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The Seesaw Curriculum: it's time that educational policy matured

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ABSTRACT The author claims that the UK coalition government's White Paper, entitled the Importance of Teaching, continues to polarise curriculum and pedagogical thinking in England into subject-centred versus child-centred camps and in doing so takes sides with the former. He argues that government reports – such as Hadow, Spens and Norwood – have been concerned with the role and status of the traditional subject-based curriculum of the elite grammar schools in a mass educational system. In this policy context cycles of curriculum development and reform have tended to *seesaw* from the subject-centred to the child-centred curriculum poles and back again. Attempts to reconcile these conflicting perspectives by locating the subject-centred curriculum in the realm of educational ends and the child-centred perspective, as exemplified by the thought of John Dewey, in the realm of educational methods. In this way the child-centred approach is used to improve and broaden access to the traditional subject-based curriculum, while being rendered subservient to it. The author goes on to examine Dewey's own integrated conception of the relationship between subjects and the child-centred perspective and its implications for curriculum and pedagogy. These are compared with the views on curriculum design and teacher training expressed in the White Paper. The author concludes that there is a growing gap, between the partial models of mind and its development that inform government policy in the field of education and advances towards a broader and more integrated model. From the latter standpoint educational policy-making in England will look increasingly disordered.

Introduction

The Schools White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* was published on 24 November 2010. Its primary concern is that education in the UK measures up poorly in international comparisons like the OECD's *PISA* survey carried out in 2006. Such comparisons define what counts as *world class* and it seems that the education our pupils receive in this country cannot be depicted in these terms. So what does it mean to be so depicted? Well evidently it means that our educational system no longer yields high levels of achievement that have economic commodity value in labour markets. *World class* educational systems are integral to economic competitiveness in global markets. This is precisely

what twenty years of a highly prescriptive national curriculum organised around discrete subjects and shaped by pre-specified learning outcomes in the form of national standards and targets to be measured at certain key stages, was intended to deliver. So what went wrong?

According to the White Paper there was just too much bureaucratic regulation of schools and teaching in them. It recommends the abolition of many of the agencies responsible for the operation of the regulatory mechanisms, such as the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), the Teacher Development Agency (TDA), The General Teachers' Council (GTC), and a reduction in the power of the Local Authorities to limit the freedom of schools to set their own goals. Key functions are to come under the direct control of central government through the Department for Education (DFE). Interestingly this is seen as integral to the deregulation process. Decentralisation is not to be confused with the latter. Moreover, centralisation is seen as a way of ensuring greater coherence in setting broad aims and goals while leaving schools free to decide their own approach in the light of them. They will no longer feel constrained to comply with targets set by central government rather than focusing on the needs of their own pupils. Hence, teachers will come under less pressure to teach to the tests and to place too much emphasis on GCSE equivalent vocational qualifications in secondary schools. Deregulation of schooling and the demise of the target culture are to be replaced by an educational system that invests in improving the recruitment, training and practices of teachers and head teachers, attends to the standards being set by the curriculum, and promotes school autonomy within an appropriate form of accountability. In this way our educational system can come to embrace what the White Paper defines as the major features of *world class* education; namely, 'a high status teaching profession; high levels of autonomy for schools; a comprehensive and effective accountability system and a strong sense of aspiration for all children.'

It is interesting how the international comparisons appear to have reversed our prejudices about what constitutes a *world class educational system.* In the 1990s, government in the UK saw its highly prescriptive target driven national curriculum and testing regime, organised in terms of key stages, to exemplify the kind of technology needed for raising standards in schools, and worthy of emulation across the globe. Then the international comparisons revealed that highly prescriptive national curricula, an absence of space for school based curriculum development, compliance to national targets, teaching to the tests, performance management in schools and a low trust form of teacher accountability did not guarantee a top place in the international league tables. However, some of the things we demolished in the process – a measure of school autonomy, trust in well qualified teachers to meet the needs of their pupils, space for curriculum initiatives by teachers, and a willingness to be called to account by pupils, parents, and the local community – characterised the systems that did well.

