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Assessment—for Whom?

Any form of evaluation which involves marks or written comments has as much potential for inhibiting teachers as for stimulating them. Even language restricts the way we perceive at the same time as it extends our expression of our perceptions.

Exams (whether at 11+, 16+, 18+ or 21+) have performed a mixed service for teachers – both an incentive to a certain kind of achievement for a minority of the age-group and an excuse for not having the time or freedom to teach intelligently, creatively or experimentally.

Many of the articles in this issue of **Forum** demonstrate that teachers are anxious to assume more control over the content and methodology of the curriculum. Two of the major stimuli in recent years have been the gradual departure from traditional 11+ examinations on the part of a number of Local Education Authorities and the introduction of the Certificate of Secondary Education. The former has been accompanied by a welcome increase in in-service activity by primary school teachers; the latter has led (as Jim Eggleston and Derek Holford say in their survey) to secondary teachers 'reasserting their responsibilities for assessing their own pupils' attainment'.

Clearly the CSE has had an impact on the GCE Boards and their readiness to stimulate new methods of assessment (there's a kind of analogy to the shock, despair and subsequent subtle shifts by the BBC after the introduction of ITV in the '50s). We publish accounts of changes at GCE 'O' level towards Mode Two and Mode Three procedures. One of the interesting findings is that some of the newer assessment methods are restoring importance to certain curriculum activities that were undervalued in traditional exams. We have yet to hear in detail of similar developments at 'A' level – although these were clearly hoped for by many participants at the **Forum** CSC Conference on 'The Sixth Form in the Comprehensive School' a few years ago.

But what is all this enormously time-consuming activity for? Obviously teachers are becoming more and more involved in the development of procedures for evaluation. They want to learn from their teaching and to modify their approaches by observing and reflecting on the performance of the pupils they are working with. They want to see a closer relationship between the certificates which the wider world sets store by and their own teaching aims and objectives. Teachers are particularly vulnerable in flexible teaching/learning environments; they 'give out' in such a variety of ways that it becomes easy to underestimate achievement; thus assessment is both time-consuming and reassuring.

Surely, the most important people in all this, say three of our writers (from Infant School to College) are the students themselves. They are the ones who want to have some record of themselves – so that they can know more about themselves and can act more rationally in choosing their courses and careers; so that they can know something of their own achievement in relation to their age-group (in their own class, school, college, in UK, in Europe?); so that they know that their teachers are taking careful interest in them.

Alongside the pupils are their parents. The recent introduction of teacher/parent plus parent/teacher reports, and mutual information by correspondence and discussion, is soundly supported by the Plowden research evidence which suggests that children of all backgrounds and abilities perform significantly better with parental support than without. A number of pioneer headteachers have been asserting the corollary: that teachers have a great deal to learn from parents. Composite parent/pupil/teacher consultation in careers advice is becoming established practice. Perhaps we shall see this develop more broadly for the ultimate improvement of teaching and learning.

Next May's Annual **Forum** CSC Conference on 'The Comprehensive School as a Neighbourhood School' may help to reassert the interrelatedness of schools and the community, just as teachers are reasserting the validity of the relationship between what they and their pupils do and what is recorded by evaluation procedures.

Recent Trends in Examining—Part I

Jim Eggleston and Derek Holford

Jim Eggleston is Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Leicester School of Education. He has completed one research project on new methods of examining for the Schools Council, and is now working on another Schools Council project concerned with evaluation of science teaching methods. Derek Holford has recently joined the staff of the Leicester School of Education as Science Teacher Fellow.

Teacher Involvement in the Examining Process

Examination boards have established a tradition of asking teachers to participate in the examining process. From their number examiners and markers are appointed, and teachers also undertake administrative duties such as invigilation. Some boards as a matter of policy insist that teachers constitute a majority on syllabus revision committees. However, until the advent of CSE following the recommendations of the Beloe Committee, the number of teachers directly involved in deciding syllabus content and in setting and marking examination papers was a small minority of those preparing candidates for the examination.

The organisation of CSE produced a significant shift in the direction of democratic representation on subject panels and administrative committees whereas a consequence of the appointment system operated by the GCE boards is that the teachers involved are a less representative sample of all the teachers whose work includes the preparation of examination candidates. The minority of teachers who are directly involved in the examining process cannot be said to represent a concentration of expertise in examination technology. The tradition of university examining operates; an amateur tradition in which procedural skills are acquired by a process of 'osmosis' from a previous generation of examiners. These become acquainted with the procedures of the particular board for which they work, and no doubt implement these procedures with commitment and justice. However, the circumstances in which examiners operate do not provide the wider perspective which facilitates a detached critical view of the possible limitations of the reliability or validity of their procedures. It is common to find examiners suspicious of statistical methodology and reluctant to innovate. The advantages and limitations of greater teacher participation in the examining processes should be judged against this background.

The major disadvantages of the traditional examining system have been its inflexibility and the remoteness of the examiners. The price paid by teachers for delegating their assessing function is that decisions are made on their behalf about syllabus content and the demands of the examination, by examiners whose perception of the educational function of the examined part of the curriculum may differ from that of the teachers whom they serve.

The undesirable side effects of examinations on teaching methods (the so called 'back-wash' effect) arise out of conflict of interests between examiners and teachers. When faced with this problem some examiners have in the past been disingenuous. They have said, 'the syllabus is merely an examination syllabus *not* a teaching syllabus'. Unfortunately, many teachers 'solve' the problem by accepting the examination syllabus as a teaching directive and furthermore they may adjust the demands which they make on pupils to be consistent with those made in past examination papers.

Whilst admitting that examined objectives are a subset of all possible teaching objectives, some examination boards have removed the façade and now specify in terms both comprehensive and precise, the particular outcomes of learning which they intend to measure. Such boards have replaced their old syllabuses which consisted of vague generalised descriptions of topics, with new ones containing more detailed information and prescribing limits of study. At the same time these boards have taken steps to diversify their examination procedures in order to effectively measure attainments consistent with these specified objectives.

Despite these changes, the serious administrative constraints which inevitably operate when a relatively small number of examiners measure the attainments of a large number of pupils still exists. The teachers, whose pupils are examined, are still remote though better informed, and the one-shot-end-of-course examination is still the most widely used form of assessment. The one-shot test is administratively convenient, but this convenience must be set against the potential hazards of teaching a subject to a pupil for five years and then ignoring all the accumulated evidence of his ability, basing decisions on his performance during a 2½ hour examination.

One-shot tests suffer from three major sampling defects. The proportion of the total syllabus which can be examined in the time available is small; the range of skills appropriate for a particular subject may be represented neither comprehensively nor proportionately;

possible variations of a candidate's performance in those skills which are measured, are not adequately sampled.

The Problem of Greater Teacher Involvement

Two ways in which teachers have become involved in examinations are by re-asserting their responsibilities for assessing their own pupils' attainment on a syllabus which they not only implemented but devised under a Mode Three arrangement, or by sharing the responsibilities for assessment with external examiners, as for example, in the assessment of course work as a component of Mode One examination.

Although the Mode Two and Mode Three provisions are associated with CSE, the former has for a long time been 'on offer' from GCE examining boards at both 'O' and 'A' levels. It would seem that any teacher seriously concerned by a lack of congruence between his perception of the hoped for outcomes of his teaching and those outcomes influenced or determined by the syllabus of an examination board, could opt for a Mode Two system and thus ensure that his pupils would be examined by methods consistent with his principles on a syllabus of his choice. In and around Leicester there is an example of a Mode Three 'A' level history syllabus which has been in operation for a few years and approval has recently been given to a group of schools to run a Mode Three 'A' level English course. In the same area Mode Three CSE syllabuses in a comprehensive range of school subjects are available. These teachers no longer delegate their responsibilities for assessing their pupils' attainments. Even under Mode One provision teachers are becoming more actively involved in the processes of assessment. A teacher-assessed component is now included in many CSE examinations and in some subjects this trend is spreading across GCE boards.

The main impetus for the assessment of course work has come from those teachers concerned with practical work in laboratories, workshops and studios, and from those concerned to measure oral linguistic skills. Practical examinations are known to be notoriously unreliable and since there is a growing body of evidence which supports this assertion, in science subjects for example, teachers are being invited in growing numbers to participate in the measurement of their pupils' attainments at all levels. When the questionable reliability of items in written examinations which demand 'essay type' answers is recognised this trend to teacher assessment may accelerate.

Given then, that Modes Two and Three options are widely available and that teacher assessment of their own pupils' attainment is established in principle, how have teachers reacted to these opportunities?

In a recent survey of trends in examining, information supplied by some of the GCE and CSE boards* included that from which the data displayed in Tables I and II was calculated.

Table I gives the percentage of all candidates in each of six subjects who were entered for CSE Modes Two and Three examinations in 1966 (the first year of operation for most of the boards) and in 1970. The information is given for eight boards indicated by letters A to H. Thus board C entered no chemistry candidate under Modes Two and Three in 1966, but in 1970 33 per cent of its candidates were entered in these Modes.

The distribution pattern showing the extent to which Modes Two and Three options have been adopted, across examination boards for a given subject, and across subjects for a given board suggest problems which may be important for the future of school based examining.

Observation 1. The entries for each of the eight boards, reading down the columns, across the six subjects, show for 1970 figures that whereas some boards examine quite a high percentage of candidates in Modes Two and Three, others examine almost all their candidates under Mode One. Board D is an example of the former, examining, in all but one subject, well over 50 per cent by Modes Two and Three. Boards A and F are examples of the latter, examining 90 per cent of their candidates by Mode One.

Comment. The options, Modes One, Two and Three are usually conceived as freely available to all schools. No doubt strictly speaking this is true, but these figures suggest that some boards may encourage schools to take up Modes Two and Three options, while others may discourage this. Alternatively, it may be that boards A and F have achieved such high levels of teacher satisfaction with their Mode One syllabuses and examinations that the Modes Two and Three options are virtually redundant. These two suggestions do not preclude other possible reasons why teachers in the regions served by boards A and F failed to take up some of the options available to them.

*The authors are indebted to the Secretaries of those G.C.E. and C.S.E. boards who at considerable expense of time and labour provided this information.

Table I

The Percentage of CSE Candidates entered for Modes Two and Three

(Expressed as a percentage of all candidates examined in each subject by each board, to the nearest whole number)

BOARD	A		B	C		D		E		F		G		H	
YEAR	1966	1970	1970	1966	1970	1966	1970	1966	1970	1966	1970	1966	1970	1966	1970
SUBJECT Chemistry	0	8	0	0	33	52	61	0	9	0	7	20	10	0	26
English	0	4	23	5	13	70	73	4	9	1	2	12	26	0	5
French	0	1	0	0	11	59	49	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	1
History	3	4	11	17	33	84	82	7	19	1	1	12	17	14	8
Mathematics	0	2	2	5	25	69	68	6	11	0	1	1	3	0	1
Metal Work	0	1	0	0	18	67	77	0	5	0	1	11	7	0	3

Table II

Direct Teacher Involvement in Assessing Attainment at CSE Level

(Percentage of final mark based on teacher assessment)

BOARD	A		B	C		E		F		G	
YEAR	1966	1970	1970	1966	1970	1966	1970	1966	1970	1966	1970
SUBJECT Chemistry	30*	30*	10	30	20	30	20	0	0	25	25
English	0	0	0	0	80 Oral	10*	16*	0	0	30	30
French	0	0	0	30 Oral	30 Oral	0	0	0	0	0	0
History	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	25
Mathematics	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Metal Work	10 45	10 45	30	0	45 25	40	45	25	25	25	25

* indicates cases where alternative examining practices are available to teacher assessment.

