FORUM
Volume 62, Number 1, 2020
www.wwwords.co.uk/FORUM
http://dx.doi.org/10.15730/forum.2020.62.1.123

Where Now for Pedagogy in England?

GAWAIN LITTLE

ABSTRACT Forty years ago, leading communist educationalist and *FORUM* editor Brian Simon wrote a chapter entitled 'Why No Pedagogy in England?' In it, he argued that English education had failed to develop a science of learning, due to its class-divided history, and that the time was ripe for the development of such a science. This article revisits Simon's arguments and tries to assess the extent to which they are still valid. It concludes that, whilst there have been substantial changes over the past 40 years, the basic contention that there is no coherent science of learning in England remains true. Further, it is argued that Simon's criteria for the development of such a science once again hold, to a greater or lesser extent, and a way forward is suggested to prepare the ground for the development of a pedagogy to guide education in England.

In 1981, Brian Simon wrote a chapter in an edited collection on *Education in the Eighties* which was to become something of a reference point for writers on education, and pedagogy specifically, for a number of years (Hamilton, 1999; Alexander, 2004a). At the time, recently retired from a distinguished career as a teacher and professor of education and having written a three-volume history of education (Simon, 1960, 1965, 1974) [1] that was the standard text on the subject, Simon could quite comfortably be described as a leading educationalist of significant influence. He also came from a very specific Marxist tradition, having joined the Communist Party in 1935. His intimate involvement in this tradition for close to 50 years at the time of writing the chapter meant that he was not just an educationalist, but also an education activist, seeking (to paraphrase Marx, 1976) not only to understand education but also to change it for the better. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he was a leading campaigner against theories of intelligence testing and the ideology of intelligence (Simon, 1953, 1971), and a key advocate of comprehensive education (Benn & Simon, 1972; Rubinstein & Simon, 1973). His political affiliation also affected his mode of analysis. As a Marxist, Simon always attempted to locate the driving force of change in the class struggle and the balance of forces, at any one time, between the dominant class in society and the working class (Marx & Engels,

1948). It is in this context that we must view his work, including the chapter under investigation.

Simon's Contentions

Simon (1981) argues that the specific development of English [2] education, in the context of a class-divided society, prevented the emergence of a coherent pedagogy.[3] In the case of the public schools/independent schools and Oxbridge, this was because the focus has always been on socialisation, with intellectual development playing a much less significant role (as evidenced by the lack of requirement for even a basic teaching qualification in the independent sector) in the development of future members of the ruling class. Indeed, Simon argues, their main role was developing 'the symbiosis of aristocracy and bourgeoisie which characterised the late nineteenth century' (Simon, 1981, p. 126).

With the development of elementary education in the latter part of the nineteenth century, there was a brief explosion of moves towards developing pedagogy, but these were quickly shut down with the creation of a system of secondary schooling at the turn of the century and the restriction of elementary education to basic functional skills. Moves towards pedagogical developments in the secondary system at the beginning of the twentieth century were similarly shut down in the 1920s by the rise of philosophical idealism and ideologies of intelligence, which insisted that everyone had a predetermined intellectual capacity and that, therefore, the purpose of education was simply to realise what already existed. These ideas dominated education for the next 40 years, through the establishment of the tripartite system in 1944, and were not fully challenged until the late 1950s and early 1960s (by Simon and others – see above), leading to comprehensivisation from 1965 onwards.

At each turn, argues Simon, it was the class-divided nature of society and of the education system (both through the structural relations it imposed and the ideologies that justified them) that restricted the development of a coherent pedagogy: 'Each "system", largely self-contained, developed its own specific educational approach, each within its narrowly-defined field and "appropriate" to its specific social function' (Simon, 1981, p. 133). Therefore, the development of an effective pedagogy would necessitate both the overcoming of class-divided structures within education and the defeat of the ideologies of intelligence which justified them.