In this article I offer a critique of the White Papers conception of curriculum standards and the implications it has for the recommendations on teacher training. I argue that this conception continues to polarise a long standing tension in our educational system between the traditional subject-based curriculum and the child-centred curriculum.

Mass Education, and Manifestations of 'Bi-polar Disordered Thinking' in the Policy Context of Education

Prior to the formation of the coalition government, teachers and schools were beginning to be given something like the curriculum freedoms their profession enjoyed in the 1960s and 1970s, a period of largely school-based curriculum reform supported by the Schools Council for Curriculum Reform and Examinations; a unique educational partnership between central and local government and teachers that became defunct in the mid-80s to pave the way for an unprecedented seizure of centralized state control over the curriculum. The curriculum reform movement attempted to reconceptualise the subject matter that made up the curriculum, and also to loosen and even sometimes to break down the boundaries between subjects, on the one hand, and between subjects and pupils' experience of everyday life situations, on the other by organising the curriculum around cross-curricular topics or 'life themes' that are meaningful to children and young people. More recently we began to hear more talk emerging in schools about developing curricula around topics, issues and projects, as in the RSA's 'Opening Minds' curriculum, about the teacher as a facilitator of an inquiry learning process, and about the pupil as an active and independent learner.

I have argued (see Elliott, 2000, p. 184) that the school-based curriculum reform movement was *pedagogically driven* to resolve persistent problems of engaging the mass of pupils in learning that manifest themselves at the level of classrooms and schools. Attempts to shift the teaching and learning process from an emphasis on 'instruction' and 'memory learning' to 'inquiry/discovery-teaching', 'project work' and 'learning through discussion' were an integral part of the curriculum reform movement. It was concerned to make the curriculum cater for the needs of the mass of students in schools rather than simply for those of an academic elite. Implicit in such a pedagogically driven shift of perspective on the curriculum is a different theory of mind and its cultivation to that embedded in the traditional subject-based curriculum. Jerome Bruner, in his article on *Folk Pedagogies* (2007, pp. 10-17), differentiates a model of teaching aimed at *the development of children as thinkers through inter-subjective interchange with their teacher and peers* from one exclusively aimed at *didactic exposure to propositional knowledge of facts, principles and rules of action to be remembered and then applied.*

On the former view teaching must recognise the childrens' perspectives in the learning process, and the teacher be concerned with understanding their existing thinking about the subject matter and how they have arrived at it. In

the light of this the pedagogical aim is to help children 'understand better, more powerfully, less one-sidedly'. By implication this kind of understanding is fostered 'through a process of discussion' in which children 'are encouraged to express their own views better to achieve some meeting of minds with others who may have other views' (p. 12). The 'children as thinkers' model of learning implies a dialogic pedagogy (see Alexander, 2008, pp. 92-120).

The school based curriculum reform movement in the UK during the 1960s and 1970s veered towards the child-centred educational philosophy of John Dewey. However, this should not be interpreted as a philosophy that is hostile to subjects as organized bodies of knowledge, as I shall argue later in detail. Rather, from a Deweyan perspective, subjects are viewed as resources for thinking about the questions, problems and issues that arise in the learners experience, whereas from the perspective of the traditional folk pedagogy in English education subjects exist as independent bodies of knowledge to be mastered by pupils.

The national curriculum, established through the new powers bestowed on the Secretary of State via the 1989 Education Act, unambiguously reinstated the subject-based curriculum as a framework for an outcomes-based education and a didactic pedagogy, thereby displacing topic-based curricula and a pedagogy that was primarily aimed at engaging children and young persons in a personally meaningful educational process.

