

FORUM

FOR THE DISCUSSION OF NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION

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FORUM

Index to Volume 9

	Page
Assessment, New Methods of: J. F. Eggleston	58
Awkward Angel, The: Edward Blishen	66
C.S.E., A School Reaction to: K. D. Bradshaw	28
C.S.E., Monitoring the: B. F. Hobby	51
C.S.E. on Trial	
Home Economics: R. Adams	28
Science: J. F. Eggleston	26
Technical Drawing and Handicraft: F. Worthington	27
Discussion	
'Assessment', Doubts raised by 'New Methods of'	90
Auxiliaries and Ancillaries	92
Dangerous Options	18
David Holbrook replies	91
Education, National Policy in	18
'Everybody Can Grow'	92
Examinations, The Comparability of	90
'Newsom' Experiment, Pupils' Views	54
Review Criticism Reply	19
Schools Council, The	54
Education, Planning to Afford: John Vaizey	9
Flexible High School, Design for a: Dennis Smith	55
Infant Classrooms: The Next Step: Margaret O. Wason	64
Middle School, The: Which Way?: Caroline Benn	98
Non-Streamed Comprehensive Schools, Subject Teaching in	
Mathematics: Brian Clayton	40
History: R. D. Lobban	43
Group Work in English: George Robertson	45
Non-Streaming: Counting the Costs: Peter Brown	46
Non-Streaming and 10/65	3
Non-Streaming in Comprehensive Schools: Conference	
Report by Ray Pinder	4
Non-Streaming in Comprehensive Schools: FORUM Reporter	48
Non-Streaming in Comprehensive Schools: FORUM Reporter	96
Non-Streaming in a Secondary School: Derek Cloke	50
Non-Streamed Schools, Subject Teaching in	
Mathematics: P. Herbert	86
Science: D. P. Bosworth	87
Languages: P. I. Pole	89
Beginning French with Juniors: G. D. Handley	95
Nuffield Science Teaching Project, The:	
Physics and Chemistry: M. Robinson	103
Biology: J. F. Eggleston	104
Plowden, A Welcome for	39
Plowden Perspectives	75
Plowden Symposium:	
Content and Method in Primary Schools: Brian Simon	77

	Page
The Nursery and Infant Range: Jean Appleford	80
Streaming: Plowden and N.F.E.R.: Patrick McGeeney	82
Schools Council, The, at Work:	
Introducing the Schools Council: John F. Kerr	11
Searchlight on the Schools Council: J. Stuart Maclure	15
At School till Sixteen: Nanette Whitbread	19
The Schools Council looks at English: Edward Blishen	21
The Schools Council looks at Maths: David Wheeler	23
Sixth Form, The Curriculum of the: Mary Hood	62

Authors—Volume 9

Adams, R.: Home Economics	28
Appleford, Jean: The Nursery and Infant Range	80
Benn, Caroline: The Middle School: Which Way?	98
Blishen, Edward: The Schools Council looks at English	21
Blishen, Edward: The Awkward Angel	66
Bosworth, D. P.: Science	87
Bradshaw, K. D.: A School Reaction to C.S.E.	28
Brown, Peter: Non-Streaming: Counting the Costs	46
Clayton, Brian: Mathematics	40
Cloke, Derek: Non-Streaming in a Secondary School	50
Eggleston, J. F.: Science	26
Eggleston, J. F.: New Methods of Assessment	58
Eggleston, J. F.: Biology	104
FORUM Reporter: Non Streaming in Comprehensive Schools	48
FORUM Reporter: Non Streaming in Comprehensive Schools	96
Handley, G. D.: Beginning French with Juniors	95
Herbert, P.: Mathematics	86
Hobby, B. F.: Monitoring the C.S.E.	51
Hood, Mary: The Curriculum of the Sixth Form	62
Kerr, John F.: Introducing the Schools Council	11
Lobban, R. D.: History	43
Maclure, J. Stuart: Searchlight on the Schools Council	15
McGeeney, P.: Streaming: Plowden and N.F.E.R.	82
Pinder, Ray: Non-Streaming in Comprehensive Schools—	
Conference Report	4
Pole, P. I.: Languages	89
Robertson, George: Group Work in English	45
Robinson, M.: Physics and Chemistry	103
Simon, Brian: Content and Method in Primary Schools	77
Smith, Dennis: Design for a Flexible High School	55
Vaizey, John: Planning to Afford Education	9
Wason, Margaret O.: Infant Classrooms: The Next Step	64
Wheeler, David: The Schools Council looks at Maths	23
Whitbread, Nanette: At School till Sixteen	19
Worthington, F.: Technical Drawing and Handicraft	27

Index to Volume 10

	Page
Against Interpretation: M. F. Cleugh	81
Assessment Procedures and Curriculum Reform:	
J. F. Eggleston	32
Assessment, New Methods of: D. Wheeler	69
Comprehensive School, Flexibility for a: I. McMullen	54
Curriculum Planning in a Large School: R. E. Copland	16
Discussion	
Assessment, More on	22
B.Ed Addendum	55
C.S.E. in an Unstreamed School	23
C.S.E. in an Unstreamed School	54
Esperanto and Culture	54
Examination Confusion	54
Forget all they told you in College	92
French for All . . . Wisdom or Folly?	24
In-Service Training	92
No New Trend	55
Non-Streaming, The Child's Eye View	93
Odd Men Out, The	95
Progress Report	95
Streaming, the N.F.E.R., and FORUM	23
Vertical Grouping in the Junior School	94
Forward to the Sixth: Harold Knowlson	102
Groups, Learning to think in: M. L. J. Abercrombie	74
Group Methods in English: George Robertson	76
Group Methods in the Junior School: George Freeland	79
New Degree, The, in Education: George Price	11
Non-Streaming, Some Corollaries of: R. P. Neal	29
Non-Streaming in Secondary Schools, Transition to:	
R. Seckington	61
Non-Streamed Situation, Exploring the: Maureen Hardy	83
Nuffield Junior Science Teaching Project: N. F. Newbury	56
Nuffield Science in Unstreamed Classes: D. F. Hamilton	100
Old Ideas Die Slowly: R. G. Crow	4
Public Schools Commission, Evidence to the: FORUM	
Editorial Board	2
Regional Developments:	
The North-West Regional Curriculum Development	
Project: W. G. A. Rudd	40
Curriculum Change in Practice: J. F. Kerr	43
In-Service Education in the South-West: Jack Walton	47

	Page
Diary of a Project: John Hanson	49
Sixth Form, The, in the Comprehensive School: Caroline	
Benn	7
Teacher Training, A New Trend in: A. H. Dalrymple	18
Text and Context: Peter Blacklaws	26
Turner, J. H.: H. L. Forster	14
Unstreaming and Subject Integration: W. A. D. Williams	98
Vertical Grouping in the Junior School: Eric Linfield	51

Authors—Volume 10

Abercrombie, M. L. J.: Learning to think in Groups	74
Benn, Caroline: The Sixth Form in the Comprehensive School	7
Blacklaws, Peter: Text and Context	26
Cleugh, M. F.: Against Interpretation	81
Copland, R. E.: Curriculum Planning in a Large School	16
Crow, R. G.: Old Ideas Die Slowly	4
Dalrymple, A. H.: A New Trend in Teacher Training	18
Eggleston, J. F.: Assessment Procedures and Curriculum	
Reform	32
Forster, H. L.: J. H. Turner	14
FORUM Editorial Board: Evidence to the Public Schools	
Commission	2
Freeland, George: Group Methods in the Junior School	79
Hamilton, D. F.: Nuffield Science in Unstreamed Classes	100
Hanson, J.: Diary of a Project	49
Hardy, Maureen: Exploring the Non-Streamed Situation	83
Kerr, J. F.: Curriculum Change in Practice	43
Knowlson, Harold: Forward to the Sixth	102
Linfield, E.: Vertical Grouping in the Junior School	51
McMullen, I.: Flexibility for a Comprehensive School	64
Neal, R. P.: Some Corollaries of Non-Streaming	29
Newbury, N. F.: Junior Nuffield Science Teaching Project	56
Price, George: The New Degree in Education	11
Robertson, George: Group Methods in English	76
Rudd, W. G. A.: The North-West Regional Curriculum	
Development Project	40
Seckington, R.: Transition to Non-Streaming in Secondary	
Schools	61
Walton, J.: In-Service Education in the South West	47
Wheeler, D.: New Methods of Assessment	59
Williams, W. A. D.: Unstreaming and Subject Integration	98

Focus on Groups

The postponement of the raising of the school leaving age, which all *Forum* readers will deplore, will undoubtedly hold up the transition to comprehensive education in a number of cities and county areas. There are other factors also which are leading to delay. Nonetheless, as the 11 plus is abolished in various parts of the country, so the development of new, more flexible approaches in the primary schools, and in the lower forms of comprehensive schools, is going forward, in some areas very rapidly. In Manchester, for instance, where selection was abolished throughout the city in September last year, some of the new comprehensive schools now established are already experimenting with non-streaming with their first year intake, and the same is the case elsewhere. In view of this, discussion and exchange of experience as to the new approaches at both primary and secondary level is more necessary than ever.

In this number we attempt to penetrate inside the classroom, and focus attention on methods of grouping pupils for different purposes, as well as on the techniques appropriate in this situation. Several articles border on this topic, in particular the detailed analysis by Maureen Hardy of the differing structures used by primary school teachers concerned with non-streamed classes, an issue taken up also by George Freeland. Although the movement towards unstreaming in the primary school is now some 15 years old, it is surprising how little material is available as to the differing methods used by teachers in the new situation, and particularly how little research or descriptive material is available as to the various forms of group work which can be undertaken.

But it is not only the primary school, of course, which is concerned with gaining the maximum advantage from the new flexible structures now possible, and in particular from the organisation of group work in its various forms. The techniques of group teaching are complex and little is known about them at any level, from primary school to university. For that reason we are glad to include an article by George Robertson, who has had considerable experience of this work in the lower forms of a comprehensive school, and particularly to include an article by Dr Abercrombie, whose work with university students is well-known—and which certainly has a relevance to the school situation at all levels.

The next (September) number of *Forum* will focus specifically on the age-group nine to thirteen, paying particular attention to the transition from primary to secondary education (a distinction, incidentally, which, with the development of various forms of middle schools, is becoming blurred). A group of articles will focus on the new approaches to teaching the first year, and often unstreamed, intake into comprehensive schools. It is clear that over the last year or two much experimental work on this stage in education has been carried on in many comprehensive schools, about which all too little is known. Mr Williams' article in this number, on the approach to integrated studies with the first year at Hartcliffe comprehensive school, Bristol, opens up this question, while Mr Hamilton contributes his experience as a science teacher to the continuing discussion about the methodology of teaching unstreamed classes in the comprehensive school.

Learning to Think in Groups

M L J Abercrombie

Dr Abercrombie is Reader in Architectural Education at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College, London. Her pioneering approach to free group discussion, as an educational medium, was originally described in her book **The Anatomy of Judgment** (1960). Since then Dr Abercrombie has taken her research on group methods further. Here she sums up some of the results of her experience in this work.

'I have just been reading about 250 essays by our students, giving a critical evaluation of their own education. What emerges over all is the lack of stimulus for pupils to discuss, exchange ideas, and form their own judgments in grammar schools (although there are, of course, exceptions).'

The editor made this statement in a letter inviting me to contribute to this symposium on group teaching, and he suggested that I might focus attention on how group work may help students to arrive at judgments and at a degree of self-assessment. It is useful to have the field narrowed in this way, because groups can be organised in many different ways, to serve different educational objectives. Some of these may be to help the student to master the body of information and skills which will be tested in examinations, to learn a 'subject'. Others may have the more diffuse objective of helping him to develop questioning, thoughtful attitudes to his chosen subject, or to broader intellectual affairs, or to life in general. In extreme cases, the aim is to change the personality through self-knowledge towards adopting more effective ways of behaving generally, as in various kinds of group psychotherapy.

Of course we all know what causes the deficiency in their education which Professor Simon's students complained of; it results from the over emphasis on factual learning which is still dominant in the upper forms of secondary schools, particularly those taking public examinations, though happily, increasingly less so in primary education. A complex of interacting assumptions underpins this setup, assumptions which are quickly and firmly denied as soon as they are stated explicitly, but are nevertheless continuously implicitly acted upon. Briefly, the learner is regarded as an empty vessel waiting to be filled, a passive recipient of information. Adherents of this jug-and-bottle theory of education recognise of course, that not all the bottles in the class are equally easy to fill; some have narrower necks than others, and the amount of the contents of the jug that gets into the bottle varies. But what is less easily recognised is that in fact, the bottles are already full of things that interact,

often unpredictably, sometimes quite violently, with any new material that tries to get in. The process of taking in information is much more like that of digesting, and very considerable changes have to take place before the material can be properly absorbed by the various individuals.

It is easy to forget how difficult and laborious this process can be. Just as a merciful amnesia prevents most of us recalling how difficult we once found it to learn to read, so once having learned any new and complex body of knowledge and skills, we underestimate the difficulty that our students will have in receiving it from us in as meaningful a way. Our ability to recognise a square or a diamond depends on the store we have built up of our own eye movements around its contour and each child has to go over the ground himself; with the best will in the world we cannot do it for him. Powers of discrimination cannot be mastered only by watching the grown-ups exercising them. The learner will not feel the need to question, assess, or judge, if all this is done for him, with inimitable skill, by superiors whose wisdom is unquestionable; he must practise himself on materials of suitable level of difficulty, and among peers.

In setting up group work for learning, we first recognise the limitations of our capacity to pass on our laboriously won experience, and secondly, we recognise not only that the student must do a lot of this work himself, but that he is fully capable of learning to do it. Group teaching aims to emancipate the student from the authority dependency relationship and to help him to develop intellectual independence and maturity, through interaction with peers. It takes note of two biological facts: that man is essentially a social animal, and that he has to undergo an exceptionally long period of development. He begins life very small and helpless and for several years the difference in physical size and strength between the child and the adults who care for it is very great. In the kind of single family home in which most children in this country grow up, the parents may seem absolute in power and authority. The child does not see them challenged in daily contact, on hearth or at table,

by other adults, people of their own generation, or of the grandparent's generation, as may be the case in biologically more primitive and perhaps socially more healthy conditions.