The dominance of these class-based structures and ideologies in education, Simon argued, had led to a theoretically impoverished education system, defined in its scientific (or rather unscientific) approach by three essential factors. Firstly, it was a system which was openly 'atheoretical' and 'pragmatic' (Simon, 1981, p. 124), 'not informed by any generally accepted (or publicly formulated) ideas or theories about the nature of the child or the learning/teaching process – by any "science of teaching" or pedagogy' (p. 125) – and imbued with an 'implicit acceptance of the status quo in organisational or

administrative terms' (p. 124). Secondly, this 'atheoretical' and 'pragmatic' approach led to what Simon describes as 'the most striking aspect of current thinking and discussion about education': 'its eclectic character, reflecting deep confusion of thought, and of aims and purposes, relating to learning and teaching' (p. 124). Thirdly, there sat, in place of genuine pedagogical positions, 'unresolved dichotomies between "progressive" and "traditional" approaches, between "child-centred" and "subject-centred" approaches, or, more generally, between the "informal" and "formal"'. He goes on to argue that 'such crude, generalised categories are basically meaningless but expressed in this form deflect attention from the real problems of teaching and learning' (p. 125).

However, Simon's chapter is anything but negative. Having set out both the reasons and consequences for the lack of a coherent pedagogy guiding English education, he put forward a clear argument that the development of such a science of education was both possible and necessary. It was possible, he argued, because of linked structural and ideological changes that had taken place within the education system. On the one hand, the development of comprehensive education was putting an end to the class-divided system that had both dominated the English education system since its inception and been instrumental in cutting off the development of a coherent pedagogy. Whilst the independent sector remained immune to comprehensive reforms, its role was relatively less significant since the mass expansion of secondary education, and the unification of the state education system (including the abolition of selection in secondary education and of streaming in primary education – what Simon refers to as 'the insistent tendency towards unification' [p. 134]) provided fertile ground for the development of pedagogy.

At the same time, a linked ideological transformation had taken place, with a decline of the ideas surrounding intelligence testing, eugenics and heredity, leading to a 'shift towards dynamic concepts of child development and learning' (p. 134), which provided the basis for the development of pedagogy. Although he does not say so in this chapter, both of these developments were, at least in part, the result of the struggle Simon (1998) and his comrades had been waging for the past 30 years or more against static notions of intelligence and their practical implications in education.

The necessity of developing a coherent pedagogy, he argued, came from the development of the 'scientific and technological revolution' (Communist Party, 1968). In terms of the rapid development of computers and automation, Simon (1981, p. 135) set out two possible futures: either such technology would be harnessed through 'an active policy of automation (in mechanised industry), with a specific aim of achieving an all-round raising of the skill levels of employment', or it would lead to a divided system which would see 'mass structural unemployment as a permanent feature [and] domination by an expanded technocratic elite, accompanied by massive deskilling of the majority of those remaining in employment'. The deciding factor, he argued, would be the way in which education developed.

Looking at society today, it is unfortunately fairly clear which of those possible visions became reality. In the absence of a broad approach to education and educability, and under the dominance of the very political and economic factors which opposed such an expansion of education, mass structural unemployment, the deskilling of the majority and domination by technocratic elites have indeed become the norm. But more of that later.

Having set out the situation, given historical reasons for its development and argued the case that the time was ripe for 'reinstating pedagogy as the basis of educational practice' (Simon, 1981, p. 137), Simon goes on to elaborate what he sees as the foundation blocks of such a pedagogy. He starts with 'two essential conditions without which there can be no pedagogy having a generalised significance or application' (p. 137). First is 'recognition of the human capacity for learning' (p. 137) – that individuals do not have a capacity which is 'fixed unchangeably and measurable in each particular case, irrevocably setting precise and definable limits to achievement (or learning)' (p. 138). This, of course, ties very deeply to one of the factors which Simon has argued prevented the development of a distinct pedagogy. Without overcoming the ideology of intelligence, the prospect of developing pedagogy as a science was non-existent. Second is that 'the process of learning among human beings is similar across the human species as a whole ... so that "it is possible to envisage a body of general principles of teaching" that are relevant for "most individual pupils"' (p. 138, quoting Stones, 1979). It was not enough, Simon argued, to believe that the human mind was capable of being educated. There had to be an understanding that this process of development, of education, was not unique to every individual human being, but that there were generalisable principles of human learning – the basis for the development of a science.