Since the 1960s educational policy has tended to seesaw between child-centred and subject-centred views of education, as if there is a radical conflict of principle between the two and no over-arching educational theory that can unify them. Indeed the seesaw is evident before the 1960s as W.H. Burston (1961) demonstrates in his paper entitled 'The influence of John Dewey in English Official Reports'. It focuses on the influence of 'three main themes' in Dewey's thought – child-centred education, the 'activity' method, and the social purpose of education – on the reports of Hadow (1927, 1931), Spens (1938), Norwood (1943), and Crowther (1959) Committees. Burston claims that the subject-based English academic tradition of education and Dewey's child-centred educational philosophy are in principle on a collision course. The former 'is necessarily based on the assumption that the subjects concerned are different forms or areas of knowledge, and behind this, lies the further assumption that, being knowledge, they are something independent of the pupil, something he has to learn, and something he has to adapt himself to, something from an adult world.' He goes on to argue that Dewey would not have wanted such a fixed curriculum but one that was entirely based on 'the child, his interests and activities.'

Burston focuses on how the reports cited handle the conflict between the English subject-based educational tradition and Dewey's ideas. There is an affinity on the curriculum, he argues, between Dewey's idea that the curriculum should be 'thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored' and the claim of the 1931 Hadow report that with traditional primary school education ' the real business

of life was picked up by the child in unregulated play, in casual intercourse with contemporaries and elders, and by a gradual apprenticeship to the discipline of the house, the farm and the workshop.' Hence, following the logic of subject disciplines 'does not always correspond with the child's unsystematised but eager interest in the people and things of the world still new to him.' The learning of subject content should be shaped at times around the interests and experience of the child. However, this does not undermine the primary aim of education as inducting students into independent bodies of knowledge. Similarly, with the use of project and activity methods. At times they may be appropriate as a means of engaging pupils in learning subject knowledge, but not to the exclusion of treating some activities, such as music and drama, as worth learning for their own sake. Burston argues that the Hadow committee is more willing to commend the ideas of Dewey for younger rather than older pupils, and while commending his methods when they serve their subject-based principles of education they are not prepared to endorse them as principles in their own right, as ends in themselves. The curriculum seesaw is loaded in favour of inducting pupils into independent bodies of subject knowledge as the primary aim of education. This loading, as Burston acknowledges, is heavily influenced by the English school leaving examination 'whose regulations and syllabuses embody in concrete form the idea of a curriculum independent of the child ' (p. 316). It is therefore stronger at the secondary stage of education.

However, Burston claims that one factor has historically worked against this loading of the secondary curriculum; namely, the establishment of the principle of secondary education for all via the 1944 Education Act (p. 316). This brought into the field of secondary education the majority of children who were of only average academic ability and thought unlikely to benefit significantly from external examinations. Here, Burston argues there was an opportunity and need for curriculum experimentation and scope for Dewey's influence to be felt. He does not claim greater scope for Dewey's ideas to be treated as ends of education rather than simply means. However, I would argue that the 1944 Act eventually established conditions that enabled Dewey's ideas to challenge the English view of the curriculum as independent of the child as a matter of principle. Indeed matters came to a head with the political decision to raise the school leaving age in 1970 from 15 to 16 years. It occasioned a great deal of curriculum experimentation during the 1960s, under auspices of the Schools Council for Curriculum Reform and Examinations, aimed at making the prospect of an extended period of schooling more attractive to pupils of average and below average academic ability.

Prior to the 1944 Act official opinion, as Burston points out, had grappled with the problem of educating the average child at the secondary stage, as was evidenced in the reports of the Hadow 1927, Spens 1938, and Norwood 1943 Committees. The first of these reports recommended a practical curriculum specifically for such pupils and contrasted it with an academic curriculum, where they felt ill at ease 'in an atmosphere of books and lessons.' (p. 316). However, Burston points out that the 'practical curriculum' is mainly conceived

as a preparation for their future roles rather than in child-centred terms. The work of the school must be seen in terms of its significance 'to the work of the world as they see it in the lives of their parents, their older brothers and sisters, and their friends ….' (p. 316). Child-centred education in the form of activity methods may contribute to equipping pupils for service as workmen and citizens, but not as an end in itself. The Spens committee on the other hand, according to Burston, appears to embrace child-centred education more wholeheartedly, through a curriculum designed to meet the present needs of individual pupils at the secondary stage. The Spens report states that:

> Before everything else the school should provide for the pre-adolescent and adolescent years of life which answers to their special needs and brings about their special values. (Burston, p. 318)

The report makes it clear that the curriculum must be thought of largely in terms of activity and experience. It therefore shows a definite swing in the direction of Dewey and the Progressive movement's ideas. However, Burston claims (pp.318-319) that Spens parts company with Dewey on the issue of subject versus project methods of teaching. In the final analysis, he argues, the Spens report embraces the idea of an independent curriculum by viewing subjects and disciplines as the fundamental basis of a good education. Whereas Hadow, Burston argues, prioritised the needs of society as aims of the curriculum, Spens prioritised the traditional academic curriculum but aspired to open up access to all pupils through the use of child-centred methods.

I would argue that the position of Michael Gove, the current Education Secretary in the coalition government, tends to mirror Spens rather than Hadow. His opposition to topic-based curricula and the project method, being gradually introduced by teachers under the rubric of the 'personalised curriculum' as the national curriculum shrine crumbled during the second half of 'new labour's' reign, are not so much an attack on progressive methods as such as an attempt to subordinate them to subjects and disciplines as organising curriculum principles. Is it not ironic that the contemporary curriculum in the universities and other higher education institutions is increasingly interdisciplinary, as is their research? Knowledge construction is now shaped by interdisciplinary inquiry in both the natural sciences (e.g. biophysics and environmental science) and the social sciences (e.g. development and business studies) in an increasingly complex world. One cannot even argue that a good grounding in discrete disciplines is a sufficient pre-condition of being able to engage in high quality interdisciplinary inquiry. The latter requires a good understanding of how one discipline stands in relation to others within an inquiry process that focuses on complex problems. The questions posed by a physicist working in isolation from other disciplines will differ from the questions posed by a physicist working in an interdisciplinary team. The shift towards inter-disciplinarity in human inquiry is a response to the demand that science yields practically useful knowledge in a rapidly changing and complex world. Increasingly knowledge is acknowledged to be shaped and conditioned

by human interests and needs that arise in the context of the social practices that make up society. The idea that a good education consists of inducting children into forms of knowledge independently of human interests and needs is a myth which Dewey challenged but the English Education system has persisted with, in spite of overwhelming evidence that a curriculum shaped by independently conceived bodies of knowledge, albeit softened by the use of progressive methods, consistently fails to engage and motivate a significant proportion of the nations children.

The Norwood Committee (1943) focused on the School Leaving Certificate examination but according to Burston (pp. 319-320) brought curriculum principles to bear in its considerations. The major principle was that of effecting a match between the curriculum and the special interests and aptitudes of pupils. It was the business of secondary education to allow opportunities for pupils to manifest their particular cast of mind and have it catered for. The committee felt that the time had come to recognise 'the significance of child-centred education' as well as 'the value of the Grammar School tradition' in confronting the difficulties of the present Secondary School system by introducing more curriculum flexibility and thereby paving the way for secondary education for all. The committee distinguished three kinds of mentalities to be catered for – the academic, the technical, and the practical – and prescribed three corresponding types of secondary schools. However, as Burston points out (p. 320), it recommended retaining the existing school leaving certificate for a transitional period of 7 years, after which teachers should become responsible for designing, conducting and marking examinations internally. This recommendation was never implemented. Nevertheless, Norwood had proposed greater flexibility in the examination requirements to take immediate effect. The flexibility involved abolishing the group structure of the certificate with its demand for a pass in a subject within each group, and allowing candidates to take whichever subjects best suited them. Burston shows how Norwood sought to introduce more pupil choice into the Leaving Certificate. The report attempted to adapt examination to a more child-centred curriculum (Burston, p. 321).