At school, the gulf between the generations is firmly maintained; parents are replaced by teachers who also are not customarily seen to be challenged by other adults, and children tend to be kept in classes of age-mates, little interaction occurring between the bottom and top classes. The increasing span of full-time education prolongs the time during which, however big and strong he is physically, the pupil is still inferior in knowledge. In times of social mobility, when the secondary schools are teaching many first generation scholars, the distance between teacher and taught as the pupil sees it, may be increased by social distance. Especially now that it is usual for teachers to deliberately foster a non-authoritarian relationship, it is important to recognise that there is still an essential asymmetry of mutual perception between people of different age groups. Time anticipated is vastly longer than time experienced, and seen from the standpoint of the pupil, the age difference between pupil and teacher is much greater than when seen from that of the teacher.

If the pupil becomes too fixed in the habit of learning only from authority figures remote in age, he will find it more difficult to continue to learn later in life; sooner or later he himself will rank as a senior with no-one older to teach him, and if he is to learn at all, he must learn from his age-mates, and even from his juniors. This requires quite a big change in his perception of his relationship to a source of knowledge; learning in groups helps the student to share both ignorance and knowledge with his peers, and prepares him for a flexible attitude toward the roles he may have to play in teaching and learning throughout life. It will be seen that what is required for group teaching is a new attitude to the relation between the pupil and his teacher; the teacher becomes less a source of information, and more a catalyst of a learning process, a process that is self catalysing.

It would be useful to run a core set of group discussions, which would help to train the participants in effective ways of behaving in groups, and strengthened by this procedure, they would be able to set up spontaneously all sorts of other kinds of group contacts themselves for various purposes. For the training group it would be necessary to have a regular meeting of the same people for an hour or so, say once a week throughout a term, in

the same place, so that no time is wasted getting familiar with new surroundings and new people. I find the easiest way to get discussion going is to have all the participants share an experience immediately before discussion starts. In ordinary committee meetings, the reading of the minutes of the last meeting, and a run-through of the agenda serves to remind the members of community of interests and aims, and usually some artificial props of this kind are necessary to start things off.

I have described at some length in the *Anatomy of Judgment* the way in which I developed group discussions for helping medical students to improve their powers of observation and judgment, and only the essential features need be repeated here. This particular project began with an introduction of some of the principles of perception; the experience the students were given was intended to acquaint them with the kind of factors that affect judgment, in particular, their relevant own experiences and the context in which the current experience was made. The topics chosen to start discussion were varied, but more or less related to the medical students' scientific interests. Suitable material for more general purposes would be provided by perhaps a short film or filmstrip, a newspaper cutting, a report by **Which**, a comic strip, almost any subject of current interest. The topic should preferably be one in which none of the participants is particularly expert, but about which all will have views, even if they do not know they have. However ignorant people are about a topic, they have a great many assumptions and associations about it that they are not normally aware of. They become aware of them by seeing that not all the other members of the group share them. What one takes for granted, another may regard as outrageous. By comparison and contrast of what they say and what others say, they become aware of the contents of their own bottle, and of other peoples', and can learn to make sounder judgments of both old and new issues. Group discussion fosters understanding, tolerance, and discrimination. It is not necessary that the issues discussed should be controversial. Contrary to what is commonly supposed, the most effective discussions are not the most heated ones. It should be reflection that is encouraged, rather than debate. Skill in understanding one's own point of view and changing it is more important than putting it across.

The physical environment in which a group meets, the behaviour of the teacher, and the expectations of the pupils are all very important. They are not more influen-

tial than in conventional teaching situations, but there they are familiar and accepted, so that people conform to them automatically. They are far less understood in groups. The first essential is that the participants should be face to face with each other, all members of the group being able to talk with each other. This means that the number cannot be many more than twelve people, and eight is probably the optimal number. Seating arrangements are important. Preferably the chairs should be in a rough circle, and they should be similar to each other, indicating that similarity of participation is expected. Teachers have been so well drilled by the classroom structure of chairs and desks that they have difficulty in emancipating themselves from spatial asymmetry; when in a group they tend to take the biggest or more comfortable chair, placed at a greater distance from its neighbours than separates any of the others, and at the head of a table if there is one. Perhaps they take books or notes with them, and in a hundred subtle ways, emphasise that they have come to teach whereas the others have come to learn. All this, of course, is done with the collusion of the pupils, who indeed, try as hard as they can to stop the teacher doing otherwise, for they also feel more

comfortable in the familiar hierarchical situation.

The teacher's role requires great self discipline; he must get out of the habit of talking, and into the habit of listening. This is not at all easy, especially for teachers who have made a success of didactic teaching. A tally of the interventions made by each of the participants is a very good corrective and listening to a tape-recording is even better. The teacher should aim to make fewer contributions than the students, and should try to make each as short as possible. The quality of his contribution also is important, and should set a model for others to follow. He should be spontaneous rather than heavily logical and rational, and not strive after grammatical perfection. Permit yourself to be stumbling in speech, don't insist that the others let you finish your sentence, and never, never interrupt anybody. Don't leap in to repair any silence; let others learn to take responsibility for keeping the party going. Be prepared for some expression of hostility on the part of pupils who want you to behave in the old-fashioned authoritarian way. All this comes slowly with experience, and it comes more quickly if you can be in a group yourself discussing the equivalent of the sort of topics you might set your pupils.

Group Methods in English

G Robertson

Mr Robertson is head of the English Department at Abbey Wood School, London.

My ideas about Group Methods derive from experience with full-range mixed ability classes, and with different streams in a comprehensive and a grammar school. I am also indebted to many colleagues, in particular in the London Association for the Teaching of English, which is interested in discussing group methods.

These methods are a product of the teacher's awareness that every child is unique. Ideally, the child should be able to work as an individual, as a member of his peer group, individually and in a group with an adult, and each child will make unique demands on groups and on adults. There is therefore a need to vary groups in order to create a variety of language demands and also to vary the provision of stimulus and resources to meet the special needs of each individual.

'Group Methods' implies, then, an English course implemented by a teacher who studies and re-studies the work of his pupils in sequence to find out what is happening, in order to contrive the material, personal response, or group situation which will enhance each child's best development. The classroom and library must be, and seem to be, rich in resources. The working group will range from one bringing several classes together, through the whole-class forum to various working groups within the class. Some ways in which the latter can be set up have been described in a previous article in *Forum* (Spring, 1967).

Within the working environment created by the teacher, children move through all the language operations belonging to English-and-drama as these become valid

instruments for fulfilling the child's present concerns. These concerns will often be worked out in friendship groups, or by individuals, rather than imposed by the teacher. But it is the teacher who creates the physical and moral environment. If Group Methods are to succeed, the teacher must be released from the limited social, linguistic and disciplinary role of the dais to become a part of the class, observing, limiting, defining, stimulating, as a leader from within.

The proportion of time we spend in large groups is usually given to viewing and discussing film which has been previewed and discussed by the teachers in the department.

A good deal of time is spent on sequences of work involving small groups, within the class as the basic unit, and these normally vary in size from two to six. Since we are concerned with individual development, we must recognise that the working group, like the family, enhances development according to the kind of language environment the participants provide for each other. Groups can be flexible, critical and loving, offering society and solitude, challenge and the chance to rest and recoup – this last is of great importance but the school day does not *a priori* provide for it and this, I think, is a source of many behaviour problems. While the environment can offer new experience, the child's own emerging talents are also new experiences, disturbing the old pattern of life, and creating a need to play with, relate and assimilate these new forces. He will not only try out new ways of expressing himself, but of 'being' others, and of attending to others.

Each child brings to bear on the material provided by the teacher and on the plans of his group a unique combination of maturities, purposes, and areas of response and inhibition. We must observe how every child finds his own routes from one insight to another – rather than expecting a child to arrest his response to a poem or improvisation until the teacher and any particular group of children who have responded to the teacher's design have exhausted a 'class' discussion.

It seems also that there are moments of rapid, and periods of slow, progress in each individual's development. By using Group Methods I can take both the less able and the able very far, very fast, by careful individual provision, while providing for others at a stage when quiet reading, or a long steady project are needed. Above all I like a situation in which the eager can get down to work as soon as they enter the room, while the child who comes in tense and aggressive can talk it out, relax

and take pleasure in life again, or be shown to be at fault – without disrupting the general pattern of active work.

Children respond to variety. A new class library, even if it contains many books they have seen before, stimulates a new bout of reading and discussion. On the other hand, children also need continuity. When I take a class lesson I expect some children to take the option of going on with other work they have in hand and verify the need with them.

Children's willingness to learn (become involved) also hinges on the nature and appropriateness of the roles they and the teacher assume. When pupils face each other across their work and the teacher moves about from group to group, children are the originators. There are many centres of interest which the teacher, and other resources in the room, service: they may call him to the work, and do; but they may branch off individually on special interests, move into groups to learn techniques needed at the moment, and in all this they talk, help, advise, distract and learn not to distract. Not the least important experience is learning how far they are capable of being with other people constructively, and coping with the limitations exposed. They choose their groups, and change them for various purposes.

In these circumstances the teacher's role becomes infinitely flexible – audience, expert, participant, lecturer, technician, typist, saboteur, goal, and many other things at need. But to arrive at this kind of situation careful planning is needed. Before attempting to move into a flexible situation, therefore, I aim to establish

- (a) that I have read carefully each child's work and talked to each child individually while he is planning a scheme of work, or while reading through his work with him;
- (b) that the children have become accustomed to consult, refer, and plan together as needed in a considerate way – or at least that a standard has been established;
- (c) that they have learned to choose their own ways and means in following up work, subject to discussion;
- (d) that each child knows that my first response will be to accept him and his work, and to welcome it (I write thank you at the bottom of their pieces, for instance) though this does not preclude criticism.

Group methods demand resources. We are planning to provide, or borrow from the education authority and the British Film Institute –

1. A large stock of duplicated material, photographs, articles, and so on; these to be filed in the English cupboard, with a key to the collection of samples in theme files, and a sample for each teacher.

2. Class libraries.
 3. Frequent access to the school library.
 4. Film extracts and occasional full length films.
 5. A departmental library including reference books.
 6. A collection of tapes, records, slides and other aids.
- We would also welcome easy access to workbenches, laboratory, art room, and reprographic services – which raises the whole question of the library resource centre, the English workshop, and integrated studies.

I spend a considerable time establishing and developing methods of presentation, using carefully related material – each piece being designed to set off reactions with some other piece we have touched on. The aim is to open up interest in an area of experience, which can become an explicit theme which the children go on to explore in groups. I do not insist that they keep to the theme, but encourage them to move on into any interesting concern that emerges – the characteristic question is, ‘what do you want to do next?’ For instance, they may make a beginning with new files or books, and I will present them with a specially selected class library. A great variety of activities develops immediately; the tone and attitude of the class becomes immediately more intent, more cheerful, and more relaxed. As the work proceeds I find a few children need careful support, on personality grounds, as well as the many who need the support of my knowledge of the available material. Bright children usually begin by making great strides in the volume and level of reading, which is crucial for later development. Some children take evasive action, but individual attention, or the lure of other children’s interest or success, draws them in. A great deal is absorbed from the general discussion that goes on and social intercourse. Children who seem for a long time to be making little progress (though I could find no cause) eventually turn out pieces of writing which reveal that a great deal of development can take place by other means than pressure to produce two pieces of **Daily Mirror** award writing per week.

Many teachers like to restrict such enquiry sequences of work to a given theme; this makes the choice of material more manageable and enables class or group presentations. But the theme which becomes a subject, and a limitation, can be pernicious, leading to the faults familiar in any inflexible course.

Group work on aspects of themes which develop from a class play or novel can be rewarding – explorations of *Evil*, *Ambition*, and *Violence*, preparing for an improvisation of *Macbeth* are an example.

Some very interesting work is being done with small unsupervised groups recording improvisations, or discussions of a stimulus. The tapes confirm the idea that children have their own ways of organising the exploration of ideas or literature, and that in their talk, as in their written work, anecdote, statements of a derivative kind, fact-hunting, repetition of stories, poems, or ideas may, properly guided and fed, play a part in the exploration of the groundwork of a concept which at the right moment, or at the right stimulus, emerges in the truly felt, and assured statement.

I am very satisfied with the progress of children working in this way. I believe the opportunity to read, to work independently, and to sustain a literary interest, will bear fruit with children from non-reading homes, and is the best, possibly the only appropriate, preparation for sixth form work. At all events, I am convinced that classrooms should be primarily places in which to live, because it is in meeting others, in resolving the personal and linguistic problems involved, that we really meet ourselves. For the teacher, to work in this way is to admit and discover that he is still educable, and to draw the benefits from that.

FORUM CONFERENCE

In the January number, it was announced that **Forum** was organising a weekend conference in the Autumn on non-streaming and new forms of grouping in primary and secondary schools. The conference was to take place on 21 and 22 September at Leicester University.

However a conference on ‘Teaching Unstreamed Classes’ is being organised by the Advisory Centre for Education on 2 to 4 August, at St. Catherine’s College, Oxford. This conference will concentrate specifically on subject teaching in the non-streamed situation.

In view of this **Forum** has decided to postpone its conference to the Easter vacation, 1969.

Full details will be given in later issues of **Forum**.

Those wishing to attend the A.C.E. conference should write to the Conference Organiser, A.C.E., 57 Russell Street, Cambridge.

Group Methods in the Junior School

George Freeland

George Freeland is headmaster of the Alderman Richard Hallam Junior School, Leicester; he has had many years' experience as head of non-streamed junior schools, and is a member of the editorial Board of **Forum**.

In the great debate on practice which is so much part of our time, we have necessarily come to accept certain terms as the linguistic coins through which we can exchange our ideas. Group methods is such a one but, on examination, it seems to cover such a diversity of practice that we cannot be certain any longer, I think, that we are talking about the same thing.

'A group exists', it is said, 'when two or more people are in interaction', and when I relate this to all the things we do in our school, from the good readers helping the poor ones, to the occasional coming together of a whole year group to be taught on a team basis in the Hall, I am really not surprised that confusion should exist.

Teaching in groups, in its widest sense, is certainly not new. At St Mark's and St John's College in the early thirties there were few of us who, out on our spells of teaching practice in Wandsworth or Fulham, would have risked the Education Tutor catching us taking our reading on a class basis.

True our groups were nowhere nearly as carefully chosen as they are today and true again that the main purpose of the exercise was to give every child more actual reading time, even if it was only to a team leader; but, nonetheless, groups were widely used and, with the turn to non-streaming in the mid-fifties, they became an integral part of the new teaching techniques from the start.

'We teach them as a class whenever we can', we used to say, 'and then we break down into groups and individual work.' It was the natural response of teachers conditioned to streaming who found themselves face to face with the full range of ability usually waiting to be taught in an over-sized class. What usually happened in this situation was that the children were put together into groups of roughly equal ability for the basic skills and then brought back into class formation for other class activities.

This kind of organisation is still widely used but in a much more varied way, varied in the light of our growing knowledge of the learning process.