This latter condition drew Simon into direct contradiction with what he referred to as 'child-centred' theories of learning – a contradiction which may seem counterintuitive to some, and certainly would have done to some on the Left in the 1980s as well, as Simon acknowledges (p. 140). However, on closer inspection, this is not quite as illogical as it may seem. 'Child-centred' educational theories were popular amongst some educators, particularly on the Left, and had been subject to attack from the Right – for example, in what Simon refers to as the 'essentially philistine and atheoretical standpoint of the Black Paperites' (p. 140; see also Ball, 1990). However, Simon argues that these theories, in fact, share many of the premises of the ideology of intelligence – namely, that a child's educational potential is already a given, internal to the child, and that the process of education is simply to provide an environment in which this potential can be brought to maturity, to make the internal external.

This insistence on the role of education as being to actualise the child's potential can lead to Piagetian emphasis of stages of learning, or concepts of readiness; can downplay the role of the teacher from educator to facilitator; and fundamentally contradicts not only the second of Simon's essential conditions (that the basic process of learning is generalisable across the human race) but

also the first (that children are not endowed with fixed personalities, learning potential, etc.). As Simon (1981, p. 141) argues:

> to start from the standpoint of individual differences is to start from the wrong position. To develop effective pedagogic means involves starting from the opposite standpoint, from what children have in common as members of the human species; to establish the general principles of teaching and, in the light of these, to determine what modifications of practice are necessary to meet specific individual needs.

As a counter to these theories, Simon suggests a basis for a science of learning in Vygotsky's (1978) concept of social constructivism and the zone of proximal development, supported by the work of Bruner on education and culture, and the work of Luria on education and language. Each of these latter two, he argues,

> (as representative of their respective traditions) point in a similar direction – towards a renewed understanding both of the power of education to effect human change and especially cognitive development, and of the need for the systematisation and structuring of the child's experiences in the process of learning. (Simon, 1981, p. 139)

As for Vygotsky, his work on the social process of learning and the zone of proximal development (essentially the difference between what a child can do aided and unaided, and therefore the area in which they can most fruitfully be supported in their learning) provides the basis that Simon is looking for – a practical-theoretical approach to the process of learning in the child and also the structuring of the curriculum and development of appropriate 'pedagogical means' (p. 141).

The Contemporary Relevance

To a great extent, the atheoretical, pragmatic approach to English education described by Simon remains dominant. In spite of some significant pockets of genuine progress in exploring the science of education – for example, Learning without Limits (Hart et al, 2004; Peacock, 2016), dialogic pedagogy (Alexander, 2004b; Mercer & Hodgkinson, 2008; Skidmore & Murakami, 2016) and approaches to socially constructed learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Coleman, 2019) – on the whole, the trend has been towards one-dimensional pseudo-scientific approaches turned towards limited goals (for example, retention or improving standardised scores).

This pragmatism is actively celebrated, with politicians of the last 10 years – notably, Michael Gove (2014) – posing 'evidence' against research, practice against theory, and a mantra that 'what's right is what works'. In doing so, they have created a bogeyman of university education departments, which are

disparagingly referred to as 'the blob' and supposedly in league with 'allies in local government' and 'ultra-militants in the unions' who are 'hell bent on destroying our schools' (Gove, 2013). Indeed, proposing that there might be more to developing a theory of learning and teaching than putting in place isolated 'interventions', and measuring the impact on 'outcomes' against a control group, has at times seemed enough to provoke a modern-day witch hunt, or at the very least such claims have been dismissed as quackery. In practical terms, the ideological attacks on educational institutions and on education theory in general have been used to justify the removal of much initial teacher training from university education departments, the weakening of any professional or academic involvement in the development of curricula, and the shifting of public dialogue on education to ever more atheoretical, pragmatic ground.