The Role of the Subject Disciplines in Child-centred Education

John Dewey was only too aware of the seesaw between the child-centred ideal in which the child 'is the starting point, the centre and the end' and a curriculum made up of logically ordered subject matter that furnishes the ends of education and determines methods. He argues that 'commonsense recoils at the extreme character of these results' (1902, p. 344), and yet he is often prejudicially identified at one end of these extremes... The problem he suggests resides in the prejudice that there is a qualitative gap, rather than a difference of degree, 'between the child's experience and the various forms of subject-matter that make up the course of study' (p. 344). Pedagogically the teacher has to

view learning from the side of the child and seeing how his/her experience contains within itself some of the elements that enter into the subjects of study and how it contains the motives, attitudes and interests which have operated in developing the subject-matter to the level it now occupies. From the side of the subject-matter the teacher needs to interpret it as the outgrowth of forces operating in the life of the child in order to discover the steps which intervene 'between the child's present experience and their richer maturity' (p. 344). The child and those organised bodies of truth that subjects consist of are simply two limits that define a single process of instruction. Dewey would agree on the importance the coalition White Paper gives to teachers' subject knowledge. The teacher who lacks depth of understanding in his/her subject will be pedagogically impoverished, as will the teacher who lacks the empathy to stand alongside the child's attempts to find meaning in their present experience. This does not imply that a course of study must always take the form of subjects. But it does imply that the teacher's subject-matter knowledge enables them to discern which elements of the subject can enable the child to discern meaning in experiences that may be shaped by their practical interests and projects.

At the heart of Dewey's conception of the relationship between the curriculum and the child is the unity of subject-matter and method (see 1916, pp. 180-193). Facts and principles are selected, classified and organised in forms that support thinking about certain questions and issues, which arise from experience of the world of nature and human beings. Hence, there is a sense in which the organisation of subject-matter supports the pursuit of certain pedagogical aims. For Dewey subject-matter knowledge is not pedagogically neutral.

With respect to the subject-based curriculum Dewey argues that 'it often appears – as if subject matter existed solely as knowledge on its own independent behalf, as if study were the mere act of mastering it for its own sake, irrespective of any social values (p. 181).' However, for Dewey there are always connections between the way knowledge is organised and the habits and ideals of the social group, although these may be disguised and covered up. Dewey himself was particularly interested in the relationship between organisations of knowledge and the development of those habits of mind and intellectual capabilities that enable people to participate in a democratic way of life. These connections between knowledge and society need to be considered from both the standpoint of the teacher and the learner. The subject-matter of the teacher cannot always be the same as the subject matter of the learner. The former needs to know the subject matter to 'supply definite standards and to reveal to him the possibilities of the crude activities of the immature (p. 182).' As such it needs to be systematised in terms of the relationships that the facts have to one another. Hence the teacher needs to master those systematic bodies of knowledge that we call disciplines or subjects. However, when engaged in teaching s (he) needs to have the subject-matter at his/her fingertips while focusing directly on the 'the attitude and response of the pupil.' In other words subject disciplines are pedagogically constituted as 'resources for learning'; the

cultural capital that learners can draw on in developing their capabilities. Dewey argues that simple scholarship, although necessary is not sufficient as a basis for teaching. It has certain features which 'get in the way of effective teaching *unless* the instructor's habitual attitude is one of concern with its interplay in the pupil's own experience (p. 183)'. That experience is organised in terms of the practical centres of interest in the lives of pupils. For Dewey the problem of teaching 'is to keep the experience of the student moving in the direction of what the expert already knows (p. 184).' In designing a course of study, a curriculum, the teacher needs both subject knowledge and a knowledge of the interests and needs of pupils. The implication of Dewey's thinking about the curriculum is that an exclusive emphasis on organising it around 'subjects' simply neglects the importance of pedagogy, which is about the interplay between subject knowledge and the experience of the pupil. For Dewey the curriculum needs to be organised pedagogically. So called child-centred methods are not simply a means of mastering subject knowledge for its own sake, but rather a process of connecting the latter as a resource for addressing the questions and problems of life as experienced by the pupil.