Observation 2. The entries for each subject (along the rows) may be compared across the eight boards. Teachers of some subjects show markedly less preference for Modes Two and Three. French teachers in all but one board examined 89 per cent or more of their pupils by Mode One. Even the exceptional board D shows a decline from

59 per cent to 49 per cent of pupils examined in Modes Two and Three during the period 1966-70. On the other hand, English teachers of three boards and history teachers of four boards, examined 15 per cent or more of their pupils by Modes Two and Three.

Comment. This differential response, by subjects, may be related to the lack of concensus among teachers of some subjects on the nature of either syllabus, teaching objectives or the evidence on which measures of attainment should be based. If this is so, then teachers exhibit a greater divergence of opinion on the content of CSE history and its examination than do teachers on the content and examination of French courses.

Observation 3. Differences in the growth rate of Modes Two and Three are in evidence both between boards and between subjects. Overall, the number of pupils examined under Modes Two and Three options has increased. In the data quoted (seven boards, six subjects) 19 out of the 42 cases show increases of at least 5 per cent in the number of candidates examined by Modes Two and Three whereas only two cases show decreases of 5 per cent or more. Boards A and F have the lowest Modes Two and Three growth rates among the seven boards for which data was available. Only in the case of chemistry is growth to 5 per cent or greater achieved by these boards.

Comment. Either these two boards have achieved high levels of satisfaction with their Mode One syllabuses or for other reasons teachers in the areas served by these are disinclined to offer alternatives. The highest growth rate is achieved by board C with an average increase across all six subjects of about 4 per cent per year.

Among subjects, chemistry shows the greatest growth rate, averaging about 12 per cent (2.4 per cent per annum) for each board. The numbers opting for Modes Two and Three French are almost static. English shows a growth rate of about 6 per cent (1.2 per cent per annum) per board, on average.

The prerequisite conditions for an increase to occur in the number of candidates entered for Modes Two and Three are presumably as follows:

(a) A lack of agreement between a teacher and the board on syllabus content and possibly also examination structure.

(b) The level of motivation of those teachers who are in this state of disagreement with the regional board, coupled with the competence and confidence necessary to devise and submit to the board a syllabus and examination.

(c) The willingness of the board to accept proposed syllabuses.

The first of these three conditions clearly operates in the case of many chemistry teachers. Not only is the growth overall, in Modes Two and Three the greatest of the six subjects for which data is reported, but even in those regions where the growth rate is slow, chemistry stands out as an exception. The same applies, but to a lesser extent, to English. French on the other hand, seems to be the cause of little dissension between teachers and the examining boards.

The third of these conditions is also evident from the disparity between board D, with very high Mode Two and Three entries, and boards A and F with exceptionally low entries. This finding may give rise to concern. Do some boards actively discourage teachers from taking up Modes Two and Three options?

If the boards' policy is neutral then there appear to be

regional concentrations of teachers to which (b) above seems to apply. The possibility that this condition exists exposes deficiencies of pre-service and in-service training in the skills required for this kind of professional activity.

An alternative explanation of the low Modes Two and Three entries might be the substantial involvement of teachers in the boards' Mode One assessment procedures. The data given in Table II helps to clear up this point.

Table II records the percentage of marks per subject given for various forms of teacher assessment of attainment. Thus the chemistry examination of board E, 1970 contains a teacher assessed component of 20 per cent. In most cases the teacher assessed part of the examination is described either as course work or, more frequently, practical work or project work, or in the case of languages, oral work. Alternatives to teacher assessment are occasionally incorporated in the structure of the examination. In these cases the entry in Table II is the percentage of marks assigned to the teacher assessed component irrespective of possible alternatives.

The information given in Table II indicates the important role of teacher assessment in practical subjects. In all but one of the six boards, for which information was available, between 10 and 30 per cent of marks are awarded by teachers in chemistry. All six boards assigned between 25 and 55 per cent to teacher assessments of attainment in metal work. Teachers of English are involved in assessing their pupils' attainments which are amenable to oral examination in three of the six boards.

In general, teacher assessment of attainment is reserved primarily for assessments which cannot readily be carried out by the board under Mode One regulations. There is some indication that attainments traditionally measured by external written tests in some subjects may be, at least partly, teacher assessed. However, on this evidence the trend is not yet well established.

Comparison between Tables I and II reveals the interesting fact that boards A and F, which show the smallest percentage Modes Two and Three entries, also involve teachers least in assessment under Mode One. Board G, conversely, with relatively high Modes Two and Three entries, involves its teachers substantially in assessment in four out of six subjects. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that such boards as A and F have a less adventurous spirit, and have engendered a similar spirit in their teachers.

In a future article these observations and others concerning the structure of the Mode One examinations at GCE and CSE levels, will be related to the potential of school based examining.

What kind of records?

Annabelle Dixon

Annabelle Dixon has taught in Infant and Junior Schools. She is now at the Minet Infant School in Hillingdon and has just joined the Editorial Board of **Forum.**

A fresh record-book always looks impressive somehow: the blank pages neatly ruled out: the various divisions and subdivisions so encompassing of all there is to be learned. But to what extent do the realities of the classroom situation measure up to such orderliness? Although, broadly speaking, and for reasons outlined below, I think certain kinds of record keeping are important, possibly the most essential point to keep in mind about them is the extent to which learning is *not* recorded, or even, one ventures, possible of being recorded.

Most primary school teachers probably remember as students having to observe one child for a certain period of time during a school day, and recall how totally time-consuming and difficult that was. One was not asked to record what the child had learnt – only what he was doing; but even then, problems of definition, explanation and subjective recording came in. As class teachers then, with thirty or more children, how is the problem of recording learning going to be tackled? Turning to developmental psychology for assistance with this problem one finds that the insights are matched by the headaches – for one is not only made increasingly aware of the quite amazing complexity of the learning situation but by the difficulty of actually defining learning as such. Nonetheless the actual school situation goes on existing and one is still presented with the dilemma of what one should attempt to record and the means by which one should try to do so. What I describe below has arisen out of this practical experience. I don't look on it as a solution but a possible approach to the problem.

To begin with a typical incident in one of the younger-aged classes in a primary school: Janet's mother stands at the door holding Janet's coat for her: 'And what did you do today dear?' she asks cosily, buttoning her up firmly. 'Nothing!' says Janet, beaming. 'Oh, they *often* say that, when they've had the *busiest* day', one answers – and the chances are the child really did have a very busy day. Given the various reasons though, why children often don't tell their parents about what they do in school, it occurred to me that it might well be possible that the Janets of the class would have found it quite difficult to have given anyone a coherent account of what they had done that day, or any other day.

In a more formal kind of timetabled day, where lesson follows lesson, where perhaps Reading follows Writing which is followed, if lucky, even by 'choosing' . . . , children have a very definite chronological structure to the day. Their time in school under this sort of procedure has a certain predictable orderliness and the child has a ready-built structure to his school experience that gives him a measure of security that shouldn't be undervalued. However to hold onto such a teaching schedule for these reasons alone has little justification but can often be skilfully rationalised by a teacher who sees similar advantages in it for herself.

Such teachers aren't necessarily being just dull and unimaginative; they may be conscientious people, who, because of their years of training, really can't see what is gained by 'going informal' but have a very good idea of what might be lost. Amongst the presumed losses being the lack of knowing what the child is doing or has done. 'How', goes the cry, more in puzzlement than censure, '. . . do you keep records?'

This question has been answered in a number of ways but most profitably perhaps when it has been approached from two directions: one, that the teachers know what the children are doing and have achieved, and, second, that the children themselves know likewise. Looking at some of the highly elaborate record books and forms that have been devised the questions that spring to mind are – who is it for? – why? – what is the justification for keeping those particular records? – when are they really used or referred to? – why? etc, etc. I believe a good many schools going over to more informal methods agree to the change only on condition that rigorous records are kept but don't ask themselves such questions and record-keeping degenerates only too easily into keeping them for their own sake [if not for the peace of mind of the head-teacher].

So busy can one become writing up records that little time is left over for reflection. The acid test seems to be whether one ever makes thorough use of them. And is one putting things down on paper that can equally well be kept in one's head? Faced with the evidence every day, one is not likely to forget that little Brian is socially rather intractable or that Sophie needs help with her handwriting.

The second main consideration, the children's knowledge of their activities and achievement, is to return to Janet. Given a more informal kind of timetable, how do the children structure their experience in school? Has it shape to them? definition? purpose? Following such queries are questions as to the manner in which children do this and the ways in which they can recognise achievement and their own progress. Like many other teachers attempting an integrated day I try to make use of class

discussion times but find that there simply isn't the time for all but a handful of children, and that there is a limit to the amount of time we could reasonably expect the rest of the class to sit and look or listen to someone else's achievements and progress. Family grouping tends to complicate this further although it is useful in other ways; enlarging the children's ideas on the wide range of possible achievements. ['That's not bad for one of the little ones', say the seven-year olds not infrequently, and it's not a patronising tone that's adopted – more a recognition of the stages through which work progresses and appreciation of the effort involved.]

It was in the face of these problems that I've been trying a rather different form of recording. Briefly, I wanted a means by which *all* the children, both those who could write and those who couldn't, could record certain of their own activities and achievements. I didn't want it to appear competitive but I did want a way of recognising achievement that was not confined to the 3R's. For instance, a well cleaned-out guinea-pig cage, a carefully planned puppet show, tying up one's shoes successfully for the first time, thoughtful attempts at solving a problem in 'experiments' – aspects of children's learning and experience which call for just as much concentration and thinking as anything they might do on the side of academic skills. I also wanted those in the oldest and middle group (of a family grouped class) to always record when they had finished a piece of work and be responsible themselves for marking it down.

In practical terms, I have tried to meet these specifications by making a book, a fairly tough one considering its daily use by over thirty children, rather like a scrap book with blank pages, save for the children's names along the vertical edge and the days of the week along the top horizontal edge of each page. [Each whole page representing a week and there consequently being a blank square per child per day.] The entries that are put in these squares, discussed with the children, are a simple series of symbols. For example an 'O' for any kind of written work, 'X' for any kind of number work, ● for a variety of work involving reading and an 'I' for any other kind of endeavour. To divide the categories further I found became too confusing, though obviously different ones could well be used and the above might be thought to be somewhat arbitrary. Although they are, to no little extent based on an essentially adult view of the classroom situation, using this system of recording there are no 'grades' as such and therefore no possibility of 'odious comparisons'. I find that, by insisting that a piece of work be shown or referred to me before being recorded, not only do I see what each child is accomplishing, but I can prevent a child entering a mark for it if I feel it to be below his capacity, whatever his age or ability. This way I hope that anything recorded really *is* seen as an achievement, something worth recording.

