Examination of Witnesses Minutes of Evidence, Question 958, Select Committee on Education and Employment, 24 February 1999)

In January 2007 the government announced a pilot-scheme designed to re-configure 'national' testing arrangements in England at Key Stages 2 and 3. Starting in September, students in ten chosen areas would take new tests at intervals within the Key Stage, rather than being tested only once towards its end. Each year there would be two opportunities to be tested under the new system, in December and in May or June. Teachers would decide which students were ready to take the new tests. In order to be 'tested when ready', students in the opinion of their teachers would be capable of demonstrating that they had moved from their previous National Curriculum (NC) level to the next-higher level. The new tests would be shorter than current SATs, and like them externally marked. The government expects that all students will 'progress' by

two or more NC levels across a Key Stage. Schools whose students demonstrate excellent progress will receive a 'progression premium': payment for improving results.

Education Secretary Alan Johnson was quick to assert that the new scheme did not mean the government was scrapping SATs. Students in the pilot-areas would still take the current NC tests at the end of their Key Stage as well as the new tests within it. But if the pilot is judged successful, a revised 'national' test-when-ready regime in England is likely sooner rather than later replace a single set of end-of-Key-Stage tests. There will be more tests, more often. Each year of state schooling through Key Stages 2 and 3 will become a year in which students are readied for, and many will sit, public examinations. If current experience is anything to go by, the upshot will be a decisive expansion in teaching-the-test.

The 'test when ready' pilot-scheme marks the first wholesale shift in testing-arrangements in England at KS2 and KS3 since the SATs boycott of 1993. The government altered testing arrangements at KS1 in 2004, after pressure from parents and teachers. Teacher-assessment was prioritised, and teachers were given more control over the timing and content of tests. But the changes at KS2 and KS3 are being conducted on the government's terms. They intensify the regime of targets, tests and League Tables which has done so much in the judgement of many to restrict educative experience over the past decade and a half. Now that the tendency for end-of-Key Stage test results to rise year by year seems to have reached its limit, a political incentive exists to re-direct what the current system measures. Around three-quarters of students have attained the 'benchmark' level 5 scores in English, Maths and Science at KS3 in each of the past three years. Results at the KS2 'benchmark' of level 4 appear likewise becalmed, with around a fifth of Year 6 students falling short. After gathering political benefit in the years when test-scores surged, the government risks annual damage now the trend has stalled.

Measure with Confidence

The changes to the testing-regime were floated in two DfES documents: *2020 Vision: Report of the Teaching and Learning in 2020 Review Group* (DfES, 2006a) and *Making Good Progress* (DfES, 2006b). This latter document was a consultation-paper, and summaries of the responses are available to download. It shared with the more wide-ranging Review Group Report certain intellectual positions and linguistic echoes, notably in relation to matters of assessment and to 'personalised learning'. At the core of both documents is a belief in the power of particular kinds of data to enable legitimate comparison of students, classes and schools, and to measure 'the impact of teaching' (DfESa, 2006, p. 16, p. 19). This is buttressed by a conviction that, when systematically employed, it is the analysis of test data (or 'summative assessment') that can best prompt teachers to 'respond rapidly in order to bring pupils back on track if they begin to fall behind' (DfES, 2006a, p.18). Learning would appear to be characterised in this

view by its linearity across a span of time, and students-as-learners by their predictability.

The Report suggests that NC assessment should be re-developed for 'personalised learning' so that 'teachers use their understanding of achievement data and other information about the pupils to benefit particular groups, for example the gifted and talented, by matching teaching and other opportunities for learning more accurately to their needs.' (DfES, 2006a, p. 14). The Report not only accepts that students must fall into one of a limited number of predetermined categories such as the 'gifted and talented', but privileges 'achievement data' ahead of 'other information about the pupils'. This order of precedence does not vary across the document, and remains a hallmark of New Labour education-policy in England. The alleged benefit of teachers having 'much more [test based] information to help them address weaknesses early' was being touted in 2002 by one of New Labour's special advisors (Ryan, 2002) even as the Welsh were scrapping KS1 SATs. A similar claim formed part of Margaret Thatcher's justification for imposing the original SATs (Thatcher, 1993, p. 593.) In 2005 a DfES document, *Tracking For Success*, asserted that: 'Effective tracking of pupils' progress is essential in promoting the achievement of high standards. It ensures that pupils make good progress through their school career...' (DfES, 2005, p. 4., my emphasis.) More recent DfES material has at least recognised that teaching, not tracking, helps students make progress. However, policy-advisers persist in their determination to avoid acknowledging that teachers are best placed to assess the progress of their students. By claiming a diagnostic function for annual testing they appear to believe that such tests disclose all at once and unexpectedly student-needs which have hitherto escaped the notice of those most closely and sustainedly involved with those same students' learning.

