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Comprehensive Reform

It is important to maintain the momentum of the move towards comprehensive education. This has two aspects: first, accelerating the transition to effective *systems* of comprehensive schools, and second, ensuring that comprehensive schools themselves achieve the objectives of this reform—particularly that of providing ‘continued equality of opportunity throughout the secondary stage of schooling’, as set out in the original statement of objectives drawn up for the NFER research project.

Forum has more recently concentrated on the second of these aspects—the Comprehensive Schools Committee (now renamed Campaign for Comprehensive Education) focusing on the first. Genuinely comprehensive education, as many now accept, involves considerable innovations within the schools themselves—of which the move towards non-streaming is only one (if still perhaps the most important). But linked with this goes the need for a fundamental rethink of the content of the curriculum and of methods of teaching—just as in the field of primary education; and also of the whole matter of teacher-pupil relations.

In this issue we concentrate on several of these topics. We make no apology in printing first Roy Waters’ report of the **Forum**/CSC conference held last June on democracy and innovation in education. The discussions at that conference centred around inner changes within the school, and, if Countesthorpe is far from typical, it is acting as a kind of laboratory involved in testing quite radical changes in school practice. But the experiences of many other schools are also very relevant to the main point at issue. One ‘case history’, as it were, of the way in which a school staff has examined its procedures in the process of change, is provided by Denys John’s account of Nailsea. The Thomas Bennett School at Crawley has, of course, long been known for its innovative character both under Tim McMullen and for more than five years now under Pat Daunt. Curriculum change has been one of the objectives, and Peter Mitchell contributes an article on the resources based integrated humanities course now being implemented most effectively by a team of teachers at this school. Joan Leighton, whose work at Levenshulme High School, Manchester,

will also be well known to **Forum** readers, writes on a similar topic.

One significant thing about these curriculum changes is that they are being thought out and directed at *all* the children in the school; in other words the tripartite division in curriculum reform which began with the early Nuffield projects (directed at grammar school pupils) is being overcome, the initiative being taken, appropriately, by teachers in the comprehensive schools themselves. This initiative has been eased by the establishment of the CSE examination, and especially Mode III. As we move towards a single examination at 16 it is clearly crucially important to retain the best aspects of CSE practice, which Mr Uglow describes so clearly in his article. And here it may be as well to reiterate that this single examination should cater for *all* the pupils, and not only the top 60 per cent, as the Schools Council strangely propose. This is the essential means of unifying the single secondary school.

Experiments of the kind reported here are crucial to the continued vigour and development of comprehensive education. Yet, as we point out in the article on the latest NFER report, there is now no body charged with monitoring these changes—either as regards the extent and character of the overall transition to comprehensive education, or as regards the inner development of these schools. It is left to voluntary organisations, such as CSC and **Forum**, to do what they can, but neither of these have the facilities to undertake the work on the necessary scale. The value of this kind of study is borne out in some of the items dealt with in the NFER’s third report—for instance in relation to the principles by which resources are allocated within comprehensive schools; or the most effective means of organising the work of slow learning children (see page 25). Effective research and monitoring requires resources, and it is ridiculous that the DES, the Social Science Research Council (or the government for that matter) have apparently *no plans whatever* for carrying this on. Comprehensive reform is far too important a matter to rely on the old English method of muddling through, especially when the techniques of relevant research, which could be of great value to the schools, are now well known.

Democracy and Innovation in Education

Roy Waters

Roy Waters is a district inspector to the ILEA and a member of the editorial board of *Forum*. He previously taught at Wandsworth School in London and was head of Holloway School—both comprehensive schools.

This year's Forum/Comprehensive Schools Committee conference fell on the 20th May, at the end of a week which saw a series of pupil power marches in London. The subject of the conference, *Democracy and Innovation in Education*, thus seemed singularly relevant, though in opening the morning session Pat Daunt (Headmaster of Thomas Bennett) insisted that the coincidence was purely fortuitous. The issues involved, he claimed, were fundamental and enduring. He suggested that as a nation we display an apathetic neglect for the tasks democracy imposes on us. Schools should train us better to undertake these tasks and in this, as in other matters, pupils learn best through practice—one learns to walk by walking. The authoritarian attitude of school teachers towards their pupils in this respect is in contrast to that of lecturers in Further and Higher Education towards their students, and to that of social workers towards their clients. Further, the democratic relationship should not exist simply between teacher and pupil—parents and the rest of the community also have a role to play.