In many ways, this goes back to the development of the National Curriculum for England following the 1988 Education Reform Act, and later of so-called 'Common Core' standards in the USA. These reforms – and the development of standardised national testing, performance-related pay, etc. that flowed from them (Little, 2015) – have had a wide-ranging and negative impact on the whole question of pedagogy and curriculum. As Hamilton (1999, p. 136) observes, 'Anglo-American conceptions of curriculum have become both limited and limiting' and curriculum theory

> has been reduced to questions about instructional content and classroom delivery. The sense that a curriculum is a vision of the future and that, in turn, curriculum questions relate to human formation has been marginalised. The short-termism of 'What should they know?' has replaced the strategic curriculum question of 'What should they become?'

Eclecticism still reigns supreme and was never really overcome in the way Simon hoped it may be. In his 2004 analysis of the New Labour government's Primary Strategy (in the light of Simon's article), Alexander (2004a) finds a document which is 'ambiguous and possibly dishonest, stylistically demeaning, conceptually weak, evidentially inadequate and culpably ignorant of recent educational history' (p. 7). He goes on to describe it as a 'mire of contradiction and confusion', with the only consistent prescription being 'obligatory individualisation' (p. 19) – again a trend Simon (1981) foresaw in his strident criticism of 'child-centred' learning approaches.

This eclecticism has not improved with the election of a series of Conservative-led governments since 2010, and the flow of educational 'fads' continues unabated, with many of them (for example, retrieval practice and isolation booths) actively supported by government (Lightfoot, 2020).[4] This work, some of which may be relevant and/or accurate in its own terms, tends to be based on 'research' which fails to answer any of the big questions about how children learn, but rather is focused on how to improve 'results', with all the

unwritten assumptions about the nature and purposes of education that this uncritical focus on data entails.

A key part of this has been the rise of randomised control trials to test 'methods' of teaching and isolated 'interventions', and meta-analyses to draw together an eclectic combination of research and 'evidence'. Whilst randomised control trials have a valid place in the scientific approach, to test hypotheses on the basis of wider scientific theory, the way in which they are effectively dislocated from theory (thereby accepting the unwritten 'common sense' of the educational status quo [Gramsci, 1971]) and used as a reductionist replacement for theory-building in education (Wrigley, 2019) is symptomatic of the lack of a coherent or developed pedagogy in England. Similarly, whilst meta-analyses can be a useful way of drawing out common factors across similar studies, their application to a variety of contextualised research and more one-dimensional studies (including dislocated randomised control trials) means that they often reduce conclusions to relatively meaningless dimensions (for example, 'impact' in the Education Endowment Foundation's 'Teaching and Learning Toolkit' [5]) whilst incorporating all the methodological flaws and contradictions of the original studies into their results.

This approach has now been elaborated to the point where schools are steered not only towards a particular kind of curriculum, but also towards a particular kind of classroom practice – Rosenshine's (2012) principles, cognitive load theory (Shibli & West, 2018) or a heavy emphasis on memorisation (Gibb, 2016), for example. In this sense, it could be argued that there *is* a pedagogy in England now. Yet what passes for pedagogy is not theoretically well founded and fails to answer many of the key questions demanded of pedagogy around the nature and purpose of education.