The key factor in this change is that today we know more about the nature of Intelligence (and I use the capital letter advisedly). We have looked beyond the word, so final in the thirties, to find that the quality to

which we referred can be, to some extent at least, acquired. We have come to realise the catalytic role which language plays in the process of acquisition and whilst we still adhere to the idea that the curriculum of the Primary School should be thought of in terms of activity and experience, we now know that this must include linguistic experience, and not just activity for itself.

Inevitably all this has had an immediate impact on old and well-tried methods and, in the light of it, it soon becomes clear that the old rigid class structure is no longer an adequate vehicle for the new ends we wish to pursue.

We must have the children more actively involved with real situations and materials: we want them to have more opportunities of talking naturally about the tasks before them with other children and especially with the teacher, the adult who will introduce the mature language into the learning situation. We want them to be able to pursue new ideas to a reasonable and satisfying conclusion without the frustrations imposed by a too rigid reference to subject or to time, and all this implies a turn, in some form or other, to group methods – group methods, I think, in the sense in which we have come to use the term in so much of our current discussion.

In the broad new flexible approach both homogeneous and heterogeneous groups have their place. The homogeneous group has relevance to the more programmed work in the basic skills and is probably most widely used in the teaching of reading.

Plowden based an important part of its case for a change in the age of transfer by stressing the critical stage which many children have reached in their mastery of reading at the age of seven. Nearly half the children in the survey undertaken by the NFER in Kent, it had been demonstrated, continued to need skilled teaching in the beginnings of reading after transfer at seven.

Half the children in the survey had mastered the basic art of reading and half had not and this is the size of the problem. Some teachers deal with it by individual methods, some set the children working in twos, but the majority of junior schools, streamed and non-streamed, carefully allocate each child to the book that seems most appropriate in a graded reading scheme and proceed to

deal with the group situation as it arises from there. Many teachers cope with spelling at different levels in the same sort of way.

This width in reading attainment is, of course, heavily correlated with differences in linguistic development as a whole and their direct relation to differences in home background. Vigotsky has said that in learning to write the child learns to construct sentences, to do consciously what he has been doing unconsciously in his speaking, and with this aid, to advance to a higher level of speech development.

I have always believed that it should be possible to differentiate broad stages of development, to note points of qualitative change such as when a child begins to link two ideas with 'and' or 'but' or 'so' or when he gropes for the more advanced connectors with which to express more complex forms of thought. On this basis at my school we have formed groups to help the children forward at different stages in this way.

The method of forming groups of roughly equal ability is necessarily much the same everywhere but, once established, there is a great difference in the ways in which they are deployed. Some teachers newly turned to non-streaming may structure most of their curriculum, except in such subjects as art, music and PE, round the groups, and in a free situation they may merge and fluctuate to such an extent that they hardly exist at all in the organised sense in which we are speaking of them.

In my school, although much of the day is not time-tabled, there is a definite period set aside for the younger classes for reading purposes each morning. The teacher hears each group read in turn. The groups not so occupied work on a programme of related activities, in phonics, comprehension or vocabulary. The need for this time-tabled approach diminishes up the school as most of the children master reading and the number of those still requiring basic teaching withers away.

Some schools, however, adopt a much less structured approach from the start and combine reading with other activities which require less supervision, arguing that by so doing they are able to allocate their time to more advantage. Some deal with the children in need of help in groups whilst they allow more freedom and choice to the more advanced.

The emphasis on homogeneous groups is naturally usually on the individual, the children doing their own work, the group working as a unit only when the teacher takes them together on a group basis to hear, for example,

the reading, or to teach them part of an arithmetical process which is presenting difficulty. Whilst most protagonists of the non-streamed school would accept this as an efficient and economic method of dealing with differences, they would not feel that it was fully exploiting the learning situation which they had set out to create.

When I first began to de-stream my school in the mid-fifties I wrote:

'Non-streaming makes possible the development of new teaching techniques which deliberately use the special opportunities furnished by the un-streamed class, the stimulus of a group working collectively for a common end.'

In those early days I was undoubtedly thinking more in terms of the class as a whole than I would today (although, be it noted, I still see great value in bringing the class together from time to time) and, obviously, what we need to do now is to break the class down, trying to pursue the same end through more manageable units, themselves replicas of the non-streamed class containing the full range of ability.

The work on which such groups must be engaged, it would seem, must be of the problem-solving nature, whereby the group as a whole work together to the same end.

The Nuffield projects have given a lead on this kind of material in mathematics and science and it is very possible to extend it in the environmental field as a whole.

Children of junior school age, of course, need to be trained to co-operate. I remember how disappointed one of our teachers was when she first introduced Nuffield group mathematical work into her class room only to find that the children did not immediately co-operate. We have to help the children to do this in all sorts of ways, by the manner in which we draw up the task cards, by the way in which we present the task, by the amount and type of apparatus which we provide.

The fact is that we know very little about what happens inside such groups at Primary level, most of the research having been done at a much more mature age. We should examine the findings about group work – about competition, the struggle for leadership etc – and see how far these are relevant in the primary school situation.

In this way, and in the light of new research more precisely directed at the primary school (some of which it is gratifying to report is being carried out from Leicester University), we may be able to deepen our understanding of group methods and learn how to use them more fruitfully in the flexibly organised unstreamed school.

Against Interpretation

M F Cleugh

Dr Cleugh is Reader in Education at the University of London Institute of Education. She is the author of **Educating Older People**, as well as other works in the field of special education. Here she criticises a particular approach to group work with students.

Some very strange ideas seem to be current in the study of group processes. I have met them in a number of places, of which the most convenient for the general reader is Elizabeth Richardson's recent book **Group Study for Teachers** (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967). It seems to me time that these ideas were challenged, before they seep too far into the general climate of opinion. I would summarise the underlying ideas, which are implicitly assumed if not explicitly stated, in five statements, of which I shall pay most attention to the last.

Anxiety and pain are an integral part of group experience.

Relations among group members are of necessity frequently strained, with a good deal of scape-goating going on.

An angry argument is to be welcomed as a sign of depth and commitment.

We can learn best how groups function by setting up groups that have nothing to do other than study themselves. (Comparison: studying digestion in a body which has nothing to eat.)

Interpretation is essential.

My experience in the last seventeen years in running university discussion groups has led me to very different conclusions. In a brief article I can only state them baldly, but they are not merely dogmas, and I can document them.

Anxiety and pain occur. They must be faced. They must not be unnecessarily increased or stimulated. Group learning is primarily a joyful process. Release, energy, and insight are the primary experiences: anxiety and pain are secondary.

Learning takes place rapidly in a friendly group: scape-goating is rare, and its occurrence need not be regarded with complacency, but on the contrary as a sign of lack of skill in its leader.

Expression of deep feeling is more likely to occur in a setting of trust, confidence and security. Surface fire-works get nowhere and the entertainment they afford is trivial. Unacceptable feelings, including aggressive ones, need to be expressed – and accepted: but their frequency

and violence are not a barometer of the depth of issues tackled by the group.

A group which has nothing to do is an abnormal group. All normal groups have tasks to perform; as they get on with these, mechanisms are brought into play and these can be studied in retrospect. Some members become interested in the processes of group learning and spontaneously examine them for themselves with considerable insight and without anxiety. Others do not gain this, second order, insight, but they have benefited at the primary level from the achievement of their learning task. This seems to me sounder educationally than dragging everyone through by the scruff of their necks beyond their level of comprehension, emotional as well as intellectual.

Interpretation, far from being essential, is nearly always either useless or harmful. Is it not, in essence, a claim to play God? It is my contention that the process of interpretation involves a contradiction with the expressed aims of group study which is not merely a surface inconsistency: this contradiction reappears at the second level, and the third, and the fourth, to an infinite regress – in short it is fundamental.

Let us imagine a very skilled consultant, whose interpretations are always dead right (a tall order! but let it pass) and analyse the implications of his activities at the receiving end. If these are shown to be unhelpful, even though he is in fact right, then a fortiori there is still less to be said for the inaccurate, the biased, and the erratic interpreter.

Interpretation is always threatening. It involves piercing defences that have been erected to guard tender spots. There is all the world of difference between the voluntary dropping of defences in a situation of trust, and having them forcibly penetrated. The latter appears aggressive, ruthless, threatening: the defences become more, not less, necessary. When the sun and the wind in the childhood story made a wager who would get a man's coat off, it was the sun who won, because the harder the wind blew, the more tightly the man wrapped himself in his coat. If you know that comments will be made on the 'meaning' of your behaviour, the obvious reaction is to mobilise your defences and retire behind them; they are

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Against Interpretation

going to be needed. So the person retreats, and shows only what is trivial. The consultant claims godlike omniscience and by so doing devalues the creatures wriggling in front of him of their humanity. He **knows**, and he will tell them what he knows, willy nilly. He is the authoritarian par excellence. So it is no good talking piously about a 'climate of acceptance', or a 'non-judgmental' attitude to the group, or 'encouraging the expression of repressed feeling' – the reality is other, it is an authoritarian, non-reversible situation, and here is the fundamental contradiction.

In my experience I have plenty of evidence for advocating the eschewal of interpretative comment. In groups where there genuinely is a climate of acceptance and a non-judgmental attitude, people are left unmolested. They can join in or be silent. They can learn to challenge ideas without attacking people, and, equally, learn to accept challenge without it becoming a personal threat to be countered aggressively. There is a lot of fun to be had from the comradeship of a harmonious working group. It is safe to express feelings spontaneously. Defences that are not needed against unwelcome invasions of personal privacy tend to drop. Discussions become more genuinely self-involving and may reach considerable depth, but easily and gaily – in contrast to the exchange of barren trivialities, punctuated by explosions, of the defence-ridden interpretative groups.

In sum, I would rest my contention against interpretation on three counts – it is authoritarian, it is bad-mannered, it is futile.

An exchange of assertion and counter-assertion accomplishes little. I have written this article because I did not want the case to go by default while the opposite views become the orthodoxy in spite of their manifest shortcomings. But what is really needed is more evidence in the form of full transcripts of proceedings in discussion groups and these are not easily come by. Is there any reason for this coyness? Why should we be fobbed off with large claims of 'great depth', 'significant learnings' etc and a general tone of mystique and long words, when the actual examples given are brief and of a startling and humourless banality? I have given full examples myself of group discussion (*Educating Older People*, Chapter 4, and University of London, Institute of Education Bulletin, New Series No. 3, Summer Term '64) and of processes of change (*Educating Older People*, Chapters 8, 9, and 10). Please will those who dislike the views I have expressed here do the same?

Exploring the Non-Streamed Situation in some Leicestershire Primary Schools

Maureen Hardy

About a year ago, a group of teachers in primary and secondary schools in the town and county of Leicester formed a study circle to discuss the problems of teaching in the non-streamed situation. This article, by the secretary of the group, discusses some of the results gained from an enquiry undertaken by the group. Teachers in non-streamed primary school classes were asked to record a time sample (one day) of their class's activities. Some of these are given in this article, together with an analysis by the author, who, of course presents her own point of view.

Miss Hardy teaches at a Leicestershire junior school in Thurmaston where, she writes, she has been given scope and encouragement to experiment with a wide variety of modern methods and materials. **Forum** would welcome similar articles from primary school teachers, in order to widen the discussion on the various methods which may be used in the non-streamed school.

The non-streamed class is an exciting challenge. Children within the class may come from one social extreme to the other. They will certainly be at very different stages of development physically, intellectually, emotionally, morally, spiritually and aesthetically. Between them they will have a multitude of strengths, talents and special abilities and an equally large number of weaknesses and special difficulties. Collectively they will react with each other to present a panorama of rich experience and thus a natural situation with possibilities for promoting growth in personality and knowledge, readily accessible to each individual within the classroom community.

The challenge is to discover the most efficient method of ensuring that each child becomes aware of the possibilities surrounding him and so can draw upon the varied resources of this miniature community to the limit of his capacity. Making the child aware also implies giving him the necessary basic skills to help him interpret, deepen, clarify and crystallize his discoveries. The crucial challenge is, then, to discover a form of organization allowing sufficient freedom for communication and interaction of personalities, whilst providing sufficient discipline to ensure that learning and growth take place. A study of some ways in which teachers have endeavoured to solve this problem should help to show how far the aim is at present being fulfilled. All examples quoted are actual time samples of normal classes in action, recorded by the teachers themselves.

The first method considered is simple and straightforward, closely following traditional practices:

TIME SAMPLE 1. (1st years)

8.50 – 9.15	Registration. Maths books and cuisenaire rods distributed. Assembly.
9.15 – 9.45	Maths lesson.
9.45 – 10.05	Packing up and Spelling test (10 mins.).
10.05 – 10.35	Reading. Teacher marks Test and hears better groups read.
11.00 – 11.50	Creative writing (8 mins. stimulation). Stories corrected as completed.
11.50 – 12.00	'Though many children are not yet finished, the class stop and listen to selected children read stories.'
1.35 – 1.50	News time – individual children tell the class their news. Less responsive children encouraged by teacher.
1.50 – 1.55	5 mins. story, whilst awaiting arrival of students.
1.55 – 3.00	Students take groups for Art (room prepared at lunch time). Teacher gives out extra materials and assists where necessary.
3.15 – 3.20	Maths work returned marked – brief talk on common mistakes.
3.20 – 3.25	History books distributed – meanwhile teacher talks about behaviour in playground.
3.25 – 3.45	Discussion on the Romans.
3.45 – 3.55	10 mins. practical History work. Teacher completes marking two Maths books, discussing errors.
3.55 – 4.00	Books collected . . . Afternoon prayers.

Initially, this plan seems based on a logical conception of a day's work by an experienced teacher; a methodical

person, who plans precisely and has made an apparently sound programme. The children appear to have been given a well balanced diet of activities and a variety of experiences. Individuals are given due consideration, since the children, using apparatus, are allowed scope to pursue Maths at their own level and rate of working; similarly in regard to expression in art and writing. The need for cross-communication is covered by class discussion and group work taken with the assistance of adults drawn from outside the classroom. However, to test the plan's soundness, it is worth endeavouring to look at it through the eyes of the children it is designed to benefit, even though this is only possible hypothetically.