That such a stance continues to be taken by policy-advisors seems of a piece with the refusal to base policy on the 'teacherliness' of teachers. Or rather, to base it on a version of 'teacherliness' desired by government. For example, when considering those teacherly skills regarded by the Review Group as especially important in relation to 'personalised learning', a teacher's ability in 'analysing and using data' *always precedes* 'understanding how children learn and develop', and 'engaging children as active participants in learning' (DfES, 2006a, p. 31, p. 41).

The intellectual position taken by the Report sanctions a kind of data-imperialism. It desires students be rendered more and more thoroughly numerical. The Report calls explicitly for the development of '... formal metrics for 'non-cognitive' skills' (DfES, 2006a, p. 19) as well as for increasing the frequency of summative assessments. It is claimed that to do these things is in the student's best interest, for 'better assessment... will promote the progress of every child.' (DfES, 2006a, p. 41.) The Report would seem deaf to those who argue that testing is a minor subset of assessment, and that assessment in the classroom context will rightly be predicated on the qualitative.

In its turn the consultation document (DfES, 2006b) appears to ascribe bewitching power to quantitative data and their analysis. More frequent public examination coupled with data derived from tests and other sources (such as that retained by schools in standard ways and pertaining for example to gender, ethnicity, free school meal uptake or student home address) can now make available particularly fine-grained information. It is claimed this allows interested parties:

with confidence to measure trends across time, across schools, and by almost every conceivable characteristic of the pupils. (DfES, 2006b, p .4.)

By almost every conceivable characteristic of the pupils? Their happiness, for example, or their imaginative enterprise, or their tendency to prefer 'House' to 'Scrubs'?

Expected Trajectories

The stated aim of the consultation-document is to:

... reduce disparities of ultimate achievement by focusing more on progress... without compromising the framework of tests, targets and performance tables which have helped drive up standards so sharply over the past decade. (DfES, 2006b, pp. 1, 2)

For the document's anonymous author, rising test-scores equals rising standards in school. Statistics, numbers, charts and graphs substitute for that reality which he or she, lacking daily contact with school-students and teachers and immersion in the life of particular schools, wants to address. The author appears to hold that schools can really be understood, in the last instance, through certain kinds of quantitative data straightforwardly interpreted, and in keeping with the vision of the Review Group Report, that more testing, more often, will benefit students by informing teachers more fully about their progress. Shorten the gaps between test-events, the moments where a student's 'potential' becomes actualised and codifiable as data, and the teacher can understand the student's needs more fully. More frequent testing will give 'better evidence of individual rates of progress' (DfES, 2006b, p. 5) and so prompt schools to come up with better techniques to improve those rates for 'under-attaining pupils' (DfES, 2006b, p. 5). The treasuries of data lay bare expected (and even on one occasion the 'right') student-trajectories, the path each individual student should be following (DfES, 2006b, pp. 5, 7, 8, 16, 21, 22). If students begin to falter, thanks to the ungainsayable evidence of more frequent testing they may be rescued and re-directed. Increased use of individual tuition is posited for idiosyncratic students who 'entered the Key Stage already well behind trajectory, including boys in schools where the gender gap is largest' (DfES, 2006b, p. 5).