What divides Dewey and the proponents of the subject-based curriculum is not the importance of subjects but their educational significance. For Dewey their significance resides in their status as resources for thinking about the problems of living in society, whereas for the latter their significance resides in providing a source of perfect knowledge and infallible wisdom detached from the pursuits of everyday life.

The proposal to introduce a traditional subject-based English Baccalaureate as a structure for the GCSE runs the risk of perpetuating the see saw curriculum between child-centred methods and subject disciplines that has dogged the history of educational policy making in the UK. In debureacratising schooling and giving teachers greater curriculum freedom the coalition government could have opened up more curricular space for multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and meta-disciplinary courses of study in addition to freeing up space for school-based curriculum development within the subject domains. There is no reason why an English Baccalaureate could not accommodate a diversity of designs with a common aim at their core; namely, to develop all pupils' powers of understanding through the use of what Dewey would call the intellectual or scientific method of inquiry. The subject disciplines will be the major resource for the development of these powers, and in this respect I have some sympathy for scepticism expressed about vocational equivalents at GCSE level unless they are pedagogically informed by the disciplines of knowledge. However, this need not imply that the curriculum always needs to be organised in these terms. Increasingly knowledge production in our complex society takes the form of interdisciplinary inquiry and pupils will need to be equipped as citizens to critique the outcomes of this form of research and its impact on their lives.

Teacher Training: the 'apprenticeship' and the'laboratory' model' of learning to teach

Whilst agreeing that teachers' subject-matter knowledge needs to be improved at every level of education the White Papers vision of the development of pedagogical skills is limited. The apprenticeship model of learning to teach has much to commend it but it is not sufficient for the development of a *world class* teaching profession.

In the Anglo-Saxon countries policy makers increasingly pour scorn on educational theory as in any way relevant to learning to teach in classrooms and schools. The process is largely seen in terms of the novice teacher having an early immersion into practical classroom experience under the guidance of an experienced mentor. This process of induction, in which the novice observes the mentor and then strives to imitate their performance assisted by critical feedback from the latter, depicts an apprenticeship model of learning to teach. It is increasingly viewed as the most efficient and effective way of learning to teach and is already well established even in university-led training programmes, where since 1992 student teachers have been expected to spend 60% of their time in schools under a mentoring system. Spending time not undertaking a great deal of practice work but engaged in the study of educational theory at an institution of higher education prior to such work, the 'theory applying' or 'rationalist model' of learning to teach, has long been regarded by university-based teacher educators to be an unworkable model of learning to teach, inasmuch as novice teachers are unable to match the abstract theories learned in the academy to the realities of life in classrooms. However, members of the policy community are increasingly sceptical about the value of having periods of practice work in schools under a mentor interwoven with periods of theory work in higher education establishments, on the grounds that they cannot see how the latter adds value to the process of learning to teach. Hence we have the growing influence of entirely school based 'teacher training' in the form of the 'TeachFirst' programmes in England (recommended in the White Paper) and the 'Teach for America' programmes in the USA.

What is being ignored is a perspective on practice work in classrooms and schools that neither fits the 'apprenticeship' or 'rationalist model' of learning to teach. It is a perspective initially articulated by John Dewey as the 'laboratory model' of learning to teach that links the development of teachers' theoretical understanding with the development of their practice through their personal experiences as learners in classrooms and beyond.