The situation is first reviewed from the standpoint of the most intelligent child in the class and secondly from that of the least intelligent. Considering the first case, certain flaws immediately become apparent. Imagine this boy becoming interested in his Maths – he works and thinks and discovers new possibilities with the apparatus, but, in order to progress, he needs to discuss his ideas. He is keen and interested, but his teacher is busy helping other children – he waits, going over ground already covered, unable to proceed. Owing to the rigidity of the programme, he cannot leave Maths and then return to it when his teacher is free. Eventually, the teacher reaches him, probably near the end of the lesson – they discuss his ideas – he is anxious to continue, but no, spelling must now claim his attention. He finds the test boring – designed for average children, it covers words with which he has long been familiar. Reading follows – he enjoys this, but probably on this occasion, he could have been more profitably employed progressing with his Maths, a project which must now wait until the next day. Creative writing follows – he enjoys writing and, given time, could cover many pages with interesting matter, but knowing that he may be asked to read his story aloud, he abruptly brings his creativity to an end at precisely 11.48. So ends the morning for this particular child and his companions, some of whom will have had similar experiences.

As expected, he makes good contributions to the news discussion. Then follows the brief story – too short to nurture interest. Conditioned to this kind of existence, the boy rapidly changes his interests through news, story and then Art. He sets to work enthusiastically, but his approach is slow and careful, hence he has not finished when the hour is up, so his work is put aside until the students' next visit. He has much information to offer concerning the Romans, because he has read widely and

visited Museums, but the ten minutes allocated for practical work is hardly long enough for him to express all he knows. Given time and encouragement, he could well make a project book, or better still, help a group of children study the subject more widely and deeply than they could otherwise manage. At 4.00 he leaves school placidly enough, because he is too used to the situation to feel frustrated by it. However, it is easy to see that if the day had been less definitely structured, he and others could have been stretched further and gained more inner satisfaction from their efforts. This boy is, perhaps, too good to be true or even desirable, but nevertheless he illustrates a genuine weakness in a rigid system.

Considered from the opposite angle, flaws again appear. The least intelligent boy needed more help with Maths than the teacher could give him in the short space of half-an-hour, when all the class required attention. Spelling Tests are a waste of time to him – as he can barely read, he can hardly be expected to spell correctly. He required the reading practice, but was probably not able to concentrate for thirty mins without help (Note: the teacher was otherwise occupied). News time was good for him – the teacher must be commended for encouraging all the children to communicate their ideas verbally. Perhaps he was interested in the story and concentrated, a rare experience for him, but it stopped so suddenly that his new found pleasure and experience vanished. Art work followed, in his case an hour was perhaps too long for his initial interest to last – his scribbled paint daubs could have got progressively worse, not better, as time went on. He enjoyed the fragments he managed to listen to concerning the Romans, but practical work could have been quite beyond him and the text book no use at all, unless very attractively illustrated. Again, an extreme case, but such children are usually present in a non-streamed class.

In conclusion, it appears that the teacher's carefully planned day was only truly satisfactory for a very small section of the class, those near-hypothetical creatures – the average children. It is probable that many of the children could have done with more or less time for one or several of the activities covered, either because of special interests and talents or due to peculiar difficulties.

II

More fluid variations on this method involve grouping. The teacher divides the class into a number of small groups of either heterogeneous or homogeneous composition. If the former, the advantages of non-streaming

are maintained, interests and problems can be explored from a variety of approaches and social communication is still rich. If the latter, then streaming takes place within the non-streamed class and many advantages are lost. Groups may be static throughout or varied for different purposes. The latter is preferable, because it enriches the chances of cross-communication, but not so desirable where changes are determined by ability in different activities, for that is virtually streaming again.

Using grouping, the teacher can work either on a clearly defined subject timetable, or more than one subject may be in progress at any one time. The latter system encourages flexibility and it is conceivable that the class would not be perturbed if groups or individuals stepped outside the framework in order to continue worthwhile projects not on the schedule. The teacher is still very definitely in command, but is granting scope for spontaneity to play its part when valuable results might ensue. An over-structured situation cuts out the possibility of enthusiasm and concentration springing out of spontaneous participation in interesting topics.

From the samples available, two have been selected to illustrate grouping; the first uses a traditional time-table, the second is slightly more flexible.

TIME SAMPLE 2. (1st years)

9.00 – 9.10 Registration and Classroom prayers.

9.10 – 9.30 Scripture Story.

9.30 – 10.35 Mathematics:

Class Table practice – 10 mins.

Then 4 main groups with sub-groups within them:

Group 1 used scales and weighing machine in corridor. Worked well with little supervision.

Group 2 applied add rule to money sums, some from assignment cards – others made shopping bills from catalogues. Many needed help, especially where 10s was used – this was given by demonstration using money and Base 10 longs and Units (Dienes).

Group 3 measuring water to discover capacity table. This necessitated many journeys to cloakroom by children and teacher as wrong cans were used and water lost in transference. Two children were measuring objects in feet and inches.

Group 4 Several were shown how to do mixed bases with and without abaci and then left to practice. Two children, needing constant help, were attempting adding base 10 with abacus.

10.35 – 10.40 Clearing up.

11.00 – 12.00 English.

Group 1

Each child chose a book from 'Read About It' series. These were read and twenty questions answered. Little help given except the reading of difficult words and questions.

Group 2

Some used similar books to above or 'My Book of Telling Words.' These needed more help, sometimes in finding answers.

Group 3

News writing day for eleven less able readers. Each child told news and this was written out to be copied and illustrated. This took a considerable time as they were encouraged to read back the news.

1.30 – 2.30 Needlecraft – 1st and 2nd year girls.

(Boys occupied elsewhere)

2nd years Most were able to work without much assistance, as their articles had been checked beforehand and many were doing repetitive borders. However, some required help with turning hems, etc.

1st years Those making linden canvas mats needed frequent teaching of new stitches, threading needles, etc. Those knitting required help with casting on and off. Those making raffia mats worked steadily with no help. There was always a queue of up to eight children waiting for attention, which seems inevitable with younger children.

2.45 – 3.45

No PE (wet weather). Instead, a History story extended by work on Roman numerals. Children copied numerals and drew clock faces. During the latter some poor readers had extra practice, but there was not enough time to hear them all.

3.45 – 4.00

General tidying up.

Although timetabled as precisely as the first programme, this classroom scene is much more alive. The approach is more concerned with individual needs rather than class direction and there is room for spontaneity to creep in. The chief flaw is that the teacher continually seems to have more children needing help than she can possibly cope with in the time allowed for each activity. Inevitably, some children must go through the hour of Maths without getting attention and so deriving little value from the lesson. Similarly, much of the needlework time is spent queueing for help. Now, if half the class were engaged on work which they definitely could do

alone, eg illustrating stories or handwriting practice, then the teacher would become more efficient, having twice as much time to devote to those tackling complex subjects. Simple and complex activities could be rotated. The next sample shows a teacher endeavouring to mix activities in order to achieve an easier situation for helping individuals.

TIME SAMPLE 3. (3rd Years)

9.00 – 9.15 Assembly.

9.15 – 10.35 Group Work:

- Group 1** Writing practice for poor writers.
- Group 2** Finishing stories started Monday p.m.
- Group 3** Top Maths group working on Algebra.
- Group 4** Money – giving change from 10s.
- Group 5** Decimals.

Teacher moving round all groups. Group 5 needed most attention. Algebra group marked and left to continue. Stayed 5 mins with Group 4.

10.55 – 12.00 Art experiments and projects eg
Viking pictures
Stipple paintings
Printing with embossed paper

Teacher moving between children in classroom and corridor, helping, suggesting and seeing every child during lesson.

1.30 – 2.00 French (visiting teacher)
Remedial reading for four boys (class teacher).

2.00 – 2.30 Creative writing. Children wrote individual stories with illustrations in various media. Teacher helping with spellings, checking stories and suggesting further work.

2.45 – 3.20 A science lesson arising from previous questions about space travel, the nature of the universe and God. The children had many observations, many of their questions and answers were quite profound. Teacher prompted questions and answers, bringing 38 children actively into the lesson and illustrating difficult points on the blackboard.

3.20 – 3.45 **Tom Sawyer** read by teacher.

Although precisely time-tabled, the approach here is child-centred and more ‘individual’ minded than previous

samples. Every child does not have to do Maths each day – getting satisfaction in finishing stories, or improving handwriting, is considered just as important a task; so children are allowed time for these, whilst others obtain the full benefit of plenty of Maths apparatus and a teacher with time to help them, because all the class are not engaged on tasks requiring much instruction. Presumably a balanced programme is achieved by alternating activities. In Art, a variety of activities were available. Then came individual creative writing and illustrations – giving the brightest scope for making whole story books and the slowest a chance to express themselves in pictures more than writing and so gaining satisfaction rather than frustration from the activity. The science lesson is interesting, because it sprang from the children’s own questions – it was not teacher imposed. Its discussion form provided an opportunity for cross-communication of ideas and approaches.

III

Large blocks of time for ‘Activities’ figure on some formal timetables. For these, teachers set up an environment and then let the children choose from activities suggested therein. The children work as individuals or in interest groups. An example of this method is given below:

TIME SAMPLE 4. (2nd Years)

1.30 – 2.30 English and Activities.

Children working as follows:

- 8 finishing creative writing
- 4 using Bulk writing books
- 6 practising joined hand-writing
- 2 working on the ‘Sir Francis Chichester’ Class Book – pictures, etc.
- The rest continued their Personal Interest Books.

2.45 – 3.45 Continuation of above – children changing occupation. Three tables had been set up for painting and mounting for Interest Books.

Throughout the teacher was helping and advising individuals and in particular supervising the painting of a papier mâché cow (follow up of television dairy programme). Last fifteen mins spent clearing up.

Such periods are valuable, because in a free situation the teacher has time to discuss generally with individuals

and stimulate discussion within the free-formed groups. Also, interest and concentration can be greater, because children are participating voluntarily and thinking things out for themselves.

IV

The next sample shows these principles applied in an extreme form – the timetable is nearly non-existent and ideas of child-centred and individual education are dominant. The method appears to lack organization and the teacher appears unmethodical. She admits that she seeks only to control the situation, not to dominate it. The system is very flexible, because the aim is, as far as possible, to endeavour to create a situation which can be easily adapted to meet the needs of the class and the individuals within it. Ideas continuously bounce back and forth between children and teacher. In a term, the teacher suggests about half the activities covered, the others arise from the children's interests as revealed in discussion – class, group and individual discussion is encouraged.

The situation is not as haphazard and risky as it sounds, because the teacher ensures that certain programmes are built into the system, eg the Dienes Mathematical programme. She also deliberately introduces important topics, and ideas originating from the children are extended to cover necessary aspects of education, eg in discussing Christmas, the children talked of the Post. The making of a Post Office followed and out of it came work with weights and money and an interest in how the Post Office operates. Letter writing was encouraged, at first within the class and later beyond the classroom. Once letter writing became a vehicle of communication with people outside, the necessity for making letters as clear as possible was realized – this created a need for some formal instruction and stimulated extra care with writing and spelling.

The free approach involves a mixture of methods – in addition to a large amount of free choice, there is a need for some 'open ended' direction (ie a specified form of work capable of approach at a variety of levels), plus some formal lessons. The aim is to foster adaptability in children – to help them think for themselves, but also be capable of conforming when the occasion demands. The allocation of time depends on many factors. Spontaneous experience and creativity are rated highly, but it is recognized that some facets of education are better covered on a directed basis either to use the time available economically or because the subject consists of a clear progression

necessitating orderly presentation. Thus, individual activity, directed tasks, free discovery, class and group work are all included when and where applicable.

A broad outline of a programme is sketched each evening, based on needs and interests indicated during the day, but this is only a framework, subject to adaptation to meet the needs and mood of the children. The only real timetable is that of fixed points for use of Hall, TV, etc. These fixtures and other directed activities sometimes cut across blocks of free time, but children soon take them as a matter of course, like lunch break – simply leaving off at the appointed time and returning to work later with little fuss.

The chief advantage of the free approach, is that it leaves the teacher free to talk to the children, work with them and so really get to know and understand them.

Here are two typical days – the first showing a diversity of activities – the second shows how children at times become involved in certain main ideas which become matters of concentration.

TIME SAMPLE 5. (1st and 2nd years – Vertical Grouping)

The following activities were chosen and covered during the morning in addition to a TV programme and a visit to the nearby local Library. Some kept to one activity throughout, whilst others changed once and some twice.

- 4 children made parcels of various weights for Post Office.
- 4 used Dienes MAB apparatus.
- 2 made squares with Poleido blocs – measuring sides and diagonals.
- 2 used Stern Maths material.
- 1 used Cuisenaire Rods.
- 3 used the Ribbon Shop – an activity involving measuring, fractions of a yard and of money; also demonstrating subtraction by complementary addition.
- 3 helped the teacher count dinner, savings and School Newspaper money.
- 2 wrote letters.
- 2 made up plays with toy theatre.
- 2 played Hex.
- 2 used the 'Make-a-Shape' puzzle.
- 2 played draughts.
- 3 played a sets game with Logic Blocks and also a reasoning game.
- 1 child wrote and illustrated a story.
- 4 investigated the Cave theme (current Class Literature – 'The Cave Twins'). They researched from books and from simple teacher devised cards for poor readers. A Class Book was begun, which eventually involved many children and stimulated excellent creative writing.
- 3 children used electrical equipment (eventually leading to the making of a multi-lit lighthouse and lighting for toy theatre.)

Exploring the Non-Streamed Situation

2 made working models of cranes with Junior Engineering Kit.
2 painted cave pictures.

Several read.

1 first year boy, who had spent time the previous day making patterns on a Geo-board, used it for making squares and measuring the sides. Having worked out the perimeters of the small squares, he turned his attention to the yard squares on the floor. He noticed that each consisted of 9" sq. tiles, so he found the perimeter by adding nines, checking his addition on an Addo Calculator. Then he measured the perimeter in feet. In discussion with his teacher he discovered that he could also have added in twelves or four lots of 36". Also he noticed the fractions of a yard involved.

During the afternoon :

11 children used Dienes MAB and AEM material.

3 used the Ribbon Shop.

2 used the electrical equipment.

2 played Dominoes, then changed to Logic 'Dominoes' with a basis of one difference.

2 played draughts.

2 used the Toy Theatre.

1 used the Fiddle Board (pulleys and levers).

1 did table practice with pegs and peg board, checking with an Addo Calculator.

1 girl made a birthday card.

2 children painted.

2 used Geo-board, one copying the patterns exactly on inch squared paper.

3 began a Topic Book on Animals.

4 played various Logic Games.

2 used 'Make-a-Shape' puzzle.

4 children read.

4 poor readers played an i.t.a. game.

The day ended with a chapter of 'The Cave Twins' and a discussion on the Stone Age into which all the children entered. The teacher stimulated with quick sketches on the blackboard.

TIME SAMPLE 6.

The following activities covered most of the day, but there was a class discussion on the correct way to set out a letter and one was collectively composed on the blackboard.

10 children researched, wrote and drew for Class Book on Cave Theme.