For this document's author, what motivates is not a teacher's desire to help students, or her commitment to her subject, or to learning as a good in

itself. What motivates is data. ‘The data spurs us on’ (DfES, 2006b, p. 1). Paradoxically the data-based ‘personalised’ classroom ignores much that is characteristic of the inter-personal encounter, with all its spontaneity, its unwritten-ness, its possibilities for transforming rather than maintaining a supposed ‘trajectory’ of learning:

In the personalised classroom, the teacher has the data, information and tracking systems to know what each pupil can do and the things they are finding difficult... Personalisation depends on having an accurate picture of what each pupil can do, and intervening promptly if they fall off the expected trajectory...
(DfES, 2006b, p. 16)

Of the teacher’s rich, deep, multi-faceted but never complete (and therefore always ‘inaccurate’) understanding of each student won through regular contact, observation and shared close involvement, these documents have almost nothing to say. It is acknowledged once that teachers ‘make *simple* formative assessments all the time.’ (DfES, 2006b, p. 11, my emphasis.) Simple? As if the dynamic of the myriad human interchanges which make up lesson after lesson, growing for the teacher knowledge of the student and informing the moments of judged intervention time and time again, were ‘simple’. As if the representation of a student’s mind in a grade, score or NC level were the acme of evaluative sophistication. Yet a test-score is still to matter more than a teacher’s assessment, for which:

... the only essential is that it is robust enough to be ‘levelled’, mapped against the original teaching-objectives, and used to shape current and future teaching for that pupil. (DfES, 2006b, p. 11.)

Striking, and revealing, such deadening to language here. For ‘robust enough to be ‘levelled’...’ should we read: resilient enough to give way? Adamantine enough to disintegrate? Policy would outlaw an assessment made by a teacher on the basis of criteria which policy does not condone or control. Policy would seek to determine ‘the only essential’ as regards assessing, here happily in words which mock their own decree.

However insensitively framed, policy has consequences in the public world. What would such policy, as it shapes teacher-assessment, do for Jason, ‘aged seven years, six months...[who faced] 36 questions in the test and... answered them all. One of the answers was correct, giving Jason a raw score of two...’ (Drummond, 1993/2003, p. 1). What would it do for Jason’s teacher, and how might it accommodate a view of assessment which reveals that Jason’s wholly-completed and almost entirely non-scoring test-paper ‘does tell us some very important things about Jason’s learning, and about other children’s learning, that must be taken into account in a full understanding of the process of assessment.’ (Drummond, 1993/2003, p. 1)?

Drummond’s devastatingly-recuperative analysis of Jason’s test performance indicates how ‘...against what must be, for him, inconceivable

odds, Jason is struggling to make sense of the test...' (Drummond, 1993/2003, p. 8) and has indeed learned all manner of things. She suggests that Jason stands as:

... an example, and an awful warning, of what can happen to all children whose learning is not, for whatever reason, the prime concern and central focus of their teachers' attention... It is children's learning that must be the subject of teachers' most energetic care and attention – not their lesson-plans, or schemes of work, or their rich and stimulating provision – but the learning that results from everything they do (and do not do) in schools and classrooms... The process of assessing children's learning by looking closely at it and striving to understand it – is the only certain safeguard against children's failure...
(Drummond, 1993/2003, pp. 9-10)

At which of the two, performance-data trajectory or living child, will 'personalised learning' as presented in the Review Group Report and the consultation-document look closely and strive to understand?

Fear and Uncertainty

A decade on from its assumption of power, New Labour's policies have generated their own vast arrays of data. In his recent book, Warwick Mansell (2007) gives an overview. For those with school-aged children or those who work or have worked recently in England's state-schools, what Mansell presents is likely to be all too recognisable.

The need to maximise exam-results now defines how teachers and schools behave to an extent not seen since Victorian times, when schools were funded according to how well their pupils fared in simple three Rs tests. School League Tables, targets, Ofsted inspections and teachers' performance pay now all hinge on test results, reminding teachers, under a system I characterise as 'hyper-accountability', that raising exam-scores is their *raison d'être*. Yet it is far from clear that this is improving our schools...
(Mansell, 25 June, 2007, <http://www.progressonline.org.uk>)

Mansell is chief education correspondent of *The Times Educational Supplement*. He sets up a fundamental opposition at the outset of his text: education for passing tests versus education (in the words of Tony Blair circa 1996) for opening minds to beauty, knowledge, insight, inspiration. That is, a subservient education or a liberal one. What has the standards-drive meant for students? Does it work? Can you trust the data? What are the risks, side-effects, impacts? And is it worth the price? Mansell declares his 'exasperation' and 'frustration' at decisions being taken to weight exam-results even more heavily as the arbiter of success for schools 'without ever any realistic analysis being carried out as to the

possible negative implications, in terms of the quality of the learning experience for pupils, which might follow...' (Mansell, 2007, p. xv.)