Dewey (1904, pp. 313-338) contrasted the difference between the 'apprenticeship model' and 'laboratory model' of practice work in terms of the different aims each serves with respect to the induction of novice teachers. These different aims he argued changed the amount, conditions, and method of practice work. On the one hand the immediate and ultimate aim of practice work is shaped to give novice teachers skill and proficiency in the work of teaching, control of techniques of instruction and classroom management. On the other hand its *immediate* aim is to make theoretical instruction – knowledge

of subject matter and principles of education – real and meaningful. The immediate aim of practice work from the laboratory point of view is not to supply an efficient workman to schools and classrooms but rather 'to supply the intellectual method and materials of good workmanship' (p. 314). It aims to give the novice teacher an opportunity to pose intellectual questions about the educational significance of the subject matter they are to teach and of scientific, historical and philosophical studies of education. From this point of view practice work raises questions about the nature of the educational process, which then become the focus of inquiries and culminate in testing hypotheses about 'educational significance' in classrooms conceived as 'laboratories'. Within this process the dualism between theory and practice is overcome i.e. embracing lofty pedagogical ideals in abstract while effectively disregarding them in practice, which Dewey regarded as duplicity and 'one of the chief evils of the teaching profession.' The 'laboratory model' conceives theory and practice growing together 'out of and into the teacher's personal experience' (p. 320) The teacher not only becomes a technically skilled professional but also develops the capability to generate new conceptions of what constitutes education (p. 338).

Dewey was careful to avoid polarising these different points of view, arguing that 'the *results* are not exclusive' (p. 314). Practice work shaped by the laboratory model can ensure the development of some technical instructional and class management skills as a consequence. Conversely, practice work shaped by the apprenticeship model 'can incidentally serve to enlighten and enrich instruction in subject-matter and the theory of education.' It is a matter of emphasis. In actual practice work one of the aims will be dominant while the other plays a subordinate function.

Dewey argued that the schools themselves will find it difficult to create the conditions under which novice teachers can best acquire and use the *intellectual* or *scientific method* (see Dewey, 1910, p. 188) to address questions and issues that arise from their personal experience concerning the educational significance of their practice work, whereas there will be time to acquire and perfect technical skills while undertaking the actual work of the profession under normal conditions. He felt that the scientific foundations of pedagogy should be laid in advance of full immersion into the work culture of schools. Nevertheless, an initial training process on a laboratory model gave the teacher 'the power to keep on growing' while in-service (Dewey, p. 320), and to continue to view their classroom as a potential laboratory for conducting educational experiments. Hence the need for teacher training schools to organise practice work according to the laboratory model. It may be that this is what the White Paper has in mind when it suggests that the best university based ITT providers will be invited to become university training schools. In the promised working out of the details of teacher training one can only hope that the coalition government will recommend well conceptualised links between the apprenticeship and laboratory models.

For Dewey, as already indicated, the cost of relying predominantly on an apprenticeship model of teacher training is that it limits the power of teachers to keep on growing. Such power consists of being able to accept intellectual responsibility for designing pupils' learning experiences in the form of lesson plans. There is a world of difference according to Dewey between the novice 'who prepares set lessons; who then has those lesson plans criticised; who then has his actual teaching criticised from the standpoint of success in carrying out the prearranged plans' and the teacher who, through a process of reflective self-criticism 'has to build up and modify his teaching plans as he goes along from experience gained in contact with pupils' (p. 317). The latter does not become capable of accepting intellectual responsibility for the design of their teaching solely on the basis of the former kind of experience when a student teacher. What that experience does, according to Dewey, is more related to becoming responsible for securing discipline in the classroom. Not that this is a bad thing but it focuses on securing what he calls the *outward* attention of the pupil to the neglect of the *inward* attention (pp. 317-18). The latter involves 'the giving of the mind without reserve or qualification to the subject at hand. It is the first-hand and personal play of mental powers.' It is in a nutshell the pursuit of *understanding* as the goal of learning (see Gardner & Boix-Mansilla, 1994). Dewey (1904) argued that the supreme mark of the good teacher is the ability 'to keep track of this mental play, to recognise the signs of its presence or absence, to know how it is initiated and maintained, how to test it by results attained, and to test results by it.' (pp. 318-19) Such a capability lay at the heart of Stenhouse's notion of the *teacher as a researcher* (1975, pp. 142-65). It is the capability that Dewey emphasised in his account of teaching as bridging the gap between the experience of the child and the teachers' subject-matter knowledge.