10 made pictures with pastels and chalk – mostly cave theme or transport.

20 used Dienes Maths apparatus.

30 wrote letters (some used their own typewriters).

8 used the Post Office.

3 used the Ribbon Shop.

3 acted out 'Sleeping Beauty' stimulated by Toy Theatre and a well illustrated Library Book.

4 read.

2 painted patterns.

The day ended with another episode of 'The Cave Twins' and classroom prayers.

The major problem with this type of organization is that the teacher is one among many and that all the children need the support and enthusiasm of an interested adult – helping each other, they can only get so far; and without stimulus their own original enthusiasm can fail in frustration. It is probable that it is in this type of situation that additional classroom help would prove most valuable.

It is again possible to apply the test of looking at the system through the eyes of children. Here the standpoint of the most intelligent is not so important as that of the most energetic, and the lazy child must be substituted for the least intelligent, because in a free situation, effort is a better criterion than intelligence. For comparison, however, it is presumed that the most energetic is in the able sector and the laziest in the less able (neither being invariably the case).

Here the most energetic had time to go on experimenting on a theme, eg the boy with the Geo-board, who could not have progressed so far in a Maths period. Similarly, another day, two girls voluntarily progressed several stages on the Dienes programme, the stronger helping the weaker and verbally clarifying her ideas as she did so. Another time, two girls covered sixty pages each with good creative writing. Naturally, the children do have non-productive periods, but even these can lead to better things – eg the boy with the Geo-board on the day previous to his discoveries.

It is true that whilst the teacher is busy with interest groups or slow learners, lazy children probably get away with too many rest times. The teacher does her best to ensure that such children do a certain amount of work each week, but she cannot always be standing over them. Such children, however, are also a problem in formal systems. Classroom assistants would be of great help here. Another difficulty is that of ascertaining that the children follow a reasonably balanced programme over a period of, say, a month. This can be done by the structuring of the environment and by constant reviewing of the progress of individuals and subsequent direction when necessary, but it is not easy and by no means as foolproof as one would wish.

Many teachers use free activity for part of their timetable. Some utilize the early morning, when the children are fresh and at their most creative. To others it is an

optional frill, strictly for use when all essential work has been completed. Some devote whole mornings to it, whilst others limit its use to an hour a day or one or two periods a week. All these methods can work satisfactorily, but also have their flaws.

The main problem is that the less time allocated for free work, the less likely the children are to use the time available usefully. Brief free periods contrast so sharply with structured periods, that children tend to equate them with play time – thus they occupy themselves rather than create. Knowing that they will be made to work for much of the day, they will hardly choose to work when free choice is offered. Yet, unless they willingly extend free play ventures, interpreting and clarifying them with the aid of the basic skills, much value is lost; for valuable experiences to take place, there must be a real connection between exploratory and creative play and basic skills. Naturally, semi-free systems could allocate time for work arising from free periods, but it is inconceivable that all the children would be ready to extend and crystallize their free time experiences simultaneously.

The teacher of Time Sample 5 once tried using free activity for one and half hours a day, followed by group and class work. She noticed that after a while, the children dissociated the free time from the rest of the day; it became a time to play, neither thinking nor learning took place. The ideas arising from it which could be utilized in the structured learning became fewer and fewer. However, once free time again began to occupy the greater part of the day, then the children once more accepted it as a form of work and it became alive and valuable. In a relaxed atmosphere children work out their own rhythm or work and rest, but a stimulating environment promotes more of the former.

Another method in current use is the practice of creating a free situation and then controlling the work covered by giving the children a list of tasks which must be completed either each day or each week. This ensures an adequate well-balanced diet of work and also guards against slackers. It also has the merit of giving children responsibility for planning their time. The danger is, however, that it could result in a deterioration of the quality of work normal in either a truly formal or truly free situation – since children may hurry through the tasks and then merely play in the remaining time. Also it can cut across the possible fruits of spontaneous interest.

Some teachers keep part of the class on time-tabled group work and have a sensible group of children work-

ing freely on integrated methods. This caters for temperamental difference – those who can benefit from freedom are given it, whilst those needing direction, receive it, but the advantages of mixing personalities in the community are lost. Experience shows that often the less able and the lazy get infected with the enthusiasm of the able and energetic with good results. Again the average, and below average, children's more direct approach to problems can be of help to the able children, who sometimes think in too complicated a manner to discover the basic nature of problems. Average children gain from contact with both brighter and less bright children and should not be separated from either. Among time samples available there is a quotation supporting this – 'We talked of dreams . . . the brighter children and the poorer contributed well, **but the middle children not enough**'. Segregating a group of sensible children for integrated work, often means creating an obvious top group and thus promoting the worst effects of ideas of superiority and inferiority. In a free situation, the top children become natural, but largely unconscious, leaders and their abilities stimulate the others in indirect ways. Segregating a bottom group for free work at their own level can have similar unsatisfactory effects. **Working children of all types together fosters social tolerance and provides a richer pool of thoughts and ideas from which children of all intelligence levels can benefit.**

Among the research material available, there is a long and interesting time-sample which clearly shows one teacher's endeavour to strike a balance between individual and directed work. His method appears to be one of flooding the environment with a continuous stream of stimuli, which all the class study up to a point. He then allows large blocks of time for pursuing individual interests suggested by the stimulus matter. Thus he alternates between class instruction and a modified version of the integrated day.

Another teacher, also aiming at a true balance of individual and directed work, has a convenient, seemingly logical and practical scheme, for ensuring that every day the children have an opportunity of exploring in an interesting environment, whilst also receiving a satisfactory amount of ordered and disciplined tuition and practice in essential skills and topics. Although, inevitably, modified by external factors, the basic scheme is as follows:

Each day is divided into four main sections:

(A) 9.15 – 10.40

Children
Activity, children free to use all available facilities in and out of school

Teacher
Marking work, teaching small groups (ie musicians). Available for questions, etc.

(B) 11.00 – 12.00

Children under direction for discussion, tuition, class activities (PE, etc.) routine practices.

Discussion previous activities and the requisite follow-up, reviewing recorded work, giving tuition.

(C) 1.40 – 2.45 As 'A'

As 'A'

(D) 3.00 – 4.00 As 'B'

As 'B'

Now to examine this type of programme from the viewpoint of children. First imagine the children busy exploring an exciting environment, early in the day, when they are fresh and creative. The most energetic, or most intelligent child begins to make discoveries in say science, he becomes absorbed. However, break brings an end to his progress, for he must next participate in unconnected directed work. The discipline may be good for him, but it stops him pursuing the enquiry during his early enthusiasm. After lunch, he is free to take up the interest again, but first he must collect his thoughts and physically collect his materials. Perhaps, however, the directed work will have stimulated him in another direction. Again he could reach an interesting point only to be stopped by classwork. This also happens in a free situation, for, even there, the physical time-table breaks into individual ploys – but the less structured the situation, the less regularly this occurs. It can be argued that the more time you give a child, the longer he will take – that time limits help to sharpen reaction and promote industry. This can be true, but it is not always so – eg one boy in Time-sample 5 could not have packed more into his morning, nor progressed so far, if his initial activities had ended abruptly at 10.40 a.m.

The method sounds an excellent way of dealing with lazy children, but not entirely satisfactory for low ability children. Whilst ensuring participation for much of each day, it overlooks the fact that some of the class work exceeds their powers of understanding. Individual work at their own level or examining self-chosen topics in conjunction with brighter children would be of more benefit. Less able children gain from class work, but the doubtful point is – can they benefit from large amounts of it every day?

This study does not attempt to offer a blue-print for non-streamed classes, but merely to stimulate thought and discussion. Diversity is inevitable, not only because the unstreamed situation is new, but because of the individual personalities of the teachers – a methodical person, for example, might only be able to give his best in a well-structured situation. None of the methods discussed is without flaws or difficulties. The aim, however, is that the study of the methods of other teachers may help each individual in developing his own best system.

Comprehensive Non-streaming

Unstreaming the Comprehensive School, Where supplement twelve.

Most **Forum** readers will by now have seen the **Where** supplement on unstreaming the comprehensive school, which was published early in the year. It is a very useful compendium – particularly for students, but also for any who are concerned with the new developments in comprehensive schools.

Albert Rowe, who acted as consulting editor for the Supplement, contributes a characteristically trenchant article making 'The case against streaming', while Caroline Benn writes on American evidence. It is interesting to note that, as a result of a lawsuit brought by negro civic leaders in Washington DC, in which the court found against streaming (as discriminatory), grouping by 'ability' is now virtually forbidden in Washington's schools.

The Supplement contains a number of articles on teaching unstreamed classes, several of which are by authors who have recently contributed to **Forum** – for instance David Bosworth on science teaching and Brian Clayton on mathematics. Derek Roberts writes on geography and Donald Reid on biology. There are articles by Michael Armstrong, Michael Tucker and others. All in all this Supplement makes a useful addition to the armoury of those concerned to rethink the theory and practice of education in the comprehensive school.

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Discussion



Forget all they told you in College

In 'Curriculum Change in Practice' (*Forum*, Vol. 10, No. 2) Professor Kerr dismisses without comment one of the greatest assets in any balance sheet promoting curriculum change. Students after 3 years in Colleges of Education enter schools with the potentiality for the transfusion of ideas. They are the members of the profession (17,243 entered in 1966), who are the most likely to have the advances in curriculum study at their 'finger tips'. All they lack is experience in practice and yet instead of being in a position to enthuse and influence their colleagues they are considered 'not likely to be effective agents of change.'

Many probationers are dissatisfied with both the school they enter and the college they have left. Colleges – quite rightly in my view – concentrate more on the dreams of what might be in the future than on present reality. Should

we perhaps cancel our classes in Nuffield and teach reciting of tables instead? Should we abandon our emphasis on integrated work for the individual child and instead emphasize formal class presentation? Must we abandon hope that probation teachers will promote change and instead reconcile students to adopting the situation as they find it?

I would suggest that there is a strong case for inservice training in the school itself, both the probationer and the experienced teacher having a lot to offer each other. Why should not the probationer be encouraged to at least start the process of retraining the experienced teacher in the use of the new curriculum in return for the valuable advice he is receiving from his more experienced colleagues?

B H EDWARDS, *Kesteven College of Education*

In-Service Training

Contemporary evidence suggests that we are going to see a good deal of in-service training in the not-too-distant future – and not only in the field of education. The increasing pace of development in advanced industrial societies suggests that, increasingly, the initial training of an individual is unlikely to carry him through an entire career. In some cases the job itself disappears in an advancing technology: in other situations new approaches and techniques emerge to modify or supplement more traditional methods. It is, of course, with the latter situation that the in-service training of teachers is, and is likely to be, primarily concerned.

Now, in spite of the willingness of at least some education authorities to spend considerable sums of money in this field, it is clear that, at least in the foreseeable future, resources are likely to be disproportionate to needs. In these circumstances the problem of securing the maximum utility from these limited resources is a very serious one, and thus the key question is, or should be: What

major considerations ought we to have in mind when we take important steps in this field in this early but essentially formative period?

In the first place, it should be borne in mind that in-service training is not an entirely new idea. Possibly we might learn something from what has been achieved so far. For instance, in present circumstances, it would be unwise to reject the voluntary element in the process: when the initial resources are so limited, an overt willingness on the part of the individual teacher to undergo retraining is not to be despised. On the other hand, and in the long run, it is obvious that there is limitation and waste in the process of preaching to the converted, as it were, and this is especially so when the need to bring about broad changes of attitude and approach in our schools is at least as important as the need to illustrate the use of new and relatively clear-cut techniques. This suggests that we should begin at once – and the colleges and departments of education are the obvious starting places – to propagate the idea that retraining is likely to be a necessary and inevitable part of the careers of all teachers.

Two other considerations also appear to be of particular importance. In the first place, it seems likely that group study techniques, rather than the more traditional approaches, are to be the methods *par excellence* of in-service training. This partly because researches in sociology have illustrated the power of the well-led group in producing attitude-change, and partly because a system of in-service training is wasteful unless it can draw directly and positively on the accumulated experience of all the teachers involved. In present circumstances, it must be confessed, novel ideas developed actually in the classroom are often spread with painful slowness even over relatively small areas. No doubt a comprehensive system of in-service training might do much to help to solve the growing problem of communication in the educational world.

In the second place, it might be unwise to create a class of full-time in-service lecturers. Clearly, one of the major obstacles to real educational advance in this country is the gulf (sometimes mythical, sometimes not entirely so) between the projectors of the ideal, or the apparently futuristic, and the practitioners grappling with practical problems in the classroom. To allow this dichotomy (which is perhaps inevitable in our present system of initial teacher education) to persist into retraining would indeed be something of a tragedy. Of course, a system of in-service training requires the employment of full-time administrators. And, of course, it needs to draw on experts from every type of institution. Some of these experts, inevitably, will be far removed from the school classroom, for an appreciation of the nature and relevance of a new technique is often grounded in a deepening grasp of the fundamentals of a subject, and here the academic can often speak with a clarity and vigour denied to the ordinary practitioner. Yet ultimately an effective system of in-service training would require a very special process of co-operation in which the traditional distinction between teacher and taught would be far less easily discernible than it is at present.

JOHN SALT, *Thornbridge Hall College of Education, Sheffield.*

The Child's Eye View of Non-Streaming

It is worthwhile considering to what extent the arguments for non-streaming are concerned with the needs of children *now* and to what extent they expect children to anticipate the needs and responsibilities of the adult world of which they are not yet a part.

It can be said straight away that, even in the ranks of the most well-intentioned and disinterested proponents of non-streaming, there is an unacknowledged

intention of promoting their own adult-integrated social philosophies and practices, rather than the present social interests and customs of the children whom they wish to educate.

The non-streaming argument generally begins by comparing the streamed set-up of the school with the non-streamed arrangements of home and work. The next step – a big, unexamined one – is to decide that the former must 'therefore' be wrong. Then, having reached this position, the ranks divide.

In the first lobby are those who select the intermingling of the age-groups as the most relevant feature of non-school society, and they will vote for the 'family' form of integration. In the second are the supporters of academic non-streaming who will regard the workaday intermingling of the talents and social functions as the worthier model.

But, when arrived at in this way, both these solutions are based on adult social philosophies and on adult-orientated social arrangements.

What sort of proposals would we, as teachers, make if we were to decide to capitalise on juvenile social philosophies and on the actual social predilections of children?

So far as the second is concerned it is not difficult to observe the social relationships which children appear to prefer when left to make their own decisions on these matters. But in regard to the social philosophies behind these preferences we must, like Freud and Jung and anyone else who has had a stab at it, make informed guesses since there is a shortage of reliable child-gathered evidence to assist us.