It is the effect on students (rather than on teachers) which is Mansell's primary concern. He believes that the current regimen is detrimental to students' abilities to think for themselves. Education in England's state schools is being prevented from fulfilling its core function by the drive to raise test and exam scores.

Mansell charts the extent of surveillance now in place in the service of hyper-accountability across the state education-system in England. Test-scores and other varieties of quantitative data mean perceived under-achievement can be 'smoked out', as the title of one DfES paper (DfES, 2004) has it. Teacher-activity can be influenced to an unprecedented degree, and with increasing frequency, through recourse to the various kinds of data coupled with the reach new technologies give those making policy at the centre. Resources for particular kinds of desired curriculum-initiative and pedagogical practice are generated and disseminated at speed. Specific kinds of teaching-method can be imposed, their uptake monitored by OFSTED and other inspectors/advisors. For support-staff at work (and in some cases 'teaching') in increasing numbers of classrooms, the necessary adult-student interchanges can be anticipated and scripted.

Mansell is clear that the various national strategies forced on teachers by New Labour were always at base about raising test scores. He quotes from the tendering document:

The ultimate objective of the national strategies is to make improvements in the practice of teaching and learning in the classroom, and through these improvements to raise pupils' attainments as measured by national curriculum tests... The central purpose of this contract [is] increasing the [test] attainment of pupils. (The National Strategies: invitation to negotiate, DfES 2003, cited in Mansell, 2007, p. 11)

He notes that hyper-accountability not only changes the climate in schools through fear and uncertainty; it was itself the product of fear and uncertainty on the part of government. Huge financial resources were made available to the state education-system, and so demonstrable results had to follow. Mansell cites QCA figures which show that in a typical Primary school students in Year 6 spend an average 10 hours per week between January and May cramming for SATs (Mansell, 2007, p. 33). He doesn't include in this calculation time spent on booster-classes or on similar government-sanctioned extra preparation outside normal school hours. He quotes teachers supporting the view that 'test-preparation has become the overwhelming focus of Year 9' (Mansell, 2007, p.58). Such test-readying is essentially sterile: it goes over and over old ground rather than introducing students to the new, and it ousts work on those subject-areas which will not be tested. It '...turns the pupil into a passenger in the learning-experience...' (Mansell, 2007, p. 226.)

Mansell calls outright for the scrapping of 'pointless' KS3 SATs in favour of teachers conducting their own assessment, and for representative small-scale sampling. Such tests:

...would provide far richer data than is possible under the current regime. Because each pupil would not have to take every test, the assessments could be more numerous, more varied and more expensive (sic) than is possible now. So, for example, there could be checks on pupils' speaking skills, their ability to... solve complex problems and to work in teams, all of which are not currently monitored. (Mansell, 2007, p. 254)

The mis-print, (for surely Mansell means 'more varied and more *extensive*'), perhaps reveals one reason why his suggestions will be resisted by government.

High Stakes Cheating

But monetary costs aren't the only costs worth considering when it comes to the public sector. Hyper-accountability propagates several varieties of corruption. These include examples of apparent cheating by teachers to raise student test scores. A number of high-profile cases of apparent NC test-related cheating have been brought before the General Teaching Council, and anecdotal evidence of apparent cheating in KS2 SATs (the results of which are crucial for perceptions of Primary Schools) was publicised by the Guardian in 2002. The relation between 'high stakes' testing of the KS2 kind and 'teacher malpractice' has been more fully considered in the USA.

Such testing is, if anything, worse there than in England although the USA has no NC and no 'national' tests. States use different local tests in their schools, and a multi-million dollar private testing industry services (and fuels) the process. Students may take slightly fewer tests in the US than they do in England (though under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act 2001 US students must be tested in reading and math yearly from third through eighth grade, and may then face a High School diploma-exam to graduate.) But for teachers the stakes can be even more significant. Schools must reach their test-related 'Adequate Yearly Progress' target or face downgrading or possible take-over. Individual teachers can secure extra payments depending on their students' test-scores; likewise they may lose money or even their job. In such a climate there is growing concern about test-readying practices. Certain kinds of activity associated with testing, deemed unremarkable in England, would be designated in parts of the USA as responsible for 'test-score pollution'. Teaching test-taking skills, consciously working to increase student motivation, matching curriculum content to test content, and altering the instructional programme to cater for the test are all examples (see Haladyna, 1992; Popham, 2001). Some of these 'polluting' practices are also generally deemed unethical. But the compulsion for a teacher to engage in them can seem irresistible:

I feel that if I am pressured any more to do well on the TEST, I will do everything I can to make sure my kids do well... even cheat. I have a family to support and I would be stupid not to do this. My job is more important than my values.