I think it's one way of helping children in an informal educational setting, whatever their age or ability, to structure and reflect on what they're doing and what they've achieved. I should also like to think that by these means they are gaining real experience of taking responsibility for their own actions. It's also *their* book, from the oldest to the youngest, to be looked at, referred to, and above all used. That is not to say, though, that they all use it in the same way, and it is inevitable that the youngest children, given their level of intellectual development, will not be categorising their experiences according to the rather arbitrary divisions of the record book. Nevertheless to be able to put some sort of mark down for their work (in the widest sense) seems to give quite a number of them great satisfaction – putting them on a par with the older ones.

I also find such a book useful to refer to, and with different questions in mind, it helps provide clues to such queries as which of the younger children likes recording? – what particular things do they seem to be recording – is there a pattern to this? etc, etc. One can also look at the book together with a particular child and go back through what they've done. All this doesn't mean that I consider other records to have little use, as I find it practical to keep notes on the nature of their number work and the level they've achieved in a particular field, their frequency and progress in reading etc—detail that is not easy to keep in one's head and is of proven use. Even so, I find adding a note as to what one feels a child *needs* in various areas as well as what he has already done is useful and worth noting; together with this it's interesting to collect together representative examples of a child's work and progress in some kind of a folder.

Record-keeping for its own sake is insidious because obviously it will never be acknowledged as such; but perhaps the application of the criteria, for whom? – why? – what for?, might succeed in cutting down some of the unnecessary proliferation of records that seems to follow in the wake of a changeover to informal methods.

Nonetheless, given the vast complexity of the whole matter of learning in these younger years, any methods of recording are going to touch but the most obviously visible parts of an iceberg of undeterminable depths.

The Individual Profile

Graham Owens and Larry Soule

Dr Graham Owens is Head of Teacher Training at the Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham. Larry Soule is Head of English, Soche Hill Training College, Malawi. They describe a Profile for intending teachers as an alternative to current methods of examining.

When examinations come in by the door, education flies out through the window. The arguments against exams have been well known for the last 60 years – the 1911 Consultative Committee made out as good a case as any. Examinations test the ability to reproduce other people's ideas; they place a premium on rote learning; they produce passive minds incapable of independent judgement. They test what is unimportant and they minimise the importance of the non-examinable. They distort the curriculum because backwash is inevitable: they both create and reflect a destructive competition. Parents, pupils, teachers and employers come to assess education in terms of examination success. They destroy the social structure of the school; they are big business and represent considerable vested interests. They help to produce fragmented individuals and an impersonal society.

For this reason most colleges of education have over the last few years – and Bristol University Education Department for nearly 50 years – operated wholly or in part a system of continuous assessment. But this system may range from disguised examination to virtual freedom from assessment. The questions and techniques employed may be the same as for examinations. Even the same set of books may be used. The work may be just as structured and even rely on papers done in a set space of time. Competing against your own best achievements is an improvement on competition with other people, but it is not good enough. To perfect what you are going to present to and share with someone else is the only thing worth striving for. Continuous assessment may also be fragmented, bits of work that add up to nothing. It cannot operate effectively alongside a lecture-dominated system; only in a framework of tutorials and workshops which cater for individual growth and integration of learning is it likely to succeed. And unless a tutorial system operates in which students are given a choice and use a variety of books and research tools, and in which the tutor can help them to rework their ideas and can see their development, plagiarism is almost inevitable. People have to be educated to use the freedom that continuous assessment can provide, but, even at its best, continuous assessment does not allow the fullest development of the individual. What is needed is a personal profile of a student. All systems are open to abuse – particularly by employers – but the profile offers at the very least a way of placing people in jobs that differs markedly from our national obsession with examining, testing, grading, cataloguing, pigeon-holing and stratifying, and all the human misery that they bring in their train.

The profile is rooted in the concept of self-evaluation: the only assessment of our skills, knowledge or personality traits that really matters is the one we ourselves come to. If we cannot make sound judgements about ourselves, we are unlikely to be capable of making sound judgements about other people. So the profile is written not by his tutor but by the student. His commitment to it of itself raises its value far beyond so-called 'objective' assessment. But because he works for three years on a collaborative basis in creative workshop groups, of which tutors and teachers as well as other students form part, there is little likelihood of his retaining a totally false conception of his skills and personal characteristics. He constantly modifies his assessment of his ability in a context of group discussion and evaluation. To safeguard against error, the external moderator can be retained. And there is no reason why two opinions should not sometimes exist side by side in a profile: it is high time we destroyed the myth – so cherished by the universities – that a man's character and abilities can be classified and pigeon-holed with precision. The profile is a document that is continuously added to and revised. In its final draft, it contains something like this:

1. An outline of all the pieces of work and achievements significant in themselves and helpful in placing the student in the right kind of job for him (research, studies of children's work, exhibitions, creative work, work in the community, academic studies);
2. Physical and mental health;
3. Social attitudes;
4. Interests;
5. Philosophy and values;
6. Evaluation of specific knowledge, skills, abilities and working qualities and their development.
   Ability to carry on a dialogue, to stimulate discussion, to ask questions that are open-ended and exploratory rather than closed and absolute;
   Collection and preparation of material for teaching;
   Presentation in a variety of media;
   Use of a variety of aids;
   Perceptiveness, range and depth of reading;
   Method of selecting books;

Degree of various reading skills;
Ability to integrate learning across subject disciplines;
Skill in integrating children's work;
Ability to assess the stage a child is at, and to judge the best means of encouraging him on to the next stage;
Power to initiate ideas and to undertake research;
Qualities of collaboration with others;
Ability to organise his life, work and leisure;
Achievement of a balance in the amount of time allocated to activities in college, out of college, in the community, in his family;
Proficiency in working across the spectrum from an entirely teacher-directed to an entirely child-directed lesson;
Expertise in the different age ranges and abilities of children he has taught;
Skill in handling groups of different sizes;
Experience of immigrants, backward children or handicapped adults;
Success in inter-disciplinary work, team teaching, workshop, seminar and tutorial;
Counselling skills;
Speaking qualities;
Dramatic, artistic, musical, mathematical, scientific and sociological skills;
Personal qualities: the ability to work with people, powers of empathy, the ability to keep confidences, to laugh at himself.

The following are extracts from a mythical student's first year profile written by himself in the third person.

Abilities and Skills

He has a great tenacity in carrying through an idea, unless he is under very great stress. He is original in his thinking; his inventiveness takes the form sometimes of unorthodox action, sometimes of negative thinking. His originality lies mainly in his ability to bring new ideas in music together and reorganise them into different concepts. He grasps ideas quickly and co-ordinates them skilfully. Many of these ideas occur to him intuitively rather than as a result of logical deduction, but he generally tests his ideas by the use of logic. He has marked creative ability and his judgement is usually sound, though it lapses when it is affected by his strong impulsive tendencies.

Social Attitudes

He is an extrovert who is becoming more and more independent but is afraid of the future. He is generally helpful to others when this is convenient. At the same time, he feels a certain amount of distrust for people and will show obstinacy and intolerance to them if he dislikes them. He does not adjust easily in his relationships with others.

Working Qualities

He is purposeful in what he undertakes and in many cases shows qualities of leadership. His readiness to take the initiative is increasing and, when it is convenient to him, he is willing and able to take responsibility effectively. He is ambitious and is becoming more and more determined to make something of himself. He is usually a good starter and a steady worker who normally finishes what he undertakes. Despite his qualities of leadership, and because of some of his emotional difficulties, he frequently finds it difficult to work with others, although this is improving. At this stage in most of his work detail and accuracy take second place to the overall objective, but again this is improving, and he is beginning to understand how to back up his general ideas with the relevant details. He works well with children but occasionally under pressure he tends to lose control of the class. Usually he will take advice but occasionally finds it difficult to overcome his depression and anger. He works well with adolescents, encouraging good discussion and critical appraisal, but is occasionally inclined to encourage a negative element in criticism. He is a keen student and always willing to learn: so he is always well prepared when he meets his tutors. He reads widely, takes a lively interest in new ideas and is not afraid of difficult books. Because of this, he likes discussion with his peers and tutors and is a good chairman, though sometimes he tends to dominate. He is beginning to develop the qualities necessary for working in a team.

* * * * * * * *

The profile must show what a student has done well and leave out those things that he has not had an opportunity to do, or has done badly: it must always be positive. The profile is not a standardised document: it should be individual, lively and informative. It fulfils three main functions. It fosters the student's development; it helps others to encourage his development; and it helps him to match his work profile to his job profile, so that he is less likely to end up as a square peg in a round hole.

FORUM / COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS COMMITTEE

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Saturday, May 8th, 1971

University of London Union, Malet Street, London, W.C.1.

10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL AS A NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOL

The joint annual conference organised by FORUM and the Comprehensive Schools Committee will focus this year on a controversial topic: neighbourhood schools. Should comprehensive schools be deliberately developed as community schools, or should entries be engineered to achieve an "ideal" mix of abilities and backgrounds?

There is no doubt that this will become an important issue as comprehensive schools develop in the 1970's. The idea that the comprehensive school should primarily serve its neighbourhood has been a basic principle of the comprehensive school movement for many years, but is now questioned.

This topic will be fully discussed at the conference, both in terms of theory and of the practice of individual neighbourhood comprehensive schools.

PLEASE KEEP THIS DATE CLEAR

If you wish to attend the conference please fill in and return the form below, together with a cheque or postal order for 10 shillings. Full details will be sent with the conference fee.

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Address .....

.....

School or College.....

I wish to attend the FORUM/CSC Conference on May 8th 1971.

I enclose a cheque/postal order for 10 shillings.

Receipt will not be sent unless specially requested

Mode Three GCE

Edmund P Clark

Edmund Clark is a Lecturer in English at Kingsway College of Further Education. He gives his own opinions (which are not necessarily those of the ILEA) about the change towards Mode Three for 15-18 year olds.

In the mid-1960s the Associated Examining Board called a meeting of representatives of the Royal Institute of Chemistry, the National Association for the Teaching of English and colleges for further education to consider the problems that some mature technical students were having with O-level English Language. The students under discussion were identified as (i) mature (ie over 18), (ii) sufficiently advanced in their technical studies to be able to undertake ONC and HNC courses (but which failure in the O-level English Language examination barred them from), and (iii) not seriously handicapped in their studies by language deficiencies. Although many of these students were using the spoken and written language effectively enough for their academic purposes they were failing the examination because it was insensitive to their linguistic capabilities and unfairly highlighted relatively unimportant deficiencies. It was felt that in those relatively few cases where the students' English was weak in ways that really mattered the usual kind of Course leading to the Mode One examination was not likely to be very useful. It was an examination primarily for schoolchildren, and even if it were granted that the elements of juvenility and artificiality in the Mode One O-level experience were acceptable to school-based 15-16-year-olds it was clear that they were much less acceptable to adults who had been living and working in the world beyond school.