Here, then, are my informed guesses.

1. They would wish to remain with their own age-groups.

Age is important to a child. If he hasn't achieved very much in his short life he has at least achieved a succession of birthdays and he feels entitled to the perks and privileges consequent upon his passing of these staging-posts. The only way in which he

can be sure of these entitlements is by excluding from his company those older or younger than himself, for he will regard the intrusion of these non-peers as a threat to his free expression of mental, emotional and physical promptings. This is especially so when the intrusion is promoted by adult command or moral blackmail.

Thus the attempt to put him into a 'family' group would be, on this view, an unwarranted imposition for it would impose upon him a set of relationships with which he is already familiar in the real family situation and from which (in his view) he already suffers quite enough.

In particular, it would impose upon the younger ones yet another set of seniors who would give him advice and (worse) help and (worse still) instructions; and it would impose upon the older ones tasks and responsibilities which we – either as teachers or as parents – have no reliable way of knowing they want or are ready for. (And the word 'ought', which is a barren word when used by one adult as a means of ordering the behaviour of another, is almost a fatuous one when used in regard to the behaviour of children.)

2. They would not choose to spend the largest part of their school routine and, thus, a large part of their day, in the exclusive society of their intellectual peers.

One suspects that there is no articulate or inarticulate juvenile philosophy behind this preference – it is surely a matter of accident and instinct. Children simply do not attach the same paramount place to intellectual differences as adults, and especially teachers, do. Children recognise, and even admire and envy, intellectual superiority; but they also accord at least an equal recognition to athletic skill – and sexual precociousness – and acting ability – and so on. And if our educational programmes were less efficient at removing healthy bewilderment from the curriculum, children would be more puzzled than they are

now at the special importance attached to intellect as a ground for dividing them from their fellows at such early stages in their school careers.

Conclusions. If the above observations are correct it can be proposed:

- (a) that 'family' grouping is an evasion of the streaming-v-non-streaming issue (and an invasion of the child's liberty);
- (b) that the proponents of academic non-streaming would gain the genuine support of the children themselves.

PETER BLACKLAWS, *Langdon Park School, Stepany*

Vertical Grouping in the Junior School

Viewed from a conventionally streamed classroom simple non-streaming seems formidable enough without the further complications of a full age range. In the two-teacher school I took over as Head six years ago, my class of 29 Juniors between seven and eleven was the smallest I had ever taught, yet seemed to present more problems than a streamed class of 44. I had taught children of every stream in both secondary and junior schools, but had no illusions about the unfamiliarity of my new job. I had argued against non-streaming; here there was no option. Not that all village schools are alike, or all enlightened; but a County supply head had done some useful preparatory work. The Authority was cooperative and generous, the school fund was drawn upon and in a few months the necessary books and materials for effective group and individual work were building up. There followed the most interesting and perhaps the most fruitful period of my teaching life.

Moving after four years to a much larger school, family grouping seemed

the most natural way of organising the Infants, some of whom, to equalise numbers, were being taught with a Junior class. But effective reorganisation takes time: colleagues have to be consulted, materials and equipment collected. First we introduced the 'integrated curriculum' (an ill-turned phrase which gives little indication of what it means) and the second year began with all three classes family-grouped, though I had proposed leaving out the 6-7 year olds for the first year.

Our children are drawn from a fairly wide social background, and some parents had heard of family grouping, which they welcomed; those to whom it was new reacted cooperatively. Now, after a couple of terms, no-one wants to go back to streaming.

I had not yet thought about the vertical grouping of Juniors, but was not happy about existing arrangements. These had varied over the years. With a Junior Staff of six, the emphasis had sometimes been on selecting groups of abler first-and third-year children to teach with equally divided second and fourth-year groups; sometimes the least able children in two age groups had been taught together; and to relieve pressure on Infant Staff a group of Infants had been promoted to a Junior class a year early.

With a family grouping in the Infant classes and a forward looking Junior staff the solution suggested itself. In addition to our own infants we take in a dozen or so others from a neighbouring school, giving us six Junior classes of 30 odd children each. This year all the first and second year Juniors have been divided vertically into two-year, all-ability age groups, as have the third and fourth years. So now we have three completely parallel classes of Lower Juniors and three of Upper Juniors to follow our three-year vertically grouped infants.

We have no timetable, and something approaching an integrated curriculum. The staff have responded imaginatively to the opportunities offered and have rearranged their classrooms informally

to create smaller working areas and give more display space. It is clear that in several ways the new class grouping has given a stimulus to the work.

Vertical grouping of Juniors here has been a relatively simple exercise since so many favourable circumstances are present. In this area the 'Thorne' scheme of secondary selection has operated for some years, so that the influence of 11 plus considerations has been well worked out of everybody's systems. Elsewhere, parents as well as teachers may be resistant, even while accepting the family grouping of Infants. Again, the practice of having mixed age Junior classes – however organised – over a number of years, makes vertical grouping seem less novel. Good relations with parents such as we are happy to have here (without any formal P.T.A.), further conduces to ease of change. A progressive Authority (in this case the West Riding) is also a positive asset whose benign influence ought not to go unacknowledged. Most important of all, perhaps, is the possession of a staff of forward-looking teachers aware of the need for change, willing to experiment, and ready to back new ideas with hard work.

As Eric Linfield points out in the Spring Forum the flexibly grouped class which vertical organisation necessitates brings problems of evaluation and assessment which are still new to teachers. Careful record keeping can contribute very largely to success here. Again, while an all-age class of no more than thirty has to be manageable in the village school, for any class of thirty or more a combination of two Junior age groups seems to me to be more suitable, giving some of the advantages of the family group without over-emphasising the acknowledged difficulties.

My experience of vertically grouped junior classes is too short to encourage dogmatic assertions. At this stage I am content to say that it appears to be working well.

PHILIP V CHARLESWORTH
Cleckheaton.

The Odd Men Out

The personnel of a General Sixth is more inchoate than any other secondary school group and its members are not only less intelligent than their 'A' level contemporaries but often have less drive than those who have determinedly left school for work. They may easily feel that they are offered the scrag end of the scholastic leg of mutton by a school which still demands the sacrifice of their evenings to prep and keeps them in the pocket money, instead of the wage earning, section of the community.

Theoretically, the general course is a wonderful opportunity to teach unhampered by examination demands but experience is disillusioning: one may lead the General Sixth to the cultural trough but I have yet to encounter a group with an overwhelming thirst.

A fresh start at this point is essential and subjects which have at least adult nomenclature are desirable. The importance of increasing, rather than slackening, practice in academic discipline convinces me that current affairs or civics are too vague and that 'O' level law and sociology (as offered by the Associated Board) would be worth while alternatives. Photography, with a City and Guilds Intermediate Certificate to prepare for towards the end of the academic year, with its amalgam of art and science requirements, would be a possible new practical subject. However, staff, space and money for entirely new ventures may be lacking.

There seems to be more flexibility, and therefore more prospect of success, if an abstract subject is selected and treated as a project. Suppose that the 1967-8 General Sixth study Race Relations. Reading can range from Uncle Tom's Cabin to James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* and *Growing up in New Guinea* (Margaret Mead, Penguin 5/-). For those willing to acquire an informed outlook on Africa there are a number of inexpensive volumes in the Penguin African Library

and *Black Nationalism* by Essien-Udom and *Report from a Chinese Village* by Jan Myrdal (Penguin 6/- and 10/6) present particular alien views. But since one envisages full time occupation with the subject – or at least such time as remains after the statutory P.E., R.I. and music – these documentary volumes must alternate during each day with more imaginative statements. Among the autobiographies which present an individual racial problem I have found *Fifth Chinese Daughter* by Jade Snow Wong (the story of a Chinese girl growing up in America) and *Two Worlds* (David Daiches' account of the Rabbi's sons at a Scottish school) most valuable.

The novel, by turning facts and figures into persons, can convey the realities of inter-racial problems but some of those mentioned below can be used to interest the adolescent with a more factual bent to pursue individual studies. Joyce Cary's *Mr Johnson* (Penguin 4/-) may offer stylistic problems to the less intellectual but these can profitably move on to the social background of primitive Africans and to the difficulties, moral, social and psychological which arise from the impact of western mores on such individuals. An interesting African treatment of the same theme will be found in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (Heinemann). Two West Indian novels, *A House for Mr Biswas* (V S Napaul, Fontana 6/-) and *Morning At The Office* by Edgar Mitetzofer (Penguin 4/6) both communicate from the sojourner-in-a-strange-land's angle and offer a statement of the problems facing many community psychologists and planners.

All students of the alien should come at the last to Niraud C Chaudhuri's *A Passage to England*. 'There can be no doubt,' he writes, 'that the English weather has fostered a pronounced degree of sensitiveness to nuances and made both men and things more mellow.' But he claims that we soon lose this patina laid on us by our weather when we get into the tropics and

'degenerate into outright cads.' The moral he draws is, he says, a simple one: 'Never demand more from the spirit than the flesh has power to give, and never, never in any circumstances seek to put asunder those whom God or Nature has joined together, for instance, the Englishman and his weather,' advice which is presumably two sided and implies a cynical disbelief in a multi-racial society – a splendid subject for a full scale, and by that time informed, debate at the end of the summer term.

E PHILLIPS, *Wambrook, Nr Chard*

Progress Report

'Team Teaching' was a name given to a project in education started in September 1966, at a Group IV Leicester junior school.

Consideration of some of the present problems of teachers and teaching in a primary school led to the formulation of ideas which resulted in the experiment; briefly these were:

- 1 Enlargement of the timetable and the specific skills and knowledge needed make an exorbitant demand upon class teachers.
- 2 Little opportunity due to staffing conditions for teachers with specialist knowledge to teach outside their own class-rooms.
- 3 The 'setting up' of visual aids for one class lesson involves time and trouble, while extensive use of equipment needs time-tabling.
- 4 Lessons in general subjects tend to consist of 'talk' directed at children. Testing the knowledge of children after this kind of lesson frequently indicates how little they have learnt.
- 5 Present stress on the 'intellectual' approach to learning, omitting the emotional aspects which tend to really involve children in learning situations.

With these problems in mind, it was

Discussion

decided to try out a system whereby the teachers could join together in preparation of a lesson.

Teaching aids would be needed so that the children could be given a real experience of the subject – in short, if the lesson was to be on Christopher Columbus, then the aim was to take the children in the 'Pinta'.

Before beginning the experiment it was necessary to collect together a mass of equipment. So in 1964 the idea was put to the Committee of the New Parks Schools Parent Association and a list of items made out for purchase. By September 1966 the school possessed the following teaching aids, paid for by the funds raised by the Parents' Association:

16 mm. Projector
8 mm. Projector
Strip Projector
Overhead Projector
Stereo Record Player
Bolex 8 mm. Camera (and accessories for film making)
Tape Recorder
Amplifying equipment
Library of 200 Film Strips
Library of Gramophone records
Stage lighting equipment and lighting board. (This equipment set a large target for a Parents' Association – but many Associations raise larger sums for school swimming pools or a school bus.)

When the equipment became available, plans were made to promote the idea of team teaching and these were outlined as 'Phases'.

Phase I Staff meetings to discuss the ideas behind the project. Selection of a Basic Team, who would be able to advise and help any teacher assigned to give a lesson. This team consists of:
Teacher A. **Technician**. Responsible for maintenance and use of all equipment.
Teacher B. **Music and Drama Advisor**. Responsible for directing any interludes of drama or film making.
Advice on suitable music.

Teacher C. **Librarian**. To supply books, film strips, picture material, etc. as required.

Teacher D. **Art Advisor**. To plan display of visual materials.

Teacher E. **Co-ordinator**. Liaison between staff and Basic Team.

Time-tabling of work envisaged for one term, i.e., each teacher to give two lessons in one term on a topic selected from general subjects.

Phase II 35 minute Demonstration Lesson given to 200 children and staff on topic 'The Battle of Hastings'. Staff were circulated with the content of the lesson, preparatory work needed, and indication of follow-up work which could be done in class after the lesson. During the lesson, the children listened to an edited tape recording describing events leading to the battle. A film strip illustrated the characters involved and the overhead projector showed diagrams of the strategy utilised. The climax of the battle was a tape on which a group of boys had recorded the 'sound' of William's final charge.

Phase III The school was divided into 2 groups, Upper School (Stds. 3 and 4) with about 200 children, and Lower School (Stds. 1 and 2) also with 200 children. Each group had a lesson once a week in the hall and this 'experimental' period continued for two terms.

Phase IV In the third term a new venture was tried out by organising the whole staff on a Team Teaching theme entitled 'The Wild and Woolly West'. For eight weeks the whole school made a study of this period of American history, and this culminated in a display of art and handwork illustrating the theme.

The Team Teaching lesson was controlled by the coordinator; the lesson presented in the large hall to some 300 pupils was called 'Custer's Last Stand'. In the 40 minute period, all the equipment was brought into use, as well as a film made with the children of Indian and Settler life, songs from the period, and a dramatic

presentation involving Sitting Bull and General Custer.

Phase V This leads to the present situation when the work of the past year is being evaluated and the next phase planned.

So much work and activity is promoted by each T.T. lesson that it has been decided to give the lessons once a fortnight instead of every week. *Observations*. There has been no doubt about the success of this venture among children and staff.

From the latter it has removed the burden of preparation of many lessons each week concerned with chalk and talk. Preparation of a T.T. lesson is worthwhile in the response it obtains from the children. For them motivation of interest and enthusiasm for general subjects was a problem in this particular school until this project started. Work produced after the lessons has indicated their close attention to the theme, and what has been more surprising is the fact that many children have worked at drawings and models in the evenings.

Concerning the equipment, it is not possible to start team teaching effectively with less than the list given above. Teachers can *select* from the equipment available, and it is the possibility of choice which enables variation in presenting a T.T. lesson.

Topics for the lessons have tended to be concerned with historical incidents or leader figures, e.g. The Gunpowder Plot, Alfred the Great. As the school is still trying out the project, this emphasis was accepted. Other subjects are finding their way into the scheme, for instance, 'Space', 'Railways of Leicester', 'Transport from 1800 on', 'Night', 'Under the Sea', 'Autumn', etc.

Future developments here will explore the possibility of extending team teaching into all school subjects.

V F G PAYNE, *New Parks House Junior School, Leicester*



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Unstreaming and Subject Integration in a Comprehensive School

W A D Williams

Mr Williams taught in secondary schools in London, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire before having six years of primary school experience at Keynsham. Following a spell as Head of the Music and Drama Department at Backwell Secondary School, Somerset, he is now Head of the Discovery Department at Hartcliffe, a Bristol comprehensive school.