(Anonymous teacher in Haas et al, 1990, p. 128, cited in Haladyna, 1992.)

Teachers are faced with the dilemma of cheating to help a struggling student or to ensure stability in their own family, or not cheating and watching a student falter or that family harmed... We should be asking ourselves why so many competent and decent professionals think the system they are in is so unfair to their students, their schools and themselves and, as a result, feel justified in doing direct test-preparation, violating standardisation procedures, and cheating. (Nichols & Berliner, 2007, pp. 35, 52.)

In their recent work Nichols & Berliner expand on earlier studies which document the prevalence of varieties of dishonesty in relation to high-stakes testing in twenty-two states in the USA. They argue their examples bear out the generalisation made in the mid-1970s by the sociologist Donald Campbell and ignored by those who set test-related benchmark targets for schools:

I came to the following pessimistic laws...: The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it was intended to monitor...

[Moreover...] When test scores become the goal of the teaching process, they both lose their value as indicators of educational status and distort the educational process in undesirable ways...

(Campbell, 1976, pp. 49, 51)

Nichols & Berliner compile, via press reports, extensive examples of varieties of 'malpractice' by teachers in relation to high stakes testing. For instance, teachers may have given students extra time to complete tests, or allowed students to alter answers, or themselves altered students' answers, or risked sacking by looking in advance at a copy of a particular test. The researchers find teachers making use of curricula resources which parallel subsequent test content. Even acting in a way which might in England be seen as benign, such as reading the test-paper aloud or advising a student to re-check their work, might in the US context be regarded as cheating (Nichols & Berliner, 2005, p. 40, p. 92). They find students prevented by schools from taking tests when it is felt their scores will be detrimental to the profile of the school. They find students forced by schools to take tests in circumstances where those students ought properly to have been excused (Nichols & Berliner, 2005, pp. 48, 80). Teachers speak of the anger, frustration, depression and anxiety high stakes testing generates for

them. In rare cases the pressures associated with high stakes testing appear to have been a factor in teacher-suicide both in the USA and in England (Nichols & Berliner, 2005, p. 143).

Civil Disobedience

Alongside the documented cases of teacher 'malpractice' within the exam-room another kind of corruption is engendered by the system of high stakes testing. It alters the way teachers regard students:

For those corrupted by the high-stakes environment, students become mere score-suppressors or score-increasers – not human beings in their own right. (Nichols & Berliner, 2005, p. 166)

This corruption can cause teachers consciously to make decisions based not on what is best for the child educationally but on what is most likely to boost test-performance and attainment. Field trips are cancelled, hands-on science investigations aren't carried out, untested elements of the curriculum are jettisoned (notably expressive subjects such as art or music, along with PE) and critical thinking is left undeveloped while a premium is placed on memorising facts and test-specific techniques. Nichols and Berliner ask:

... why have our politicians and lawmakers created a system that pressures people who we expect to be moral leaders of our youth? (Nichols & Berliner, 2005, p. 23)

They are also prepared to suggest that, in some cases at least, what appears to be cheating by teachers might be read instead as a kind of resistance to the intolerable system:

Suppose that the cheating and violations of standardisation are as often acts of civil disobedience or resistance as they are of malfeasance? In reading the examples... it becomes plausible to us that teachers and administrators are acting no different than those who have not reported all their income to the IRS, allow prayers to be said in schools or defy laws that deny full equality for ethnic and racial minorities or women. In each of these cases sizeable numbers of people... decide that their government is wrong and find justification to break laws they consider unfair. (Nichols & Berliner, 2005, pp. 23-24)

Nichols & Berliner adduce examples of test-related civil disobedience, including stories of students who refused on overtly political grounds to attend tests, or to complete tests administered to them, or who included in their answers considered and lengthy statements of their hostility to the testing regime. They publicise teachers who have been suspended for refusing on educational grounds to administer mandatory state tests. Some teachers risk more than their jobs. In early 1999, ahead of their administration to students, a dissident