The basis of classroom discipline and control should rest on the teacher's mastery of the subject-matter from the standpoint of its educational value and use, Dewey contended, but the novice teacher cannot focus on both at the same time. The mastery of classroom management techniques should follow on from the mastery of educational principles in relation to their application to the subject matter 'which is at once the material of instruction and the basis of discipline and control...' (p. 318) Hence the acquisition of *technique* in relation to fostering and maintaining the *inward* attention of pupils constitutes the true mode of apprenticeship, as opposed to that which focuses on the acquisition of technique in relation to securing the *outward* attention of the pupil as the supreme goal. This distinction is very important in my view. There is an important difference between techniques exclusively aimed at the 'management of behaviour' in classrooms and the 'management of learning.' It is a difference that the White Paper appears to be unaware of in its discussions of behaviour management in schools.

The White Paper appears to neglect the laboratory model of learning how to teach and the important role of higher education institutions in sustaining it. In my view any *world class educational system* needs a combination of both the

apprenticeship and laboratory models of learning to teach to sustain it. The White Paper as it stands will simply perpetuate the *seesaw* curriculum and what Robin Alexander (2008, pp. 72-91) has called the *dichotomous pedagogies* that have dogged the history of education in this country.

Concluding Remarks

I have made much of John Dewey's educational thought in this paper, simply because he avoided the dualistic thinking that sets the importance of subject knowledge in the curriculum against a learner-centred curriculum. The *seesaw* curriculum depicted in this paper is an outcome of what Bruner (1999, p. 19) calls a narrow exclusionism that attaches itself to a particular *folk pedagogy,* which is deeply entrenched in English culture. Such a *pedagogy sees children as learning from didactic exposure to propositions cast as facts, principles and rules* that exist independently of the human mind (p. 11). This outlook has shaped the traditional subject-based curriculum and set it against a more learner-centred curriculum. It has dominated educational policy making in England over many years, in part because it has largely shaped the educational experiences of policy makers when they were at school. However, we should also be aware of its appeal in a centralised policy context, inasmuch as 'it purports to offer a clear specification of just what it is that has to be learned and, equally questionable, that it suggests standards for assessing its achievement' (Bruner, 1999, p. 12). Such an appeal simply reinforces the narrow exclusionism.

Earlier I referred to another *folk pedagogy* depicted by Bruner, which I believe was embedded in the school-based reform movement in the 1960s and 1970s; namely, *seeing children as thinkers who learn through inter-subjective interactions with their teachers and peers.* The educational thought of Dewey, which emphasises learning as an active and democratic process of inquiry, has done much to give pedagogical substance to this model of children's minds and their development.

In addition to the two *folk pedagogies* already referred to above, Bruner identifies two other *folk pedagogies.* One is based on a view of *children as imitative learners with respect to the acquisition of skills* (pp. 10-11), and the other views *children as knowledgeable learners* capable of managing 'objective knowledge' as a resource for their own thinking about problems that arise from their personal experience of living (pp. 15-17). Bruner argues that all four perspectives on pedagogy need to be thought of as parts of a broader continent (p. 18), so that no-one would want to claim that *imitative learning is insignificant* or that the accumulation of factual knowledge is trivial. On the other hand he argues that 'no sensible critic would ever claim that children should not become aware that knowledge is dependent upon perspective and that we share and negotiate our perspectives in the knowledge-seeking process', and also that it 'would take a bigot to deny that we become richer for recognising the link between reliable knowledge from the past and what we learn in the present' (pp. 18-19). Bruner claims that modern advances in the study of human development have provided a 'new and steadier base upon which a more integrated theory of teaching and

learning can be erected.' I would not wish to deny such advances but claim that as far back as the early 20th century Dewey had already embarked on the task of integrating the four perspectives on pedagogy cited by Bruner. Against such a backdrop it is clear that over time curriculum policy making in England has taken the pathological form of disordered bi-polar thinking. The latest schools White Paper entitled *The Importance of Teaching* is yet one more manifestation of this persistent disorder in the educational policymaking process.

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