At Hartcliffe Comprehensive School it was decided, in the spring of 1966, to organise non-streamed classes for the first-year intake in the following September. This is a mixed comprehensive school, purpose-built, serving a residential estate on the outskirts of Bristol. Opened seven years ago with only a first form, it has now become an established school, the present senior pupils having progressed up to a seventh form.

It was decided that, as well as forming mixed ability classes, the subjects of English, geography and history were to be integrated into 'Discovery', each class to be taught this new 'block subject' by one teacher. I was asked to supervise and co-ordinate this new venture.

When the spate of articles on non-streaming in the secondary school first appeared, many of us had the feeling of 'having been here before'. Non-streamed classes have long been considered the ideal primary school setting. And those who (like the writer) have had long experience of teaching in progressive primary schools could easily see that what was educationally, psychologically and socially right for the top primary child in the month of July could and should be right for that same child six weeks later.

Experience in the primary school has also taught another lesson. Merely to unstream, without other adaptations, would be to do only half a job. The mixed ability class requires a completely new mental approach on the part of the teacher; emphasis in the classroom must be realigned from imparting information to the class as a whole to learning on the part of the individual child. To change the stress from teaching to learning, from handing out information to 'finding out' by the children themselves, inevitably leads to subject integration. But while junior schools have here shown the way, secondary schools have been rather reluctant to follow their lead.

The intake at Hartcliffe in September, 1966, numbered 406 boys and girls. Of these, seventy-five were allotted places in remedial classes and 331 were divided into twelve mixed ability forms. On the basis of primary

school records, each form was accorded an even spread in terms of 'ability' or attainment. The school operates on a plan of a ten-day 'fortnight' comprising fifty teaching periods; of these, twelve were allocated to Discovery.

Each class had one particular room for all its Discovery periods, so providing every child with a stable 'home' for a quarter of the time-table – and, for that matter, teachers also. From the outset it was recognised that, though there would be to a considerable extent a continuation of primary school methods, some techniques and learning habits normally used at the secondary stage should be introduced and developed.

New skills

First, children were encouraged to learn how to take and make notes. This ability, we discovered, is much more fully attained when the children are dealing with material with which they are personally and individually involved. It was noticeable that the weaker readers were as adept at making notes or summaries from their learning books (of simpler reading matter, of course) as were children who could use fairly advanced material. While this success is attributable to the group and individual work undertaken, rather than to the mixing of abilities or even the integration of work, it must be recorded as a very profitable by-product.

Second, after consultation with the geography department, we set out to incorporate as much map-work as possible. This was planned to cover the meaning of maps, the need for maps, their interpretation and use, and development of the ability to portray and illustrate in map form. Here success was more difficult to achieve, partly because the matter cannot easily be covered in one year when it is merely incidental to wide topic-work, often undertaken individually; and partly because there are not many books available suitable for varying stages of ability. However as much mapwork as possible was duly incorporated.

Third, the children's written work was carefully watched, as the increased use of summaries, or paraphrase in the child's own words, might otherwise have led to disorderly and unorganised work. Here it was necessary to strike a balance between freedom of thought and imagination on the one hand, and, on the other, the need for readable and presentable written work. We set as an aim to send children into their second year with this balance securely achieved and with an ability to record their thoughts. Pertinent remarks were preferred to numerical marking, as competition between children in mixed ability classes should be replaced by teacher-child evaluation of progress.

Group projects

Because of the 'interest' type of teaching required by the child-centred situation, a detailed syllabus on traditional lines was impossible, but five wide 'knowledge-areas' (Water, Homes, Food, Transport, Clothes) were specially covered when material was provided. This ensured that teachers had supporting aids for several sub-topics within those main headings that they chose to adopt. Although the group project method was largely used, class-teaching was not completely ruled out. It is a misconception that the class can no longer be taught as a single unit. It is only after the initial stimulus has been presented to the class as a whole (talk by the teacher, film, radio broadcast, etc), that children of varying abilities need individual and personal guidance. The methods used by the teachers varied with their individual personalities and interests. Provided that the 'individual learning' principle was borne in mind throughout, this deliberate allocation of freedom (syllabus-wise) to the teacher carried very distinct advantages to the pupils. Exercise books were used only for free writing and work unconnected with the children's main topic work, and thus the pupils were allowed to present their research work in varying forms – in folders, as talks, spoken on tape, on friezes, as wall displays, in drama form, etc.

In attempting an appraisal at this early stage, one or two general observations may be made. First, the most general objection to unstreaming: was the more gifted child retarded by the presence of weaker classmates? We found that, using the 'learning' methods outlined, the teacher had more time to devote to individual children, the brighter ones included. This meant that the bright

child was stimulated and kept supplied with work suitable to his capabilities, just as the weaker one was helped with particular problems. In fact, the 'flyers' probably had more attention than they would have had as members of an A class taught on subject syllabus lines.

It was noticeable that the urge to learn in the ways presented continued throughout the year, an encouragement to conclude that this is the correct method of approach for the 11–12 year age-group. Indeed, some of the weightiest reasons for adoption of the dual approach in the first year at secondary school may well apply to suggest continuance of this approach through a second year.

The individual approach

The absence of any 'order of merit' in class nomenclature, as also of marks for the work performed, has meant that each child has been totally oblivious of preference or bias on the part of the teachers. It has been particularly noticeable that the weaker children have been spared feelings of inferiority, as they have been spared labels denoting backwardness. Indeed, encouraged by a teacher using an individual approach, knowing that they are having equal attention and treatment, they have been spurred to do their best. Not only, as was hoped, have these children markedly raised their attainment but they have also gained tremendously in self-confidence.

Finally, a note of reservation is needed. Subject integration with non-streamed classes means much hard work besides a reorientation of teachers' attitudes. Very much more in-service training must take place if teachers are to be prepared for this work in sufficient numbers, as well as the preparation now being increasingly undertaken by some colleges of education. Meanwhile teachers are themselves learning by doing on the job, learning to see each child as an individual and to promote his learning, and to re-examine methods and techniques in the light of experience.

On the basis of our experience so far, we are certain that we have found a way to increase the benefits of the first year at secondary school and send children on better prepared for their later studies. From non-streaming and subject integration there is a possibility of moving on – as physical conditions and availability of staff allow – to a more general 'open-plan' learning situation and the introduction of team teaching.

Nuffield Science in Unstreamed Classes in a Comprehensive School

D F Hamilton

Mr Hamilton teaches at Stonehill School, Birstall, one of the Leicestershire High Schools, taking pupils from the age of 11 to 14.

It is not the purpose of this article to argue the case for non-streaming but rather to describe what has been done for unstreamed classes in a school using the Nuffield 'O'-level schemes, and to show the possibilities that these present with respect to the teaching of 'non-streamed' Science.

Stonehill High School in the County of Leicester is a Lower School in the Leicestershire Plan. It is attended by 550 boys and girls divided into six classes in each of three years and a small fourth year of about forty pupils. There are three full-time Science teachers each of whom takes two classes in each Year for six thirty-five-minute periods per week. The fourth year pursue a general course which contains no formal Science. Stonehill is one of three High Schools which feeds an Upper School.

In August, 1966, as in previous years, the intake from the Primary Schools was divided into two bands of three classes, the children were unstreamed in these classes except that the potentially remedial children were distributed among the three classes of one of the bands.

At this time all the first year intake began the Nuffield 'O'-level Science course (Physics, Chemistry and Biology). Each of the Science teachers has his own laboratory and teaches all three subjects as *Science*. This means that the classes do not do two periods of each of the Sciences per week but rather a few periods of say, Physics and then a change perhaps to one of the other subjects as the teacher feels appropriate.

The initial policy of the head of the Science Department was that the classes were to be organised, after the Autumn half-term holiday, as 'sets' within the bands, this having been done in previous years. As the time approached it was realised that there were no suitably reliable criteria which took into account the aims of 'Nuffield' Science teaching which could be used to establish this division. Because of this fact it was decided to carry on teaching the classes unstreamed until the end of the school year.

With regard to the ability range for which they are intended the stated aims of the 'O'-level courses vary significantly. The Physics Teachers Guide for year 1 states 'It (the 'O'-level course) is intended for all who do physics in grammar schools . . . and must be suitable for use in all streams in grammar schools and perhaps in the top streams of secondary moderns where such 'O'-level courses are taken'. The Chemistry Guide differs some-

what saying: 'The work outlined is intended for children of average and above average ability in the 11-16 age group' (preface). The First Year Biology Guide unfortunately makes no comparable statement.

The implications of using a course only intended for part of the ability range for the whole of that range are recognised and have been examined. In the light of this anomaly there has not been much sympathy for the idea of teaching the 'O'-level courses to unstreamed classes, but, in spite of this lack of sympathy there has been a growing realisation of the complexity of the situation in which many heads of science departments in comprehensive schools find themselves. For example they receive large capital grants for establishing the Nuffield 'O'-level courses which are really only intended for a section of their pupils.

The scheme of teaching the courses that has been adopted at Stonehill has initially been agreed upon on the basis of its success and also on the basis that to allow only 25% of the ability range the opportunity to pursue fully the 'O'-level courses at this stage is to compromise the essence of the comprehensive school. To divide children into classes of differing ability on the basis of a test with a high recall factor or a test with 'Nuffield' type questions which has not yet been proved reliable is also, I think, to deny the essence of 'Nuffield' science.

It has been found that no children are unable to participate in the lessons and enter into the discussion. The undampened enthusiasm shown by many of the slow children in this situation has been readily sustained. I think this is because no child has lost interest in the work as a result of being placed in a low 'set', this fact reflecting the role motivation plays in achievement.

It is a matter of school policy that homework shall be given to all children and this homework is arranged according to a timetable which allots Science two sessions of twenty minutes per week. Some of the homework is of a practical nature such as taking home a piece of indicator paper, measuring the size of objects, bringing animals and plants to school. All children cope with this type of homework but the written homework has to be prepared in such a way that every child can do some, and, what is more important, gain something from it. For example the homework might be on *either* the uses of water *or* explaining why the sea is salt and the rivers not.

The most obvious problems of teaching in the way

described are encountered in the Physics course, mainly because it demands a higher level of conceptual understanding on the part of the pupil. In the first year, for example, it is hoped that the children will gain some conceptual appreciation of very small and very large numbers, the size of atoms, etc. The Nuffield 'O'-level Physics Teachers' Guide 1 offers an approach to these conceptual problems which we have modified to suit our own needs. For example, with respect to the concept of density the Guide contains the following (pp 134-5): 'We want pupils to develop a familiar feeling for density as a thing we know about a material, a useful qualitative concept rather than a quantitative definition and scheme of measurement'. With an average or slow group of pupils this might simply take the form of comparing equal sized blocks of several materials. We could lead this teaching on to a discussion of weighing different sizes and working out the weight for some standard size such as the unit cube, but we find (from our trials with actual classes) that this imposes discouraging barriers and delays in many pupils. It seems so simple to us who are teaching to do the division and arrive at a characteristically physical quantity – the aim of much good science teaching – that most of us are tempted to rush the pupils through it. And then, when we find it presents difficulties we redo it with greater care – but not with greater benefit to the picture of science that our young pupils are forming.

So that the most we suggest with an 'average' group is that when pupils have compared the blocks of the same dimension we ask them how they can bring the other blocks into the comparison. If pupils do not show interest or give suggestions we drop the question.

It is in this spirit that our teaching is carried out at this level. There is little formal teaching because with the amount of apparatus that is available to the teacher it is possible to introduce the children to the experimental situation (See if you can find out . . . ?), and then go round the laboratory answering questions and discussing the work with individuals or groups of children. This does not mean there is no class work, there may be the demonstration of a piece of apparatus by the teacher or the general discussion of results or difficulties in the work. In the case of general discussion the divergent nature of the topic under discussion (eg Why do some worms plug their burrows?) usually allows the children to participate successfully at their own level.

It is not the aim of teaching in the manner described that all children should be over a given conceptual hurdle before the class moves on (is this ever achieved?). It is hoped that each child will gain *as much as he or she can*

from each topic. This is possible to achieve because of the nature of the first year courses in the Sciences. The Physics Guide (*ibid* p. 3) states: 'In the early stages, years 1 and 2 children will be making acquaintance with phenomena in the physical world; a stage of seeing and doing without expressing the results in formal statements'. Similarly, the Chemistry Introduction and Guide states (p. 21): 'During this stage (years 1 and 2) the child will learn about a wide range of material, how to separate them and about some of their patterns of behaviour'. The Teachers' Guide to Year 1 of the Biology Course states (p. XII): 'While the material contained in each chapter of the text is developed in a logical order, there is no set sequence to the course as a whole'.

This framework of approach, similar for all three subjects does not rely on a great knowledge of what has gone before in the course. This means that each topic can be treated in such a way that a child can reap the maximum from it. Thus, the approach described above lends itself to teaching in an unstreamed way because it offers great potential in providing open-ended experiences valid for the continuous development of the child.

These are some of the problems encountered in carrying out the above experiment and some that may be encountered by others wishing to try the same or something similar.

(1) The school described above has classes of about thirty, only two immigrant children and no non-readers. Perhaps this is not really representative.

(2) It would be very difficult to try the above approach with practical difficulties such as lack of facilities, time, money, space, and laboratory assistance!

(3) It has not yet been possible to obtain quantitative results of the merits of the approach and it is very difficult to assess its success or failure except in subjective terms based on little experience and very slight impressions. There have been no comparable experiments in the school and no previous use of the Nuffield Schemes.

(4) To base the non-streamed approach on the above quotations from the Guides may be criticised on the basis that it represents a vulgarisation of the aims of the 'O'-level Schemes.

(5) Another difficulty is that the conviction of the teacher who believes non-streaming is correct on social grounds may prevent him making a truly scientific analysis of the real situation present in the laboratory under conditions of non-streaming. This last point arises because I believe that the use of non-streaming as a form of class organisation in the secondary school is to be accepted or rejected using intellectual rather than social criteria.

Forward to the Sixth

Harold Knowlson

Dr Knowlson, who writes here on new developments in in-service training necessitated by the transition to comprehensive education, is Staff Tutor at the University of Bristol Institute of Education.

'I think our school will go comprehensive and I think this is right: but I can't help being concerned about my own future. What will happen when we have a Sixth Form?'

The speaker was a middle-aged teacher in the secondary modern school of a small country town. After a distinguished Army career he'd been a member of my tutorial group in an Emergency Training College nearly twenty years ago.

He is one of many teachers in such schools who view the future with some apprehension; some are emergency trained, some had a two-year training in the decade or so after the war, others are graduates who decided to take up posts in secondary modern schools; all are wondering who is going to teach the sixth forms.