The debate has shifted significantly from Simon's day, when atheoretical pragmatism was combined with the legacy of a divided system and the beginning of New Right educational thinking, which eschewed pedagogical discussion entirely (Ball, 1990). We now face an educational programme which, whilst it has maintained the attack on educationalists, claims to be breaking new ground and taking pedagogy seriously. An example of the promotion of this narrow and restricted form of educational thinking as pedagogy is the adoption by the United Learning academy trust of Rosenshine's principles. On the United Learning website, it states that:

> In 2018 we (United Learning) adopted Rosenshine's principles of instruction as the basis for our approach to teaching and learning across our schools. It's the first time that we've taken a collective position on teaching and learning, rather than leaving this critical issue to each school. Our focus previously was on supporting each school in having an internally coherent and effective T&L [teaching and learning] strategy. With the adoption of the Rosenshine principles we were attempting to go a step further by ensuring that each school's approach was anchored in a shared understanding of the characteristics of effective teaching. (Adcock, 2019)

The site goes on to talk about 'challenging approaches to teaching that are not supported by good evidence' and subject advisors in the chain being confident that the curriculum resources they produce will 'be applied in the classroom in similar ways'. Worryingly, it goes on to discuss Rosenshine's views on exactly when in a lesson teachers should be 'checking for student understanding' – an 'instructional core' to form the basis of all teaching, simplified as 'I'll say it first, then you'll say it with me, and then you'll say it by yourself' – and recommendations on the percentages of correct answers children should achieve at different stages in the process: '80% success rate when practicing new material. When reviewing, the success rate should be very high, perhaps 95% and student responses should be rapid, smooth and confident' (Adcock, 2019). This technocratic approach to education, masquerading as science, cannot help but be an obstacle to the development of a genuine pedagogy.

Similar approaches have been promoted by government-supported, supposedly 'grass-roots' organisations such as ResearchEd (Robertson, 2017), whilst the recently launched Chartered College of Teaching seems torn between the aims of its founders (including chief executive officer Dame Alison Peacock) and the demands of its 'no-strings' funding from central government.[6] One impact of this has been the extent to which these ideas have taken root in schools and in initial teacher education (Turvey et al, 2019).

As in Simon's day, genuine questions about education tend to be masked by the false dichotomy between 'progressive' and 'traditional' approaches, which continue to dominate public discussion both inside and outside the profession. Indeed, these passages in Simon's chapter could easily have been written yesterday, rather than 40 years ago. These 'unresolved dichotomies' (Simon, 1981, p. 125) have become more and more like the quasi-religious dogma of two opposing tribes, with which teachers who look beyond the classroom are expected to identify. For the majority, who simply do not want to get involved in a battle to the death that seems tangential to their everyday classroom experience, the solution tends to be to 'get their heads down' and 'do a good job', reinforcing the atheoretical, pragmatic approach described above.

These developments have taken place in the context of several significant structural shifts, which necessitate a revisiting of the conditions that Simon identified as the root cause of the original lack of pedagogy in England. First among these was the class-divided education system.

Comprehensivisation has not been reversed and yet it was never fully completed in several important senses. One hundred and sixty-three state-funded selective secondary schools (or grammar schools) still exist in England, catering for around 5% of all state-educated students. These pockets of selection (including some large authorities such as Kent) allow the ideology which underlies selection to grow and develop, and keep alive a profitable stream of businesses in test production, tutoring, etc. At the same time, the independent schools sector, catering for around 6% of the school-age population, was never affected by comprehensive educational reform and continues to ensure that, whatever the prescription for state education, the children of the elite are

unaffected. This allows a narrowing of the curriculum and underfunding of state education, for example, to continue, and also the development of market approaches which see education as simply another form of production – something that would be unthinkable if the children of the rich had to attend state schools. In many ways, this parallels Simon's arguments about the way in which the role of public schools and Oxbridge contributed to the failure to develop a consistent pedagogy across the English education system.

More subtly, whilst schools were outwardly reformed along comprehensive lines, many have argued that internal selection was maintained within many 'comprehensive' schools, through either transparent mechanisms, such as 'grammar streams', or more opaque methods of setting (Benn & Simon, 1972). These approaches were given an added boost by the 1988 Education Reform Act and have been actively encouraged by successive New Labour and Conservative-led governments, and have formed part of a consistent policy direction since comprehensivisation (Stevenson, 2011; Marks, 2016). As under open selective schooling, what happens in the secondary school has an impact within the primary school, and many schools are now introducing selection in some subjects for children as young as five (Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2017).