What eventually came out of the discussions was a fairly radical pattern of O-level English teaching and assessment designed to help the adult student, although the pass standard would certainly conform to the standard in the existing examination. The summary question, a stock feature of English Language papers up to that time, was abandoned and comprehension reconceived in terms of gauging quality of response and perceptiveness. A more-than-token oral element was introduced. But more fundamental than any of these changes was the decision that course work should be included in the assessment. The examination paper would account for less than half of the total assessment; it would represent the same proportion of the whole (40 per cent) as the teacher's continuous assessment of his own students' work throughout the course-year. This diagram illustrates the general structure and adds some further details:

A Coursework over the year		B Examination at the end of the year	
(i) Folder of the student's writing, including examples from all stages of the course	40%	(i) The examination paper 3 hours	40%
(ii) Oral work as an integral part of the course	10%	(ii) Oral test	10%
	50%		50%

The colleges using the 'Mature' Syllabus, as it was called, were grouped into regional consortia and the examination papers were to be set by teacher-representatives from colleges. After attending a number of meetings of the consortium to which Kingsway College belonged, the Kingsway representatives came to feel that in spite of all the denunciation there had been of conventional Mode One papers, the consortium was still tending to use those papers as models, even though they now had the chance to get right away from them. Furthermore it was a fact that only a fairly small minority of Kingsway students were over 18 (the minimum age for entry to the 'Mature' examination), and there was then apparently little prospect of the 'Mature' solution being directly extended to the majority. The general problem of O-level English Language in the college was only being touched at the fringes, as long as the question remained: how to provide for the under-18s? What was needed was a 'mature' approach and a Mode Three structure for the 15-18-year-olds, with freedom for the college to set its own papers.

The Kingsway Syllabus

The three teachers at Kingsway who had used the mature students' Mode Three syllabus felt that it would be a good idea for the college to negotiate a syllabus of its own with the Associated Examining Board. A series

of meetings were held at which these teachers described to the others their experience of the 'Mature' Syllabus so that a decision could be reached as to what extent they wanted to follow the 'mature' model or depart from it. At this stage the assumption was that teachers would be individually free to choose whether to keep to the old Mode One syllabus or adopt a new Mode Three syllabus if and when it was approved. It was vaguely expected that the teachers would divide on this, but as it turned out all the teachers except one felt that they would prefer a new syllabus and that the 'Mature' Syllabus should be copied fairly closely. The similarity of the proposed Kingsway Syllabus, when it was then drafted, to the 'Mature' Syllabus probably helped it to gain swift acceptance by the Associated Examining Board with only verbal emendations. So quite suddenly virtually the whole of the O-level English Language work in the college had been put on a new footing, and the old regime that had seemed immovable was gone, taking with it all our best excuses for failure.

The diagram of the 'Mature' Syllabus also describes the Kingsway Syllabus. The important modification was college independence in setting and assessing. The minimum acceptable amount of coursework writing for the course-year was fixed at ten pieces of 400-600 words each or a larger number of shorter pieces, or a smaller number of longer pieces. The candidate's writing was expected 'to cover a fair range, and should not be restricted to narrative or controversial writing'. The teachers' criteria in assessing their own students' coursework writing were to be: 'the effectiveness of the candidate's language in relation to the purposes for which it is used, the level of interest the content commands, and mechanical accuracy'. These three criteria were not to be employed separately but should be combined to inform a general impression, and allowed about equal weight.

The examination paper was to be set and marked by some or all of the English teachers, subject, of course, to moderation. In fact all the teachers helped to compose the paper but only four (who had experience of Mode One O-level marking) marked the scripts. The paper was to be in three one-hour parts. Part I would be 'an extended piece' of writing to be chosen from a varied list of cues. Part II would be a comprehension in which the candidate would answer 'a series of questions based on a passage of literary merit . . . not necessarily fictional'. Part III would be another comprehension, but this time the candidate was to be presented with 'a passage on a topic of social concern, or two or more contrasting or complementary passages which will include at least one on a topic of social concern'. Opportunity would be given for fairly free as well as quite specific comment and the questions would at some point give the candidate a chance to express his own ideas at moderate length. The criteria of the markers in assessing the candidates' writing in all parts of the paper would be the same as those quoted above for the assessment of coursework writing.

The 20 per cent oral element was divided equally between oral coursework (Aii in the diagram) and an oral test near the end of the year (Bii). The teacher was free to determine for his own students both the form of the oral coursework assessment and that of the final oral test. In practice, teachers succeeded in setting up talk situations that were useful for teaching as well as for assessment, and even the final oral tests fitted naturally into the pattern of personal relations between teacher and students. The possible forms suggested by the syllabus (not an exclusive list) were:

'(a) *Small discussion groups*, allowing the participants a certain amount of time to prepare their remarks and finally assessing each individual on the basis of his contribution to the discussion, or (b) *interviews*, in which the candidate has a discussion on a subject of his own choosing with two examiners (teachers) who then assess him, or (c) *short talks*, in which the candidate addresses the class on a subject of his own choosing, and answers their questions, the class-teacher assessing'.

The criteria of oral assessment were defined as follows: 'the student's ability to initiate discussion, to respond appropriately to what is said to him, and to extend his remarks as and where necessary'. Pronunciation and accent were to be disregarded unless they interfered with effective communication.

Effects on the Teachers

The teachers' responsibilities were extended in various ways. They all had the right to take part in the writing of the examination paper, finding writing-cues, choosing passages, devising questions, and sharing in the final decisions. They had an important advisory role in their students' coursework writing. They decided the form of, and were personally involved in, their students' oral work. It is not surprising, then, that they were anxious to meet frequently to discuss what they were doing. In particular, the assessment of course work, written and oral, caused a good deal of anxiety, so a number of meetings were arranged at which teachers assessed samples of other teachers' folders and compared their marks; there were also exchange visits to other teachers' classes to help with

oral testing and to match marking standards. In all this the teachers' sense of their enlarged personal responsibilities was balanced by their anxiety to arrive at agreed standards. There were moments of confusion and alarm, especially towards the end of the year, when it was a relief to remember that the moderator had the final say; but eventually a consensus *was* created, and it was one which was recognised by the moderator as realistic for O-level.

This shared experience of striving to reach a common standard will be a valuable asset in future years, but no-one should underestimate the amount of time and trouble it cost. By comparison with teachers in higher education, teachers working at O-level, whether in school or college, have unfairly heavy teaching hours and desperately little time for liaison. This may well be a major factor in delaying the exchange and implementation of new ideas in teaching. As things are at present a switch to a Mode Three syllabus, in English at least, will certainly mean an increase in teachers' workloads and there are not likely to be any concessions from their employers in the form of eased contact hours or additional pay. The teaching unions as yet have no clear policy on Mode Three syllabuses, which involve the use of teachers as unpaid examiners and impose additional teaching and organisational burdens.

Effects on Students

Once the new courses began the teachers immediately noticed that their marking was heavier than in previous years. Under Mode One even students who were very anxious to pass the O-level examination had felt a certain scepticism about the connection between the writing they did in the course and their eventual performance in the examination at the end of the course. If they wrote well they knew that all gains were insecure and that they might relapse or their ideas fail on the decisive day: equally, if they wrote poor pieces they could all too easily deceive themselves that under the pressure of the examination they might do better. Either way the student was too inclined to combine genuine anxiety about the eventual result with low output and half-hearted commitment to particular writing projects. It might well be argued that the intrinsic interest of the work and the stimulus provided by the teaching should provide motivation enough but this ignores an important factor in the further education situation, the lack of confidence of many of the students. They are not in the main the sort of students who have had much examination success in the past, and they have mostly not had the experience that a good school should give, of working for the intrinsic interest of the work and passing examinations in a more or less incidental way. With such students, especially if earning their livings had made them alive to the vocational value of O-levels, it is often true that if they can be reassured that effort put into course work writing will be a definite contribution to their eventual success that knowledge will itself be the soil in which genuine commitment and interest can grow.

A lot of English teaching in Mode One days strove to be stimulating but perhaps in the wrong way. The central medium of communication in the classroom had been talk, regardless of the fact that the Mode One Syllabus did not take oral skills into account. Teachers convinced themselves that in failing to take talk into the final account, as in many other things, the examination was at fault, but they often failed themselves to think through the question of the relevance of the written word to the discussion situations that they chiefly aimed to create. Class participation was inevitably oral, but student involvement was subtly undercut by the uneasy suspicion (more uneasy in the student no doubt than in the teacher) that what was going on was not certain to contribute to the passing of the examination. The hopeful theory was that the stimulus of class discussion would carry right through into the student's written response. But what evidence there was, such as small and perfunctory written output, suggested that in fact this writing was often only an artificial addition to, or even a perversion of, the spontaneous spoken response. The great advantage of course work assessment was that it put the student's own literary activity at the centre again, and established writing as something other than a technically treacherous extension of speech. Learning to write became an intensive activity in itself. The comments the teachers made on the students' writing now commanded more attention because they could help the student to improve the piece in hand, which would count in the final assessment. Revision, correction and rewriting, a mélange of 'mechanical' and aesthetic factors, were now obviously worth attending to.

Meanwhile talks became more 'occasional' – not more formal exactly, but rarer, and, in the view of some teachers at least, more eagerly enjoyed.

The class was engaged in whole-group activity less of the time now. The students were pretty fully occupied with their personal writing projects and the teacher spent a large part of his time with them individually, working tutorial-fashion. The situation was generally a

very fragmented one, in which the main problem facing the teacher was how to give each student adequate time. Capable students normally had a certain self-sufficiency which enabled them to spend their time usefully with relatively little attention; but weaker students, who had been treated at school with that deadening combination of neglect and spoonfeeding, needed a lot of teacher's time. Fortunately a reasonable proportion of the students had been in CSE English courses at school or had otherwise had the experience of working on their own projects in one-to-one consultation with the teacher. Had this not been so it is difficult to see how the teachers would have coped with all the demands that too many uncertain and over dependent students would have made on them. But even when the confidence of the weaker student was precarious, or when he felt under-attended, the experience was often of value to him. It imposed a *realistic* strain on him, rather than the sort of anxiety disconnected from useful action which had been common in Mode One courses.

The usual success-rate for students taking O-level English Language in the college had seldom exceeded 40 per cent. In 1970, after one year of the Mode Three syllabus, there was a success-rate of over 60 per cent. Analysis of the different parts of the assessment reveals that 65 of the 400-odd candidates got pass gradings for their course work writing but failed overall, whereas only 13 candidates who were below par on their course work writing did well enough in the paper and oral to get an overall pass. This seems to suggest that the teachers were more lenient with their own students, even after moderation, than in previous years the external examiners have been to Kingsway candidates. But there are important reasons for doubting that leniency explains the improvement. In the first place the teachers set an examination paper which was certainly more difficult than Mode One papers. And in the second place the teachers felt that under the new syllabus the students had simply learned much more about writing than their predecessors had in Mode One courses, and that the folder assessments accurately recorded a real improvement in writing standards.

FORUM SUBSCRIPTIONS

In common with many other journals we have reluctantly come to the conclusion that the price of individual numbers of **Forum**, and of the annual subscription, must be raised. The reasons are (1) the considerable increase in printing costs due both to increased wages and to the increased price of paper, and (2) a probable sharp increase in the cost of postage.

The price of individual copies has, therefore, been raised to 7 shillings (35 np) and of the full subscription to £1 (100 np) (post free). These increases commence with this issue.

Subscribers will be asked to pay at the new subscription rate at the point in the year when their current subscription runs out. **Forum** hopes that it will retain all its subscribers in spite of this increase which has been forced on us. The production costs of the journal are kept to a minimum and most of the work on the journal is voluntary. In view of the current educational scene, the need for a journal like **Forum** is clear enough. Please help us to find new subscribers to extend our circulation.

The reduced rates scheme for students and for teachers in their first year, has been extended. See opposite and page 43.