Chicago teachers' newspaper printed in full six (out of forty-four) of the city's new tests. The newspaper's editor was fired from his teaching-position and sued for \$1.4M on grounds of breach of copyright. He counter-sued citing his rights under the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Teachers have returned test-related bonuses, or pooled these and passed them on to (more) impoverished schools. In California some teachers deliberately extended the school day by thirty minutes to teach what they wanted because, in their view, it would benefit their students for life rather than for the test. This action violated their state contract and apparently led to pay being docked (Amrein & Berliner, 2002, p. 17, note 63). Concerted acts of conscious resistance to high stakes testing by small numbers of parents, students and teachers continue to be argued-for and organised in the USA (see Kohn, 2000).

Test-When-Readied

After nearly two decades of the NC testing regime in England there is strong reason to label that regime damagingly restrictive for students and teachers, and motivated by political rather than educational concerns. It would also seem to have the potential as in the USA actively to corrupt teachers. In saying this I have in mind not so much the teacher driven for whatever reasons to act against the regulations governing the conduct of NC tests (though as the US research suggests, it may be possible to read acts of apparent 'cheating' as something else.) Rather, the main issue is the way NC testing has worked to make teachers shift their care and attention, for a longer or shorter period and to a greater or lesser extent, away from what Drummond reminds is their true concern: the need to see the learning of the child, and the child learning. 'Seeing the child's learning' vitally includes the learning *that the tests won't see*, even when it is available on the test-paper. This is the learning Jason had done during his time in school, and which did not count for assessment purposes even though it was fundamental to Jason as a student, and as a person. It was the 'wrong' learning. Such learning requires a teacher prepared to see it and make sense of it, rather than register it—in line with a mark-scheme or a set of level-descriptors—as a lack, or a warrant of someone's future educational trajectory.

This proper teacher-work of seeing and making sense of the 'wrong' learning, the learning disregarded by testing, is negated by current testing-regimes and their attendant attitudes to assessment. It risks being over-ridden by the government's version of 'personalised learning' based on more tests more often and the primacy of data tracking. Revised NC testing arrangements are likely to displace yet further this work of 'making sense', whose proper frame of reference exceeds that imposed by 'learning outcomes' and NC level-criteria in the same way that a student exceeds their performance, however brilliant or abject, in a SAT. The student is larger than her or his test-answers, and in ways which the teacher will want to try to engage with, understand and mobilise educationally. This 'excess' is not captured by talk of fulfilling 'potential' or achieving in line with some perceived quotient of 'ability', far less in statistical

projections of future test-performance based on current scores. Such language, such an approach, is already forfeit to the instrumentalist account of learning which puts its trust in trajectories and tracking and would have teachers do the same.

Teachers in the USA and here continue to express anger, frustration and even despair when they talk about standardised mass testing. Some in England come to feel themselves corrupted when yet again they commence SATs-readying work. Their integrity as teachers is divided, and as they prepare their students they endure a particular kind of assault at the invisible hands of the testing-regime:

But violence does not consist so much in injuring and annihilating persons as in interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognise themselves, making them betray not only commitments but their own substance...
(Levinas, 1961/1969, p. 21)

There seems to me an insight here into one aspect of what it may be like for some (perhaps many) teachers as they again go along with the requirement to ready students for NC tests. The self-betrayal forced by the NC testing regime may help explain the depth of feeling such tests continue to arouse in teachers.

If students in KS2 and KS3 are to be tested 'when ready' once (or perhaps twice) each year this has implications for the work teachers will be doing term by term. Readying students for the imminent next public test is likely to become increasingly important. It will certainly take up more time than currently in each Key Stage. The ability to downplay the test, or to offset (as a kind of reparation?) test-readying time with more engaging work or with activities generating learning not explicitly to be tested, is likely to diminish still further. The compromises teachers may currently be making as they attempt to find ways to balance their complicity with and their antipathy to NC testing will have even less scope for implementation. This in turn has implications for how teachers care for themselves, physically, ethically and politically.

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PATRICK YARKER is a doctoral student at the University of East Anglia. Correspondence: Patrick Yarker, Dols Hole Cottage, Hall Road, Beetley, Dereham NR20 4DE, United Kingdom (patyarker@aol.com).

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