In spite of comprehensivisation, and running counter to it, there has also been a more recent diversification of schools within the 'comprehensive' system through initiatives such as city technology colleges, specialist schools and, more recently, the academy and 'free' school programme (Chitty & Simon, 2001; Ball, 2008; Stevenson, 2011). Indeed, diversity was one of the key watchwords of the New Labour years (Jackson, 2000; Chitty & Simon, 2001; Ball, 2008). These programmes have allowed inequality to persist within education experience, now in a form determined by the market rather than by a strictly imposed tripartite division of schools (Little, 2015). The documented cases of schools using covert selection and the extent of this practice within the system are ample evidence of the impact of marketisation, including the move to schools acting as their own admission authorities (Walker, 2013). This approach has been implicit since the marketisation agenda was first introduced – see, for example, Margaret Thatcher's claim of the 1988 Education Reform Act that 'money will flow to the good schools and the good headmasters [*sic*]' (quoted in Simon, 1987, p. 11). In this context, the removal of the requirement for qualified teachers in academies and 'free' schools, and the disapplication of the National Curriculum in these schools, is significant (Courtney & Little, 2014), allowing as it does a huge variation in the nature and quality of the educational experiences that take place within an avowedly 'comprehensive' system.

In many ways, then, our divided system has yet to be fully overcome, and, indeed, there is some evidence that schooling in England is becoming more divided as opposed to more comprehensive. One of the key conditions which restricted the development of pedagogy in England throughout history is still very much present. At the same time, the ideology of intelligence, defeated

ideologically and politically in Simon's day, has been surprisingly (or perhaps unsurprisingly) resilient, with terms such as 'gifted and talented', 'ability', 'higher/lower-attaining pupils' and even 'special educational needs' becoming shorthand for intelligence in too many educational and policymaking settings (Yarker, 2019). However, there is a tension here between those who seek to reinforce fixed notions of intelligence and those proposing technocratic solutions to 'narrowing the gap' – a gap, of course, that is based on oversimplified and overly simplistic data (Berry, 2017). These overlapping ideologies form a key part of the tensions within the educational rhetoric of the Right. With the recent election of a Conservative government with key supporters of intelligence quotient and eugenicist ideas at its heart (Shanks, 2013), we may well find ourselves fighting some of the same battles that Simon and his comrades were fighting in the 1950s and 1960s. However, the terrain on which we fight will have shifted significantly. Whilst Simon was fighting a system which denied education to the majority, and therefore the force of the democratic argument was with him, with the overlapping notion of 'closing the gap', the Right has laid claim to the cause of fighting disadvantage in education. This is in spite of the fact that the solutions they propose – for example, academic setting, narrowing of the curriculum, zero-tolerance discipline – are precisely those which narrow the chances of, and remove agency from, working-class students, thereby entrenching disadvantage.

The Way Forward

It is clear that the terrain of the argument has changed significantly since the 1980s. The balance of forces is different, and the Right (broadly understood) has a much more developed position on educational issues. Yet there are huge similarities. Many of the same issues which restricted the development of pedagogy in the 1980s remain a problem today, albeit in different forms. We face a system where pedagogy, understood in Hamilton's (1999) sense, is underdeveloped and where the purposes of education are tied not to the fulfilment of human growth and development but to the objective of increasing test scores. In this case, it seems legitimate to say that Simon's (1981) original assertion – that there was no coherent pedagogy in England – is still true.