The Editorial Board

REDUCED RATES SCHEME

Forum can be obtained cheap by students in Colleges and Universities. The price of each copy to individual students has been reduced to 2/- (10 np). Bulk orders should be sent to the Business Manager, 86 Headland Road, Evington, Leicester, LE5 6AD. One free copy of **Forum** is made available for every 20 copies ordered. Lecturers in Colleges of Education and in University Education Departments are asked to take advantage of this substantial concession. Please fill in the order form below.

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Discussion

Teachers for Comprehensive Education

Roy Waters' excellent conference report says: 'Only Michael Tucker wanted all Colleges and Departments abolished, but Peter Mauger . . . insisted on the importance of a sound basis in educational theory . . . '.

As those of us speaking from the floor had only a few minutes each, what might have been a more reasoned statement was, necessarily, a few coat-trailing assertions. I would like to expand – and would like it noted that for all their wrongness my remarks received considerable applause! Not **only** Michael Tucker?

Schools need urgently and desperately to keep their best teachers: the demands on teachers' good-will, initiative, energies and time are increasing, but the best teachers tend to leave the schools for more money, more professional scope, and for relief from the incessant pressure of classroom work and the institutional suffocation common in schools. Teachers *do* tire, and those who put in most, most need to refresh themselves. Sabbaticals etc can help them, but temporary replacements can wreck a developing department, especially in smaller schools. Not only is there plain physical strain, but staleness threatens us all; anxiety about this can incapacitate a teacher.

Also, students need practice: there are difficulties in placing students; many students (and teachers working with students in schools) find teaching practice abortive, because the practices are too short (time to prepare, to adjust, to commit yourself), and because practice is often not adequately prepared for in colleges – different ideas, objectives; unhelpful preconceptions, progressive colleges and backward schools (and vice-versa); furthermore, students can't normally take a place in the time-table, so whatever resources they represent are not planned for – they're just windfalls, so are often not fully used; teaching methods that use group work, individual work, team teaching lend themselves to the planned use of students, as do outdoor pursuits and many extra curricular activities. Students could be a significant addition to the manpower of schools, instead of at best a small temporary bonus.

For these reasons, teachers should be promoted within schools (accredited teachers in accredited schools) to undertake teacher training as well as continuing with their own class teaching (on a greatly reduced scale); some college lecturers could come back into school on the same terms as the newly promoted sort; others would staff the few remaining fulltime teacher training establishments, running sandwich courses, using all types of existing Further and Higher education colleges. Curricula would be worked out with the Teacher Trainer in the school, tailor making syllabuses for individual students, who would go to a centre offering what each needs. Some may need intensive academic training in a conventional subject discipline; others may need more sociology, psychology etc. The present larding of students indiscriminately with bits of this and that seems to me wasteful and boring, and inducive of cynicism regarding theoretical studies in general.

Some of this theoretical work would be done by Teacher Trainers in the schools: groups of schools would share expertise and perhaps accommodation in schools, colleges, Teachers' Centres etc. The Teacher Trainer would not just supervise teaching practice, but would conduct tutorials, assess essays, lead discussions. This would entail sending far more students to schools, whose staffs would be augmented of course (by the reduction of recruitment to Colleges).

In some such arrangement as this, the study of educational theory might be followed in much closer contact with what is actually happening in schools and some of the gaps between theory and practice be closed, and what students learn from 'theorists' might then be much more meaningful. Most important of all, students who have had a year or so sharing class-room responsibilities will have a much better idea of the help they need when they go for a 'burst' of full-time theory.

MICHAEL TUCKER,
Settle High School, Yorkshire.

Kibworth High School

Bernard Elliott's article in **Forum**, Summer 1970 justly celebrates the complete abolition, for the first time in an English county, of selection at 11. There is no doubt in my mind that this could not have come about so soon if the county's administrators had not managed the operation with great foresight and determination over the period 1957 to 1970.

Exclusive reliance on official data may however lead to misapprehensions and even to a failure to appreciate the vital part the 'grass roots' movement of teachers has to play in any genuine move towards a comprehensive system. I fear that this kind of confusion will arise if Mr Elliott's article is not corrected in at least that part of it which deals with an aspect of the Leicestershire re-organisation of which I have personal knowledge – the setting-up of Kibworth High School. Several interesting changes towards an enquiry-based, non-streamed curriculum took place within the school during its first years, beginning in 1964. They have been noted in, amongst other places, two articles in Forum (by David Bosworth and Cedric Hetherington) and a chapter of the book **In Our Experience** (reviewed in the **Forum** issue which also contains Mr Elliott's article).

Kibworth High School was established quite independently of the reorganisation of the Oadby area of Leicestershire. The entire population, staff and pupils, of Kibworth Beauchamp grammar school moved into the Oadby area in 1964 and assumed the functions of the Oadby Beauchamp upper school, in newly-built premises. Nothing was left at the Kibworth premises they vacated except the buildings, furniture, and a small number of discarded books.

The Kibworth premises were taken over by the teachers and pupils of the Hanbury CE Secondary Modern School. The Hanbury school had functioned in various forms in unsatisfactory church school premises at Church Langton for over a century. When, in 1964, the Leicestershire plan was introduced into the Market Harborough area this school was to become one of **two** high schools associated with the Market Harborough grammar school (transformed into an upper school).

On assuming the functions of a high school the staff and pupils of the Hanbury school moved into the former grammar school's premises at Kibworth, which were marginally better than the Church Langton buildings only by having the practical rooms Mr Elliott mentions and by being in a better geographical location for service to the schools' neighbourhood. They presented however the new disadvantages of being, in some respects, even more antiquated than the Church Langton buildings and of being scattered throughout the village of Kibworth Beauchamp.

None of these points I have made should detract from the importance of the tremendous practical and moral support Kibworth High School received from the County's officers during its early years of development. Nevertheless, these were the actual circumstances and conditions within which the Church Langton teachers, together with some newly-appointed teachers, launched their curricular innovations at Kibworth, and in the light of this knowledge some useful conclusions can perhaps be drawn.

CEDRIC HETHERINGTON,
Southfields School, Gravesend, Kent.

French for Everybody

Tony Warnes

Tony Warnes has taught French to unstreamed classes at Bugbrooke School, Northants, for over three years.

When we began at Bugbrooke three years ago, with an unstreamed situation, we decided to teach French to everybody for three years and see how we got on. We had no equipment other than a film strip projector and a tape recorder, and only two of our seventeen contributory schools did any French at all. The main problem was obvious; how to organise the lessons so that the ablest and the weakest both felt they were getting something out of it. Having formerly taught in a Streamed Grammar and a Technical Grammar School, I had experience of the former but not of the latter.

Our main aim in these last three years has been to try and get all the children to listen to French and to talk in French as fluently as possible. We have tried to provide the children with a tool to use rather than an analysis of the language from a mainly grammatical viewpoint. What follows is a general summary of what we have found to be effective when it comes to teaching mixed ability groups a modern language. Most of it you will probably be doing already, and then it is just a question of pace and emphasis. If we had a Language Laboratory at Bugbrooke, I suspect that much of what I say here would have to be modified.

First Years:

From the start it was obvious that a grammatical approach was out of the question, or the subject would be killed stone dead in a welter of jargon which would be meaningless to many of the children. Basically, we use a Direct Method approach, but I have found it advisable to explain carefully in English what we are trying to do. So, during the initial lessons, when familiarising them with classroom objects, we tell the children that we are going to put various things on chairs, under tables and so on, before doing it with the French commentary. Then the main body of the lesson is conducted in French.

It is noticeable that, in these first few lessons, some children learn more than they do throughout the rest of their time with us. By learning here, I mean retention and correct use of a verbal skill. Consequently, we 'do' prepositions, colours, numbers and clothes in rapid succession, followed by time, weather, the calendar and the family; these are the areas which all the children are capable of exploring and successfully negotiating and for some it is the practical limit of their achievement. By this, I mean that other skills will be temporary affairs, carried from one lesson to another and quickly forgotten. Nevertheless, in any lesson, there are always these basic areas to be exploited by the teacher, who can thus involve even the least able in each lesson.

This involvement is helped considerably by the use of coloured film-strips, and we have found those in the BBC series 'French for Beginners' invaluable. They are colourful, full of action and detail, and focus the children's attention on something specific. They come to associate words with the picture and we have found this a very effective means of getting children to learn and remember. It is essential to have this sort of audio-visual aid in mixed ability groupings, as those children with a gift for languages are given enormous scope to develop their speech patterns and, at the other end of the scale, the pictures help the less able child to see where the lesson is leading and he can contribute details about colours, numbers, people etc.

Simple dramatic work involving greeting, shopping, dining out, teaching, travelling and so forth, always goes down well and brings the child into the sort of situation wherein he can see the use of the subject. French cannot be a desk-bound subject if it is to come to life. If you can get the child to want to say something in a foreign language you are half-way home. Songs and games fulfil the same useful function.

We introduce reading about half-way through the first term using a taped course (Pamela Symonds – 'Let's Speak French'), where the children look at a picture and hear the commentary before they have to read it themselves. They are also by now familiar with the words in the opening lessons. We find this works well with all but the bottom half dozen or so, and then it is a question of reading it with them in very small doses and ensuring you don't ignore them. Again, the reading is helped if the pictures are pertinent and stimulating.

Writing is introduced shortly after the reading and we start with very simple, short dictations designed to boost the child's self-confidence more than anything. Here again, you will find children whose spelling is so atrocious that academic written French is out of the question for them. What is very interesting, however, is that there isn't necessarily any correlation between bad written French and bad spoken French. You sometimes find a child who has impressed by his use of the language or his accent and yet who cannot write two words together. Now this is the child who really benefits from mixed ability grouping, because the odds are that, if he cannot spell at all in French, then his written English isn't up to much either and he would have been a natural candidate for the Nth stream.

The children do homework once a week, starting halfway through the first term. Until Christmas the children can be kept busy reading about France and the French, drawing maps, collecting stamps and coins and doing

simple project work on any aspect of French life; 'Paris Match' is invaluable here. In the Spring and Summer Terms a more academic homework is set, usually questions and answers in French or filling in missing words in a sentence.

All homework has to be carefully prepared. It is advisable to let them start it in the lesson, so that you can get round and see that they are all on the right lines and to keep it fluid, with an expected minimum but no ceiling, so the able child can do as much as he likes. Their work is graded A-E, but not competitively. If you confirm them in their own inadequacy at this early stage, this will soon lead to boredom and resentment. We do not set any exams at all for this Year.

Second Years:

This is, in some ways, the most difficult Year. The subject is no longer new and you really have to work hard to keep them moving. We use the second part of 'Let's Speak French' as a basic Course book, but this is the year that the French Reader comes into its own. There are several bright and attractive ones about now and I have been particularly impressed by Ann Toppings' trio 'Les Duval', 'Bonnes Vacances' and 'Venez a Paris'. They are simple, without being banal, present French and the French in sympathetic terms and their line illustrations are amusing and useful. Mary Glasgow and Baker also produce several short readers which are inexpensive and which the abler pupils can use on their own. It is a good idea to have a small library of such books for the children to make use of; it gives them something to do if you are helping the weaker ones.