Most of these teachers are reasonably happy in their work; they have reached positions of responsibility in their schools; they have seen great improvements, in morale as well as in buildings and equipment. They welcomed the coming of 'O' level courses which lifted their schools out of the period of uncertainty; they welcomed the CSE. They equipped themselves to teach to 'O' level and they contributed much to the development of the new certificate. But now there is a new challenge; will they be able to meet this or will they be swept aside by youngsters fresh from the universities or, with B.Ed degrees, fresh from the Colleges of Education – youngsters who will teach to Advanced and Scholarship levels?

A few are so apprehensive that they hope the *status quo* will continue – they have persuaded themselves that, now that they have realised some of its implications, they do not really favour change.

I have had many years of experience as a chief examiner at 'A' level; I am sure that some of the men and women I have in mind are capable of teaching at this level but how are the qualifications of these able and experienced teachers going to be looked upon by pupils, colleagues, headmasters, governors, parents? The graduate is going to come off best; the mere fact that he holds a degree – whether relevant or not to the subjects he will be teaching – will serve to establish his position. Teachers with College training may not fare so well even though some of them may be far better teachers than their graduate-colleagues. The new comprehensive schools will be on trial; parents will ask – and rightly so – whether the

new comprehensives are going to provide opportunities comparable with those offered by the grammar schools. Are the new schools going to be looked upon as places where a crowd of secondary modern teachers are preparing pupils for university entry, but with apparently little chance of success? Will the prudent parent try to send his bright sixteen-year old elsewhere. As Sir Edward Boyle has suggested, the minor public schools may well benefit.

I must digress here to say that I am convinced that decisions now being reached to convert secondary modern schools into comprehensive schools, are, in some cases, most unwise. Where distances are short, I firmly believe that the sixth form college with satellite comprehensive schools teaching to 'O' level would be a far better solution, making a break at sixteen for all pupils whether they be starting work or continuing their education. However, decisions to have all-through comprehensive schools are being reached and the profession will have to man these schools. In any case, some modern schools are too isolated to fit into sixth-form college schemes.

So let me return to the position of the teachers in the modern schools. Some of the people I have in mind will retire before the children who would otherwise have gone to grammar schools reach sixth form level in the comprehensive schools. Sixth form work is not, however, going to be the sole prerogative of this group of children; there are able children now in the modern schools who are capable of sixth form work where they could not only increase the number of their 'O' level passes or improve their CSE position, but take one or two subjects at 'A' level as well. We are likely to see the development of sixth form work in modern schools well before the mid 1970s – it began in some pioneer schools more than a decade ago. Sixth form work will not only be thought of in terms of the potential university entrant, but also in terms of those making their way to colleges of education and into professions other than teaching. During this formative period, modern schools will, I believe, show that they can succeed with 'A' level as, in the past, they have succeeded with 'O' level. In this period, will an 'Advanced CSE' emerge? It is an idea which has already been mooted.

The ablest college-trained people and the graduates

without sixth-form experience would be able to cope with at least some of this advanced work in the sixth; but are they going to be allowed to do so and, if they are, how can they be helped to do it? In the next few years are heads and governors going to appoint only younger graduates to senior posts, passing over mature and successful people who may not have the right bits of paper?

In some cases, the good teachers I have in mind are, however, going to be appointed to be heads of houses or careers specialists where they can develop their abilities in pastoral care and where their senior status in the schools will be recognised; and this recognition will include financial rewards. But it will be important that these senior people meet the sixth formers and take part in their academic work. In the years to come bright youngsters may come from the universities and from the colleges to undertake the more advanced 'A' level and the scholarship work. Some public and grammar schools have already departed from the tradition that the most advanced work, the recent developments, must be undertaken by the most senior people.

How can the senior people of the present and of the future be helped to play their part in sixth form work? I believe that Institutes of Education have a responsibility towards these teachers through their in-service programmes. We have made enough progress in Bristol to bring out the difficulties of the task; but we have also seen what a worth-while, rewarding task it can be. Different people have different needs: the teacher with a good honours degree who has taught for some years but has had no sixth-form experience may need more than one kind of help. Having taken a post in a secondary modern school he may not have felt the inclination – or had the time – to retain a familiarity with all but the rudiments of his subject. He will need a revision course with an account of new developments in his subject; he may also feel the need to join some kind of discussion group or course on the problems and the opportunities of working with older pupils.

The teacher with a College background may need more help still; he may need to study his subject in much greater depth than has been possible in his College course. It may be possible to give him help in a situation where methods can be discussed as well – a situation in which learning can take place in a way which is appropriate to the sixth form itself. There is a danger that the teacher needing to increase his knowledge of his subject

may gain this increased knowledge in a crash-course and that he may then apply the same methods when he meets his sixth forms. Is it altogether too naïve to say that there is more to teaching sixth forms than cramming facts into the heads of able pupils?

In providing courses for potential teachers at 'A' level we made a start with Technical and Engineering Drawing because we found it to be a subject increasing in importance in the schools. Though some of those teaching it had but few relevant qualifications, examination entries are rising from year to year more rapidly than the average for all subjects. After a considerable number of short courses and conferences, we mounted a two-year, part-time course leading to a Certificate. In this course material and method are considered together and those who succeed are well able to teach to 'A' level. This is clearly a procedure which could be applied to some other subjects. The day must surely come when such Certificates carry a salary adjustment, especially now that part-time courses can be recognised for salary purposes. They are at least as exacting as the full-time "supplementary" courses which carry an incremental credit. Possibly, in the future, the day may come when awards of this kind may carry exemption from some part of a post-college B.Ed. degree.

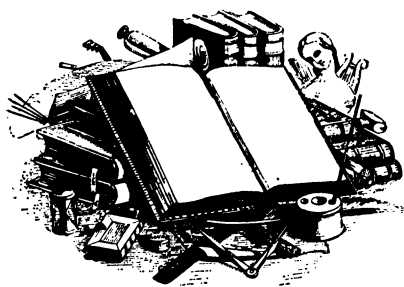
More recently we have established a short course, not leading to an award, intended for teachers of English – graduates and non-graduates – who have not had experience of teaching to 'A' level. Time is spent on discussing such topics as 'the nature of advanced English studies', 'set books: springboards or fetters?', 'the novel as a set book: the difficulties and the opportunities'.

Added to the difficulty of the range and variety of the courses and study groups needed is the geographical problem: some teachers live at considerable distances from centres where such events can be mounted. Experience has shown, however, that teachers are prepared to travel long distances to attend courses which they find really helpful to them, and that heads of schools and local education authorities are prepared to assist them in this.

A teacher who attended the Certificate Course in Engineering Drawing said 'This course has given me self-esteem. Someone roughed me up some years ago – told me I wasn't qualified to do my job. Now I can look anyone in the eye'.

Such people are going to play a very full and very useful part in the development of the comprehensive schools of the future.

Reviews



Group Methods

Group Work in Secondary Schools, by B Kaye and I Rogers. Oxford University Press (1968), 144 pp., 13s 6d. (paperback edition 8s 6d).

The authors' double purpose in writing this book is revealed in the full title, **Group Work in Secondary Schools and the training of teachers in its methods**. This duality has resulted in some confusion: the authors have tried to argue the case for the upward extension of primary school group-project methods into the secondary school and at the same time describe an experiment conducted by their own college in co-operation with local secondary school teachers.

Their objectives in advocating group work as a method are scattered throughout the text and emerge, often as incidental to description, rather than being clearly defined and argued. The following objectives can be discovered: 'to provide opportunity for everybody to find out more'; to enable the children to acquire 'skills in investigation, interpretation and creative thinking'; to engender 'a critical and reasoning attitude towards work'; to encourage initiative and 'to get the group to think for themselves, and to accept responsibility for their own decisions'; to develop 'the capacity for . . . self-engendered discipline' and 'to make them (i.e. the children) capable of sustained and thoughtful work'; and to effect 'the transfer of responsibility for learning on the part of the child, from the teacher to the child himself.'

These objectives are not directly related either to learning in particular disciplines nor to any particular age ranges, except by implication in a few examples of work undertaken by students with children. It seems that much of this work was of an interdisciplinary nature, mainly in the humanities and social sciences, and most of the examples seem to come from fourth year classes.

Although the authors argue that group work is advantageous throughout the full ability range, and refer to one C.S.E. project, they have not overtly considered group work in non-streamed classes. However, they distinguish between their form of group work and 'group teaching' in which groups are formed according to 'academic aptitude', and implicitly condemn this as 'no more than the logical extension of the system of academic streaming'. They state that in their teacher training experiment their method of conducting group work 'was suitable for work with mixed-ability classes.' A detailed exposition, explicitly related to the non-streamed situation, is unfortunately lacking.

One chapter entitled 'The rationale of group work' is concerned with the psychology of the older child, the relevance of Piaget's research and of group dynamics. This chapter contains summaries of some well known American research experiments in group activities and leadership, which were originally reported in the 1940s. It is strange that the authors omit any reference to J. S. Bruner's research, since much of this has been concerned with High School pupils.

There is some consideration of problems – oral, written and visual – both during the course of the group project and at the final reporting stage. That the teacher should guide rather than direct is emphasised; but, in view of the significance now attributed to linguistic development in learning and the ability to form more complex and abstract concepts, there is rather inadequate discussion of communication

skills in a book concerned with teaching at the secondary stage.

An essential criterion of the kind of group work described is that the children must have the right to choose their group and thus to take into account both the topic and who their companions will be. This group work demands a nice balance whereby the teacher may initiate and advise but must not direct.

This method is put forward neither as a blueprint nor as a panacea. It is suggested as a method that should be within the repertoire of teaching skills used by any secondary teacher. It presents a challenge to the traditional teacher-directed and subject-centred secondary school curriculum. Although the book is rather diffuse, there are many practical suggestions to be culled from it: not least of these are ways in which tutors and students in colleges of education and teachers in secondary schools might profitably co-operate in constructing learning situations for adolescents of a wide range of ability and interest.

NANETTE WHITBREAD

International Review

The Upper Secondary School, a comparative survey, by Lewis Spolton. Pergamon Press (1967), 283 pp., 40s.

The title of this book may well appear ambiguous to Leicestershire teachers! It is not about existing or projected 'Upper Schools' in this country, for secondary pupils aged 13/14 and above. It is, in fact, about all formal educational provision, full-time and part-time, for the age range 15/16 to 18/19; and the national systems considered are those of England, France, Spain, West Germany, Sweden, Japan, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Setting out to describe recent developments in this vast field,

Mr Spolton has produced a book crammed with facts and figures – courses available, numbers and percentages of students, and so forth – but a book in which there is only a very little description of courses as actually experienced by the student; of teaching method; or of the social organisation of schools. Apart from naturally welcoming the trend in upper secondary schooling to progress from an élite to a mass system, the author shows such studied impartiality that it is rather refreshing when in a very few instances he allows himself to depart from it, as in his conclusion favouring sixth-form colleges on grounds which are really just as arbitrary as those on which Circular 10/65 based its reservations about them.

In the early chapters a brief critical review of the Crowther Report reminds us how astonishingly dated that document already appears, and there are some interesting observations on the anomalies arising from the separate existence of the private sector in this country. The chapters which deal with the seven foreign countries are the most concentrated (an average of 21 pages, as against 88 pages on England), and it is particularly in this section that more discussion, and more imaginative illustrations such as the revealing quotations from Michel Butor's novel *Degrés* (pp. 127–9), would have been welcome. Chapter 14, 'Some Adolescent Attitudes', is perhaps the most interestingly presented, with some illuminating comments on teenage culture here and abroad.

In general, the effort to compress too great a mass of information into the space available has resulted in some lack of readability and clarity, together with a few errors of detail. However, the book has the great advantage that its subject matter is of intense interest and importance. All sorts of parallels and comparisons between educational issues in one country and another are drawn or implied, and when every allowance has been made for differing national circumstances it is logically

essential that such comparisons be taken into account in considering our own educational policies.

E A FINCH

A Problem of Teachers

'The problem of educational reform is . . . a problem of teachers'. Thus ends the English translation of **Sixten Marklund and Pär Söderberg's book *The Swedish Comprehensive School*** (119 pages, 15s, Longmans 'Education Today' paperback). The sense of this dictum becomes apparent as one reads the fascinating account of Sweden's thirty year 'experiment' in comprehensive education, now nearing completion, which has resulted in a system of all-through comprehensive schools for pupils from 7–16, completely unstreamed except in the last year, with the prospect of comprehensive 'senior secondary' schools beyond that and comprehensive universities beyond that again. For the greatest obstacle to progress in Sweden has, apparently, been the reluctance of a traditionally educated and trained teaching force to change their attitudes and practices to meet the new circumstances. By comparison political opposition has been mild. 'In the last analysis' say the authors, 'the reform of education is a political question' and the politicians, of all parties, have been prepared to override the protests of teachers and the inconclusive researches of academics. Such a frank admission of the subservience of 'educational' to political and social considerations might seem inconceivable here where the social structure is so apparently similar and so subtly different. Who can visualise two British educational administrators calmly enunciating such a doctrine or the A.M.A., the N.U.T. and the rest tamely accepting it?

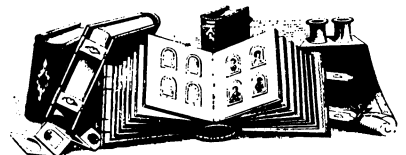
Nevertheless in Britain as in Sweden the tide of social change is set. The general will of the people, albeit

relatively inarticulate, is against what is seen as educational privilege. Robin Pedley in a characteristically trenchant Foreword to this book singles out the strategic area for immediate reform – the training (and re-training) of teachers. The Swedes, recognising the central problem, acted as early as 1950 – they established by Act of Parliament 'schools of education where teachers were to be trained for all levels of education'. By contrast we have what Pedley describes as the 'nonsense structure' whereby a government which wills the end, comprehensive education, opposes the means – the Robbins' proposals for a unified teacher training system linked to the universities.

It is difficult, despite the cross-cultural comparison involved, to avoid the feeling in reading this book that the Swedes have been this way before – the elementary/secondary dichotomy, 'comparison mania', the exaltation of public examination results as a criterion for comprehensive success, the 'bulge', the desperation of teachers trained in class teaching techniques when faced with unstreamed classes: a dreamlike sense of familiarity grows with every page.

Not that one reads of Swedish education with untrammelled admiration. It seems perverse for instance that the authors, having commended the idea of interdisciplinary work, solemnly report on the next page a timetable with the force of law that surely makes experiment in this direction nearly illegal. Nonetheless the book should be read with attention by all involved in comprehensive reorganisation – convinced and unconvinced.

D N HOLLY



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