In order to change this situation, and to create the basis for the development of a science of education, we need to challenge the forces which have held back this development. We need to challenge a system which continues to reproduce inequality in a social context of deepening polarisation, posing in its place a genuinely comprehensive approach to education within a national education service. We need to challenge the ideology of intelligence at the same time as we expose 'scientific' developments which rest on a limited and limiting theory of learning as simply knowledge acquisition. In place of these ideas, we need to revive dynamic concepts of child development which underpin the belief that every child is capable of being educated and that there

exist commonalities within this process which provide the basis for a general science of education, or pedagogy.

Notes

[1] This was completed by a fourth volume 10 years later (Simon, 1991).

[2] Simon's decision to restrict himself to England is followed throughout this article. As has been argued elsewhere (Little & Stevenson, 2015), Wales and Scotland have distinct educational systems and histories. The question of whether a coherent pedagogy has developed in either of these nations, and what lessons this may have for England, would be another article (at least) in its own right.

[3] Simon (1981, p. 125) describes pedagogy as 'a science of teaching embodying both curriculum and methodology', and argues that it must consist of 'generally accepted (or publicly formulated) ideas or theories about the nature of the child [and] the learning/teaching process'. This definition, of a publicly formulated science of education, based on an understanding of child development and of the learning/teaching process, encompassing both curriculum and methodology, is the definition used throughout this article.

[4] See also a 2017 tweet by Nick Gibb, Minister of State for Education: 'An example of an evidence-informed move away from teaching gimmicks; here, @bennewmark uses retrieval practice to begin his lesson rather than the previously fashionable "3-part" lesson structure'. https://twitter.com/NickGibbUK/status/930353123188756480?s=20

[5] See: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/

[6] See the Chartered College of Teaching website at: https://chartered.college/faqs

References

Adcock, S. (2019) The Rosenshine Papers. https://unitedlearning.org.uk/united-thinking/articles/the-rosenshine-papers

Alexander, R. (2004a) Still No Pedagogy? Principle, Pragmatism and Compliance in Primary Education, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 34(1), 7-33. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764042000183106

Alexander, R. (2004b) *Towards Dialogic Teaching: rethinking classroom talk*. York: Dialogos.

Ball, S.J. (1990) *Politics and Policy Making in Education*. London: Routledge.

Ball, S.J. (2008) *The Education Debate*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Benn, C. & Simon, B. (1972) *Halfway There: report on the British comprehensive school reform*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Berry, J. (2017) *Putting the Test in Its Place*. London: UCL Institute of Education Press.

Bradbury, A. & Roberts-Holmes, G. (2017) *Grouping in Early Years and Key Stage 1: 'A necessary evil'?* National Education Union and UCL Institute of Education.

Chitty, C. & Simon, B. (Eds) (2001) *Promoting Comprehensive Education in the 21st Century.* Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

Coleman, L. (2019) What Is Happening in Early Years Education? *Education for Tomorrow*, 1, pp. 28-29.

Communist Party (1968) *The British Road to Socialism.* Communist Party.

Courtney, K. & Little, G. (2014) Standing up for Education: building a national campaign, *FORUM*, 56(2), 299-317. https://doi.org/10.2304/forum.2014.56.2.299

Gibb, N. (2016) Building a Renaissance in Mathematics Teaching. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nick-gibb-building-a-renaissance-in-mathematics-teaching

Gove, M. (2013) I Refuse to Surrender to the Marxist Teachers Hell Bent on Destroying Our Schools, *Daily Mail*, 23 March. https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2298146/I-refuse-surrender-Marxist-teachers-hell-bent-destroying-schools-Education-Secretary-berates-new-enemies-promise-opposing-plans.html

Gove, M. (2014) Michael Gove Speaks about the Future of Education Reform. https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/michael-gove-speaks-about-the-future-of-education-reform

Gramsci, A. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Hamilton, D. (1999) The Pedagogic Paradox (or Why No Didactics in England?), *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 7(1), 135-152. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681369900200048

Hart, S., Dixon, A., Drummond, M.J. & McIntyre, D. (2004) *Learning without Limits.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jackson, P. (2000) Choice, Diversity and Partnerships, in J. Docking (Ed.) *New Labour's Policies for Schools*, pp. 177-190. London: David Fulton.