Oral work and written work are combined in the writing of essays on the board. We take a subject and let the story line lead us where it will. I write it up on the board, making judicious 'mistakes' to allow the more academically minded to keep an eye on things. It is as well to concentrate on one type of 'mistake' per essay, like verb endings or agreement of adjectives, then everybody knows what they are looking for.

As there are 31 film strips in the 'French for Beginners' series, these last well into the Second Year and those used in the First Year can be used again for revision purposes.

Half-way through this Year the children are given an oral and a written exam along the East Midland CSE lines; they are asked to answer questions in English about a passage and are given a guided essay of about 120 words; the oral exam is, of course, in French and can be varied according to the ability of each child. The essays of the weaker ones will be atrocious from a spelling and grammar point of view, but there is usually an undercurrent of sanity discernible if you read them aloud. We grade the examination as we do their classwork, only rather more objectively, but we do try and use it to boost rather than to deflate their self-confidence.

Homework is set twice a week, but I am beginning to think that one homework per week, thoroughly prepared, is a better proposition.

Third Years:

As all the children know they can drop the subject at the end of this Year, the problem would seem to be how to prevent a general apathy spreading over the proceedings, and much of what was done in the Second Year is continued here. The children, however, are more mature, more purposeful and the weaker ones are carried along by the exuberance of the more able, who are now beginning to revel in their ability to construct orally intricate sentences.

At the beginning of the Year I put the children on to the second book of Mark Gilbert's 'Cours Illustre de Francais'; this has the advantage of starting very simply, so that the first 10 Chapters can be competently dealt with by all at a fair pace and this provides a good initial momentum. During the course of the next 42 Chapters, however, he moves on to the Perfect and Imperfect tenses and these are effectively presented and reinforced throughout the whole book; illustrations once again playing a key part in both oral and essay work.

The Course which forms the main adjunct to all this is the BBC 'Allons-Y' transmission, which I tape and use when required. It is designed as a Second Year Course but, by using it in the Third Year with mixed ability classes, the able ones are openly delighted at finding they can follow French they have never seen or heard before with relative ease; whilst the drawings in the pupils' books enable the weaker ones to pick up the outline of the story. A liberal sprinkling of 'sensationnels' and 'formidables' helps make the dramatic offerings lively and comprehensible to all.

Readers are once again a boon and it is well worth while asking for Inspection Copies of all the new ones, to ensure that the illustrations are copious and that the text is suitable for your requirements.

Homework comes twice a week and it is important to

Unstreamed English in a Senior High School

Brian Hankins

Brian Hankins is head of the English department at Hreod Burna, a Swindon senior high school which opened in September 1967 with a creamed intake of 150. Subsequent, uncreamed, entries have so far raised the numbers to just under 600.

Hreod Burna is a Leicestershire plan senior high school, open to all pupils of 3 streamed junior high schools at the end of their third year. Approximately 65 per cent chose to come, forming an uncreamed entry which contains the full ability range but a thinner concentration of less able pupils. The first entry, however, consisted entirely of Swindon's last 11+ failures, so that the school's staff saw the transfer as a new chance for pupils to make good. There is, therefore, a felt tension between a wish not to type children (not continue the self-fulfilling prophecies made about them in the past) and a need to quickly identify and then suitably serve the different needs and abilities of the pupils. This tension puts the arguments for and against setting, IDE courses for weak pupils and compressed courses for highly intelligent pupils, into vivid juxtaposition against the need to create a sound academic reputation for a brand new school in a situation where the other 3 senior high schools are ex-grammar schools and where, for the future, zoning is to become less rigid than at present.

Having become sceptical about streaming at my previous school, I decided to experiment with mixed ability teaching as far as I dared. However, this committed me to mixed ability classes in both years, as setting for the 5th year only would disrupt teacher-pupil relationships, destroy class identity and cause repercussions in other subjects. Thus for the whole of 1969/70, I found myself the unconvinced and apprehensive possessor of 7 5th Year classes, each consisting of pupils ranging from the highly intelligent potential university entrant to the barely literate non-examination pupil. To further complicate matters, time-table re-organisation over the preceding summer holidays had re-organised the classes in such a way as to give some a low centre of gravity of

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French for Everybody (continued)

ensure that everybody continues to do it right throughout the year; the able ones don't like to see other people 'getting away with it' and it also helps instil the idea that the work has an intrinsic value and is not just an examination requirement.

Nevertheless, we do have an exam towards the end of this Year and the results of this are taken into account when deciding what Courses to pursue in the Fourth Year. The decision as to whether to continue French is taken by Staff, Headmaster, Parent and Child and this year 55 children out of 96 have decided to continue with French into the Fourth Year and Fifth Year.

This is what I have been doing for the past three years at Bugbrooke. It is perhaps too early to draw conclusions, although I am willing to hazard a few. Firstly, it is possible to teach unstreamed classes French for three years and make the experience worthwhile for everybody, but it involves a lot of preparation and is physically very demanding.

When you are convinced you are getting nowhere in a lesson you have to abandon it and try something different. You must have flexibility of approach in this situation. Sometimes, too, you will be depressed by the state of their written work, but you must remember that often we here demand greater accuracy than the children are perhaps capable of in their native tongue. I don't make the children do 'Corrections', as we both find them boring, but it is possible to reinforce the weak areas by presenting them in a different way.

The job is made easier if French is timetabled for each form once every day, with as many lessons as possible in the morning. Last periods, especially with a First Form, can be unrewarding. A tape recorder and a film projector, are essential. Luckily, the Publishers are now latching on to the possibilities of audio-visual French. Heinemanns have just published a new Swedish designed course 'On Parle Francais', with accompanying Film strips and Tapes. Macmillans publish a series of 8 mm. Loop films about a French family, lasting approximately 4 minutes and in full colour. Mary Glasgow and Baker have also branched out, and have produced a film series which can be bought outright or hired by the week. All these aids must ultimately make our job easier.

In conclusion, I would say that once you have made the decision to teach French to everybody, there is not much point in teaching a sort of remedial French to the less able child. Far better to put him in with the gifted ones, teach everybody good French and ensure that they all have their contribution to make to the successful completion of the venture.

ability, and some a high, while only slightly diminishing the range of ability. Experience with the 4th Year in 1969/70 and with the carefully mixed 4th Year this year suggest very clearly that such classes are not good. Mixed ability classes need to be formed as carefully and deliberately as streamed classes.

As I agree with George Freeland in the summer edition of **Forum** that, 'To over-individualise learning is to cast away one of the great advantages of non-streaming', I needed external examinations which could be worked for through a large proportion of time devoted to whole-class teaching. Fortunately, the AEB introduced for 1970 a Language Paper which relied on the direct testing of essay and comprehension skills: no formal précis, no language exercises. The fact that they plan this year to introduce some multiple-choice testing is a small price to pay for a very considerable benefit. This year the Board are introducing a literature paper which allows schools to choose four books for course work and select three out of a given six for external examination – again involving some mct.

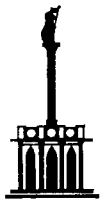
For CSE I worked out a Mode 3 Language and Literature syllabus, originally intending to have pupils assessed on 100 per cent Course work, but being blocked by the built-in conservatism of the South Western Examinations Board's group moderation of candidates' work by teachers. I reached a compromise of 50 per cent Course work, 30 per cent Written Examination and 20 per cent Oral Examination but had this year's work rejected by a group of teachers from small rural secondary modern schools at the local moderation meeting, with the Board's own moderators having to reassess all 120 scripts, which job they performed very fairly. All this begs the question: in an examination controlled by teachers, which teachers set the pace? Certainly, I have been unable to achieve the method of assessment I consider most suitable.

So far, the department's teaching has been energetic but conventional, using class-room libraries, a few poetry books and textbook sets, occasional records and tapes and a fair amount of duplicated material. Fundamentally, the method is to use a controlled stimulus for group reaction followed by individual development. The timetable is, however, blocked so that three or four classes of the same year are taught at one time, thus making plenary sessions, entertainments in the drama room and short 3 or 4 week specialist courses possible. Initially, I saw the latter as a way of escape in case mixed ability failed, especially as the examinations drew near. In practice, they have proved desirable luxuries rather than a useful route back to streaming. One batch of courses per term is the most we need, one in each batch being a relatively 'soft' option.

At the end of the fifth year, pupils can take CSE or 'O' Level or both, the final choice being made as late as the end of the preceding January. This year, out of the 180 pupils who transferred in 1968, 158 completed the fifth year, 61 gained a GCE Language pass, 27 a CSE grade 1, of whom 12 failed to gain an 'O' Level pass, and 7 were ungraded at CSE. Had all the pupils from the junior high schools completed the fifth year, we would have had an entry of approximately 286. Thus, out of the whole potential age group, 25 per cent passed at 'O' Level or its equivalent, having been taught in mixed ability classes for only the first two and last two years out of their 11 years' education. Also, to discover the limits of our flexibility, we entered 20 of the brightest 4th Year pupils for 'O' Level Language with 2 failures, 3 Grade 1 passes, but rather too many Grade 5 and 6 passes – is it true that Universities use 'O' Level Grades as significant indices of potential?

After their 2 years' experience of English teaching, those pupils who wish, enter an 'A' Level Course widely read, relatively unprejudiced about published poetry and often willing to write their own, used to argument and discussion, capable of lengthy and thoughtful essays and stories, but callow about detailed study of set texts, rather ignorant of literary terminology, alert and expectant but undisciplined. AEB's own 'A' level syllabus, with its advanced formal language work is wholly unsuitable so at present we are studying the Cambridge Board's syllabus, with what success remains to be seen. But the AEB have shown sympathetic interest in my own syllabus suggestions. Briefly, this included assessment by: (1) Examination paper on Shakespeare and Chaucer, (2) Examination paper on 20th Century writers with emphasis on relation to tradition, (3) Thesis on writer or period not covered by (1) or (2), (4) Folder of critical and creative work.

This has twice been rejected by the Schools Council, primarily for the reason that such a form of assessment would be unsuitable for university candidates. That such a syllabus would encourage individual exploration, help candidates to experience creation from the inside and give them credit for it and develop enthusiasm, stamina and retention together rather than set them in conflict, casts an interesting light on the values of the academics responsible.



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Interdisciplinary Studies

John Sealey

John Sealey is a Senior Lecturer in Education at St. Paul's College, Newbold Revel. He has had close contact with the curriculum reform experiment carried out at Dunsmore school for girls at Rugby, a bilateral school. He describes here the new forms of grouping, methods of teaching and content of education which this school has tried out.

In September 1968 a year's programme in Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities was begun at Dunsmore School for Girls, Rugby, a bilateral school with about 700 pupils. Half of the first year intake of 128 pupils were selective; the remainder were non-selective. Thus a very wide range of abilities were included in the experiment outlined here.

Initial stimulus came from research carried out by the first to third year sub-committee of the Rugby area curriculum development committee. Answers to questionnaires sent to heads, teachers and children highlighted certain difficulties encountered by the pupils in the first year of the secondary school. These included problems arising from subject-teaching, changes in class lessons and teachers at frequent intervals, large numbers of books and new subjects. They showed the need for pupils to be firmly attached to a form or house; the need to consider the formation of friendship groups in the school; for the reduction of lesson changes and homework to a minimum. They also indicated that the best primary school 'topic methods' might be used to allow a degree of freedom in study.

If any realistic answer were to be given to these problems then a minor revolution would clearly have to take place. Moreover, the change would have to involve a radical reorganisation of teaching methods rather than basic changes in the overall school staffing ratio, classroom space or book allowances.

The solution offered to the problems by Dunsmore Girls' School was a comprehensive one. A great deal of work was involved in preparing a syllabus for a five years' course using guided enquiry methods. This article briefly describes only the organisation of the first year.

Organisation

Subjects forming the basis of the scheme were geography, history, religious education and English, with some art and movement. When necessary other specialist subject teachers on the staff were available for peripheral information. Ten periods per week, each thirty to thirty-five minutes long, were utilised, blocked into two afternoons and half of a third afternoon.

The Dunsmore scheme did not allow for an entirely free choice of study. It was early decided that a limited choice and a more structured approach would be educationally desirable. But within this structure there was still much room for individual selection. At the start, five topics were chosen under the general title 'Beginnings'. These were:

1. The Land Begins. Origins of geophysical features.
2. Rivers begin.
3. Settlement begins. Prehistoric settlement. Roman settlements.
4. Village studies. Farming begins.
5. Modern farms.

Suggested lines of enquiry arising out of the main theme included: The origin of artefacts, eg. clothing, the wheel, bicycles, etc., motor power and fuel. The origins of ethno-sociological groups, eg. racial groups in early Britain, early Greek civilisation. The origins of institutions, eg. churches, schools, law-courts. The origin of methods of communication, eg. speech (language), writing, drama. The origin of the fine arts, eg. music, painting, sculpture. The origins of social habits, eg. working a five or six-day week, no sport on Sundays, the three-meal a day habit.

The 128 pupils in the year intake were divided into four tutorial groups. Each of these four groups contained a cross-section of abilities (as assessed in the 11 plus test). The tutorial group was the 'home base' or form, under the general guidance of a permanent tutor. Its major functions were to provide an administrative and pastoral care centre for the group. For example, registration, record-cards, inter-form sport and social activities were the responsibility of the 'home' form tutor. The first task of the group, before work could begin, was to organise itself into a number

of sub-groups called 'clusters'. These were formed on the basis of academic interests and friendship patterns within the group. Thus, within a tutorial group of thirty pupils there might be formed five separate 'clusters' each consisting of six pupils. Then, a cluster of six in one group would join with clusters of six pupils in each of the three other groups making a total work-cluster of twenty-four pupils. This became the 'work-unit' within the organisation. (In practice, there was no need for the numbers in the working clusters to be so symmetrical; it was possible for there to be either more or less than five clusters within a group since the choice was largely determined by the pupils' interests.)

Throughout the year considerable flexibility was allowed within the topic chosen by a particular cluster and the pupils followed many varied routes according to their interests and abilities. Sometimes two or more clusters would amalgamate for specialist teaching on a theme they had in common.

The four group tutors were only one part – though an extremely important part – of the teaching force involved with the first year experiment. The full group of teachers involved with the first year working clusters included specialists in history, geography, English, sociology, biology, art and craft, music, movement, religious education and remedial teaching.

The first task of all the teachers concerned with the first year experiment was to stimulate interest and imagination. Films on group work and on the chosen theme 'Beginnings' (Earth and History) were shown to the year as a whole. An exhibition of pictures, charts, geological samples and models illustrating 'Beginnings' was organised. Then, in the four 'home-base' tutorial groups, there was further stimulus through tutor-directed discussions on possible themes, group and individual work and diaries. The diaries included precise records and were brought up to date by the pupil at the end of each week. The tutors advised the groups on sources of information such as the fields of the specialist staff, film lists, and books for reference.

The group tutor kept a folder on each pupil containing detailed information on progress in both work and personality. At the end of each half-term the group tutor marked the pupil's topic with a grade and assessed such aspects as presentation, initiative, mental ability, motor skill, planning and the ability to link different aspects of her work into a cognitive whole. In assessing personality the tutor commented on such things as appearance, responsibility, concentration, relationships with adults and peers, adaptability and reaction to criticism.

Basic knowledge and skills

The interdisciplinary study method used was not entirely open-ended. It was certainly seen to be important that the pupils should be allowed to choose friends with whom they felt they could work; it was also true that within the five main headings selected by the staff a wide choice of different aspects of the work was permitted. However, it was thought desirable at the outset that certain basic knowledge and skills should be specifically taught. This specific content was 'injected' at points where the required knowledge or skill seemed appropriate to the particular study. For example, it was thought desirable to teach, in geography, the use of maps, physical concepts of the earth, weathering, rivers, man's relation to his physical environment, specific correlation of land, soil, climate, demands, labour and type of farming. In history: the idea of the past, beginnings of people, life in prehistoric Rome, and medieval Britain. In religious education: how writing began (pictographs, cuneiform and hieroglyphics), how stories began (myth, legend, fable, parable, allegory, fairy-tale, fiction and history), the origins of the Jewish religion, Christianity, other religions and Christian denominations.

About half the year's intake at Dunsmore is non-selective and this inevitably brings to the school its share of slow children. The enquiry method of study allowed remedial teaching to be carried on without the disruption of classes and staff which is sometimes necessary in the more formal situation.

Integration

One of the major objectives of the interdisciplinary method is to break down traditional subject barriers. The nine months or so of work put into their studies by this school's twelve-year old girls has gone a long way towards doing this. For example, a group of pupils studied the growth of a local village. In this study, the village's many geographical features were related to its historical development, its religious aspects and its economic progress; its site, houses, shops, church and farms were studied in detail. A study undertaken by another group about the horse integrated not only

subjects like geography and history, but also geology, anthropology and the concept of time.

The Staff

In a system as flexible as I.D.S. the teacher has to be equally flexible. In the Dunsmore experiment the organisation that was necessary demanded team teaching. Every week – usually a Friday lunch break – the team of teachers involved met with the team leader to discuss the progress of the past week and the day to day details of the following week. Outstanding inter-departmental understanding and co-operation was therefore a large and essential element in the structure. Another vital element was the teacher's role as 'adviser' to the pupil in her studies and school social life. In the free enquiry method used at Dunsmore there was an emphasis on personal contact between the individual pupil and the individual teacher. This was particularly the case with the four members of the team who were also the group tutors.

Report back

An essential part of the year's programme was the organisation and presentation of the 'report-back' material. At the end of every half-term, or period appropriate to the subject studied, the cluster gathered together its accumulated work. Members of the cluster would take it in turns to present aspects of the ground they had covered in the period to other clusters. The report-back session took many different forms. Illustrated and demonstrated talks were the commonest method. Pupils used as appropriate carefully prepared blackboard diagrams, pictures, models, rock samples, film-strips, slides and the tape-recorder. Notes were carefully prepared by the report-back group and were duplicated and distributed to the other clusters. Drama was also used to show certain historical aspects of the subject studied. For example, one report-back group dramatised, with costumes, an ancient Greek market-place, and activities which might be seen in a typical gymnasium, including boxing, wrestling, javelin-throwing and the private debates of the leisured Athenian gentleman. General discussion on the reports was always encouraged. They were not passive affairs. The tutors were involved in that they helped the reporting cluster to prepare and to produce the material. In particular the subject specialist was involved to check on accuracy and depth of content, while the English specialists gave guidance on manner of presentation.

The 'audience' group made notes for their report-back folders, checked samples, asked questions and answered specially prepared questionnaires. In fact the report-back period meant, on the one hand, collating, consolidating and making sense of weeks of work, and on the other disseminating experiences in a vital and interesting manner.

Visits to the surrounding villages were an integral part of the year's work. They provided both stimulus and source material on the historical, religious and geographical beginnings of environmental studies.

The year's studies finished with an exhibition of models, materials, charts, maps and written reports.

Conclusions

One of the most important lessons learned from the experiment was that it is *possible* to organise such a project in a secondary school of traditional architecture (it was opened in 1952), with ordinary staff-pupil ratios, with mixed ability groupings (IQs ranged from 70 to 140+), with no extra equipment, and no more than the normal growth of the school library. At least two major aspects had to be borne in mind. First, the need for willing co-operation by the IDS team (at Dunsmore the experiment centred on the humanities although other subject teachers were consulted from time to time), and second, the necessity for a very clear view of the *need* for enquiry methods, and the objectives thought to be desirable. From both points of view the Dunsmore experiment, though limited in its subjects and scope, was a success.

Reviews

Assessment

Studies in Assessment, by J F Eggleston and J F Kerr. English Universities Press (1970), 226 pp, 45s (28s paper Unibook).

There has long been dissatisfaction with the traditional, one occasion, written examination and this dissatisfaction has more recently been linked with demands for radical reform of curriculum and teaching methods at secondary and tertiary levels of education. Students and teachers have also expressed concern at the backwash effect of examinations on teaching methods. The Beloe Report and the consequent creation of CSE opened the way to a new approach to examinations, but, despite encouragement and help from the Schools Council and the series of **Examination Bulletins,** teachers' continuous assessment has so far formed only a minor part of CSE and has hardly been used by some Regional Boards, and there has been reluctance to use Mode 3. Teachers' conservatism has no doubt been partly responsible for this slow development, but lack of confidence through lack of knowledge about suitable techniques and the problems involved has been an impediment. Accordingly, a *Research Unit for Assessment and Curricular Studies* was formed at Leicester University School of Education with a DES grant in 1964. Five of the studies undertaken by the Unit are reported in this book.

Teachers who want to try to evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching will find **Studies in Assessment** helpful, whether or not they also want to become involved in examination reform at CSE or any other level. For teachers who took part in the trials reported found that their own awareness of the effects of their teaching was increased. Moreover, an important feature of these experiments was that the assessment process itself caused teachers to use teaching methods that fostered particular abilities which had been specified as desirable outcomes: this deliberate backwash effect was especially overt in the pilot trial for social history at CSE level and for organic chemistry at sixth form level, in both of which more adventurous styles of teaching were expressly encouraged.

In three of the five projects reported, a limited number of abilities was selected for assessment – three to four – from a larger number on which there was a consensus that they constituted desired outcomes. Two of these projects were concerned with continuous assessment of work at CSE level, one in science and the other in history, and the third with practical abilities in Nuffield A-level biology. The fourth concerned Special Studies in science at colleges of education, and the fifth was an attempt to devise test instruments for evaluating a rational rather than a factual approach to organic chemistry in the sixth form.

The studies are well documented for methodology and technique, with examples of tests and discussion of reliability, validity, discrimination, consistency and procedural problems. The variety of methods ranged from objective-type tests to impressionistic judgments, and included structured teachers' assessments and job-analysis of practical work and students' special studies. It is evident that they imposed a heavy load of extra work and considerable constraints on the teachers, but the latter nevertheless found the exercises well worthwhile.

Among tentative conclusions reached, two are particularly interesting for their implications regarding the viability of continuous assessment. It appeared that some teachers were better than others at isolating and recognising specific abilities, and there was some evidence of 'training by experience' whereby some learnt to do this more efficiently as time went on. The authors conclude by suggesting that 'it might be worth investigating the kinds of behaviours they (ie teachers) currently look for in their pupils as evidence of attainment in their subject', and that the process of curriculum reform might well be furthered by involving more teachers in these kinds of structured assessment procedures.

NANETTE WHITBREAD.

Team Teaching

Team Teaching and the Teaching of English, by Anthony Adams. Pergamon Press. (1970). 40s.