Lightfoot, L. (2020) When School Is an Isolation Cubicle with Three Toilet Breaks a Day, *Guardian*, 14 January. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jan/14/school-isolation-cubicle-three-toilet-breaks-a-day

Little, G. (Ed.) (2015) *Global Education 'Reform': building resistance and solidarity.* London: Manifesto Press.

Little, G. & Stevenson, H. (2015) From Resistance to Renewal: the emergence of social movement unionism in England in G. Little (Ed.) *Global Education 'Reform': building resistance and solidarity*, pp. 87-102 London: Manifesto Press.

Marks, R. (2016) *Ability Grouping in Primary Schools: case studies and critical debates.* Northwich: Critical.

Marx, K. (1976) Theses on Feuerbach, in K. Marx & F. Engels *Collected Works, vol. 5 (Marx and Engels 1845-1847)*, pp. 3-5. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1948) *Manifesto of the Communist Party.* London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Mercer, N. & Hodgkinson, S. (Eds) (2008) *Exploring Talk in Schools.* London: SAGE.

Peacock, A. (2016) *Assessment for Learning without Limits*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Robertson, A. (2017) Minister Slams Academics Who Won't Engage with ResearchEd, *Schools Week*, 9 September. https://schoolsweek.co.uk/minister-slams-academics-who-wont-engage-with-researched/

Rosenshine, B. (2012) Principles of Instruction: research-based strategies that all teachers should know, *American Educator*, 36(1), 12-19.

Rubinstein, D. & Simon, B. (1973) *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School 1926-1972*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Shanks, P. (2013) Advocating Eugenics in the UK Department for Education, *Huffington Post*, 28 October. https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/pete-shanks/genetics-and-intelligence_b_4166949.html

Shibli, D. & West, R. (2018) Cognitive Load Theory and Its Application in the Classroom, *Impact*, 2, pp. 18-20.

Simon, B. (1953) *Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Simon, B. (1960) *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Simon, B. (1965) *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Simon, B. (1971) *Intelligence, Psychology and Education: A Marxist Critique*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Simon, B. (1974) *The Politics of Education Reform 1920-1940*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Simon, B. (1981) Why No Pedagogy in England? In B. Simon & W. Taylor (Eds) *Education in the Eighties: the central issue*, pp. 124-145. London: Batsford Academic.

Simon, B. (1987) *Bending the Rules: the Baker 'reforms' of education*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Simon, B. (1991) *Education and the Social Order 1940-1990*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Simon, B. (1998) *A Life in Education*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Skidmore, D. & Murakami, K. (Eds) (2016) *Dialogic Pedagogy: the importance of dialogue in teaching and learning*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783096220

Stevenson, H. (2011) Coalition Education Policy: Thatcher's long shadow, *FORUM*, 53(2), 179-194. https://doi.org/10.2304/forum.2011.53.2.179

Turvey, K., Ellis, V., Watson, A., Slocombe, M., Kutnick, P., et al (2019) Total Recall? The ITE Content Framework, Research and Teachers' Understanding of Learning. https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/total-recall-the-ite-content-framework-research-and-teachers-understandings-of-learning

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walker, P. (2013) Academies Use Covert Selection Methods to Skew Intake, Report Finds, *Guardian*, 10 January.

https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/jan/10/academy-schools-covert-selection-skew-intake

Wrigley, T. (2019) The Problem of Reductionism in Educational Theory, *Power and Education*, 11(2), 145-162. https://doi.org/10.1177/1757743819845121

Yarker, P. (2019) Measured Intelligence: moonshine and shadow, *Education for Tomorrow*, 1, pp. 18-22.

GAWAIN LITTLE is a primary school teacher. He is active in numerous educational campaigns, a National Executive member of the National Education Union, and a member of *FORUM*'s editorial board. *Correspondence*: gawainlittle@gmail.com