This is not for English teachers only, nor only for the believer in team teaching. Late in the book Anthony Adams allows himself this apology: 'It is no good any more relying upon gradualness in educational change: what is needed is for a group of teachers to have worked out where they stand, to have convinced themselves as the result of much hard thinking and discussion of the tenable nature of their position, to have the willingness to

learn from their mistakes, and then to plunge into things determined to make them work'. This book is the detailed record of these processes applied to team teaching in the English work of a large urban Comprehensive School. Its importance lies, firstly, in the evident success of the large-scale application of the principles worked out, and then, following that, in the fundamental nature of those principles and their width of relevance.

Given that Comprehensive education is here to stay, that the move towards mixed ability groups in most subjects will continue, that the lonely teacher in his own classroom is an anachronism, and that the faked ritual barriers of the authoritarian school must go, how is the ordinary teacher, with all his traditional props removed, going to stand against the new pressures? That only team teaching can provide an adequate framework is the thesis of the first part of this book, which describes in detail the organisation of a Department for this purpose. But 'the cooperative enterprise demands a psychological adjustment in order to implement the basic principle of "sharing".' Whether as Project Director, Year Director, or in a 'lead' or 'stimulus' lesson, any member of the team will be exposed, in ways that are unfamiliar to him, to his colleagues. The author does not minimise the difficulties, yet says: 'I would place as of first importance the sense of support and confidence given to individual teachers . . . and the new kind of democratic structure within the Department'.

This team support is still the context of the second part of the book, devoted to a detailed study of the activities and the material used in the English teaching. Increasing rejection of the traditional English syllabus and various life-saving course- and text-books has left many teachers vulnerable: but replacement of these by departmental discussions allows for 'a syllabus in a state of continuous creation adapting to the needs of pupils and teachers in the particular context of the moment'. For English specialists there may be cause for disappointment in the limitingly conventional and writing-centred questions on the Project Work-Sheets; but there is good and full discussion of some of the hoary issues in the chapter called 'The Rude Mechanicals', and an extensive account of Sixth Form work under the system, again in 'a *learning* rather than a *teaching* situation'.

The wide implications of all this for the Colleges and Departments of Education are explored in a chapter 'On the Education of Teachers'. Insofar as we still train on the assumption that teachers will lead solitary lives, the introduction of team teaching must transform our attitudes: immediately, for instance, it allows of a variety and quality of student participation in schools that the traditional class situation does not permit. But its relevance for our own institutions goes much deeper. There is no reason why the approaches and methods outlined here cannot be adopted as the major methods of work in teacher training, given a total rejection of hierarchical attitudes and structures. Are we going to be the last to learn this lesson? The clear evidence presented by Anthony Adams and his team deserves our closest attention.

PAT RADLEY,
City of Leicester College of Education.

England Expects

Expectation and Pupil Performance, by Douglas A Pidgeon NFER (1970), 30s.

The argument about the nature of intelligence, whether it is mainly inherited or mainly affected by environmental factors, has been revived in the last few years by, to name only a few, Jensen, Burt, the Plowden Report, the Black Papers. It is an argument that is central to the whole of educational theory and practice. The very concept of intelligence can and does exert an influence on the structure of an educational system, in selective or comprehensive schools, grouping by 'ability' (and watch those who don't put quotation marks round that word), selection and availability of teaching material, expectation of teachers – and this last may be the most significant.

Pidgeon describes a number of studies showing how school environment affects motivation to learn and therefore pupil performance. The concept of 'potential ability' and the possibility of its accurate measurement may lead to the low achievement of 'low ability' pupils being the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy effect. Moreover, adverse home environment cannot be compensated for by non-verbal measures of 'ability', since these are far from culture-free. Much more has to be discovered about how the cultural backgrounds of children can influence their motivation even to perform well in intelligence tests. Not only is the degree of intimacy of daily parental contact and parental encouragement very important, but the general atmosphere of the school – its vigour, its purpose, the tempo of work – can affect motivation and therefore measured 'ability'.

In Chapter Four Pidgeon reports a study which investigated the effect of school atmosphere upon attainment.

Attainment and intelligence tests were given to a sample of primary school children, some of whom remained a further year in primary school, whereas others (for reasons of their birth date) moved on to secondary school. A year later they were all re-tested and consistent gains on every test were made by the primary school group. These results were interpreted in terms of the different motivational factors operating in the two types of school, and particularly the primary school teachers' use of tests to determine children's suitability for selective education, a pressure lacking in the other schools.

Curriculum differences can lead to quite different levels of performance; a test involving representative samples of children in Australia, USA and England and Wales showed that children of a given age in one educational system produced a markedly lower level of performance than in another, when no higher level was expected of them. Date of birth and length of schooling are also shown to affect pupil performance when teachers, even unconsciously, expect more from the older children in the class.

A mathematics survey in England demonstrated a strong association between success at school and having high expectations – which in itself is strongly influenced by the type of school attended, as Professor Himmelweit has shown (**Forum,** Autumn 1970, p 4).

Pidgeon's researches, and his very wide reading of the researches of others, leads him to the conclusion that a teacher's expectation of his pupils' performance significantly affects that performance, and that his expectations are determined mainly by the extent to which he believes that achievement is determined by innate ability.

The practice of streaming within a year group encourages teachers to form expectations of their pupils based on the stream in which the pupils have been placed.

Pidgeon's rather dry and unemotional style may disguise the importance of his findings. This book implicitly challenges the assumptions behind most traditional teaching, and a wide circulation and discussion would materially help the movement towards more person-centred curricula.

PETER MAUGER.

Comprehensive Case Histories

Becoming Comprehensive (Case Histories). Edited by Elizabeth Halsall
Pergamon Press
(1970), 45s (or 30s in Flexi-cover)

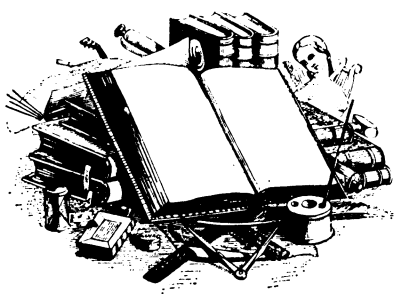
In recent years, members of the teaching profession have become increasingly aware of the dangers of isolation from their fellow practitioners. Integration of subjects and team teaching are tempting some from their exclusive cells. The frontiers between school and school have been breached by Teachers' Centres, by Advisers and by courses, but problem-vexed staff frequently long to see and hear what others are doing to meet the problems of change in organisation and content of education. Quartets of questing teachers conducted by uncertain headmasters arrange reliefs for a day or two and descend on hosts whose schools might provide some inspiration. Elizabeth Halsall's book could make some of their journeys unnecessary; for those who are determined to make the outings it provides guidance in asking the relevant questions.

The case histories cover the development of fourteen different comprehensive schools. There is a range of locations, urban and rural, and a range of types and sizes. There are schools which changed from Grammar to Comprehensive and from Secondary Modern to Comprehensive; schools blessed as 'purpose built' and schools born in Nissen Huts. There are Middle Schools and Sixth Form Colleges. The contributions of the fourteen authors should prove to any doubting observer of comprehensive reorganisation that, whatever the outcome, it will not be a dull and restricting uniformity. Each case history records a movement to provide greater opportunity within the system but the general aim is compatible with many variations between schools; individual innovations and experiments will continue to enrich them. Schools in different situations can be expected to show different adaptions but by putting together in the same chapter schools with some similarity of situation, Dr Halsall shows how differences in human reaction produce varied, but still valuable, conclusions. The case histories provide the details of change in profusion but they are doubly valuable in that they provide some insight into the personalities who were key factors in change. Jack Walton's account of Beaminster allows us to join him in feeling and thinking and arguing his way to solutions; he establishes a sympathetic bond when he writes of his uncertainties and his awareness of imperfections. It is probably more helpful to find someone else struggled with the problems that now vex us rather than to try to import someone else's instant solution. Anyone faced with the undeniable challenge of a two site school will be encouraged by P J O'Connell's account of Sir Richard of Chichester School in London. J Climo of Glossop School succinctly identifies problem after problem in the large school but also conveys the sense of exhilaration and excitement in meeting them.

The Sixth Form College is increasing in favour as a possible element in reorganisation. The Headmasters of both Mexborough and Rotherham suggest lots of questions and some interesting answers. Delf Hill at Bradford and Bartholomew School at Eynsham provide insight into Middle Schools. The final chapter contains two case histories of change within schools which unstream. Barnes of Ruffwood unfolds a fascinating story of progression towards mixed ability grouping. At each successive stage of development from streamed to mixed groupings he seeks an improved structure and develops an unstreamed organisation through a series of logical but limited steps. Thompson of Woodlands at Coventry, in contrast, consciously moved to non streaming. He emphasises that at some stage an act of faith is required but as each step is taken he checks the evidence to test his belief that this is the most rewarding system.

Elizabeth Halsall has performed a most valuable service in collecting the case histories within one cover. Like a good travel book it provides a rich experience of places difficult to reach. It can be warmly recommended.

DEREK ROBERTS
Bugbrooke School, Northants.



Town Hall Comprehensives

Going Comprehensive, by Richard Batley, Oswald O'Brien, Henry Parris. Routledge (1970). 25s.

In view of recent government changes, **Going Comprehensive** is timely, for the battle has now shifted back, albeit temporarily, to the local level. The authors take two towns, Gateshead and Darlington as their case study. Gateshead, politically, was a safe Labour seat. Darlington, however, seemed more volatile. In both instances the most important factor was the attitude of the local Labour parties towards comprehensive education.

In Gateshead the Labour party was in sympathy with comprehensive education. The battle therefore was confined to the realm of the Education Committee. The Darlington Labour party, in contrast, was riven into almost Byzantine factions with the most venerable members steadfastly 'convinced that (the city) has the best possible system of education'. The younger councillors were 'militant' pro comprehensivists. Thus the battle over comprehensive schools was more a hatchet job inside the Labour party before it became a straight fight between Labour and Conservatives.

Interestingly, the role of external interest groups was both small and relatively ineffectual. For a question that is a prime example of participation in local politics by the public at large, participation was remarkable for its absence. 'The machinery of consultation seems to have been valuable as a pill sweetener', the authors comment.

It is a pity that a greater contrast was not found by choosing another town from another area, preferably one where the comprehensive issue met with hard core resistance. One thinks for instance, of Enfield, Ealing or Southampton where the provision for reorganisation has been subordinated to the need to preserve one local grammar school. It is more than important in cases like those just mentioned, to know how the Grammar school pressure groups work. Why their interests are considered more important – the interests of some 800 children – than those of the rest of the city combined. What are the influence networks bringing influence to bear on local corporations? Or is it still a matter of burghers' rights against those of the Crown in which the peasantry is disregarded?

From this very limited study it emerges that participation in local education politics is possible only when a decision has not already been taken by Town Hall. This is disturbing since, to ape Clemenceau, education is too important to be left to Education Committees.

Finally, a minor point. **Going Comprehensive** is the second of the name. If a third book is published with the same title, the publisher should be hamstrung for his lack of imagination!

GUY NEAVE,
Leicester University.

'Voice of Sanity'

Rhodes Boyson, in The Times Educational Supplement, on

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by Frances Stevens

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