The main speaker at this session was Michael Armstrong, late of the Nuffield Resources for Learning project and for the past two years a head of department at Countesthorpe College in Leicestershire. He began by interpreting the terms used in the title to the conference. He took innovation to cover the fields usually associated with Forum/CSC thinking—such issues as unstreaming, individualised learning, team teaching, curricular reform, all within the comprehensive school. Democracy he took to refer to the government of schools by their teachers in collaboration with their pupils. There should be a role for parents, and at a further level a role for the community at large and the LEA.

However he introduced a further term: autonomy. By that he meant the right of the secondary pupil to make decisions about his own education, the teacher's task being to foster him while making decisions, and to provide him with the widest possible scope within which to operate.

Early comprehensives aimed at improving on the tripartite system, principally by being fairer, more

efficient and less socially divisive in their basic task of selecting the educational elite. Such schools he characterised as meritocratic. He saw the movement since their establishment as being steadily towards a more egalitarian school. Unstreaming had been the main form through which this change had found expression hitherto—a shift from teacher-centred to pupil-centred learning was the next step.

Packaged materials

Michael Armstrong surveyed the extent of teacher direction, even in the most progressive areas. Curricular reform was initiated by theorists, passed to the teacher in a form which was likely to inhibit any particularly creative contribution on his part, and given by him to the child. Nowadays such reforms often reach the teacher in the form of packages of materials. If the teacher modified them at all, it would probably simply be to adapt them to fit into the traditional methods he already practised, thus extracting and discarding any element of genuine innovation. To the pupil on whom they were imposed they would be little more than a tarted up version of the familiar text book. Any excitement generated by the search for new techniques would have been enjoyed by the researcher; it would reach the teacher and pupil pre-digested. (This particular insight, from a researcher returned to teaching, was appreciated by the audience.) Even materials produced by a colleague within the same school generated less excitement in another's hands.

If curricular reform and the individualised learning methods associated with unstreaming were still essentially controlled by the teacher, so was the establishment of the unstreamed teaching groups themselves. How often do children decide whether they will be taught in groups carefully engineered to be of mixed ability, or in random groups (alphabetical, for example) or in groups formed by socio-metric testing, or simply in friendship groups? Streaming involves the teachers in imposing their image of the pupil on him. If unstreaming is a reaction against this, the imposition of

teacher-structured groups would seem to be illogical, and, like the use of streamed teaching techniques in unstreamed classes, to negate the objectives of unstreaming.

Teachers of English have for some time been aware of the effect on children of the disparity between the school's code of language and that of its pupils. The Penguin *Lost for Words* illustrates how persistently the school discourages thinking aloud, and groping towards ideas. The inhibitions thus implanted lead to an inarticulateness which the teacher may only too often attribute to the pupils' background rather than to the teacher's own inappropriate expectations and modes of communication.

All these problems result from a fundamental lack of openness to the pupil's point of view. Tolstoy, profoundly disturbed at the revelation of an ignorant peasant pupil's narrative gift, asked: 'Should we teach the peasant children to write or should they teach us?' Michael Armstrong insisted that until we took this question seriously we would not solve the central problems facing us. At this point he offered as one model of democratic structure, the current organisation at Countesthorpe. The system was in an early stage of evolution, at moments depressing, at others exhilarating. The great advantage at Countesthorpe, in this as in other matters, lay in the initial commitment of the staff on appointment to a democratic mode, automatically established at the start by Tim McMullen.

Policy decisions

All working adults in the school are automatically members of the Moot (a piece of McMullenese which evoked the familiar irrelevant sneer in the subsequent discussion). This rather cumbersome body takes major policy decisions. If voting is fairly even, the issue concerned is referred for further consideration, since effective implementation usually depends on a measure of unanimity. Weekly details are decided by a Standing Committee consisting of a quarter of the staff who serve for a quarter of the year, rotating. This Committee also elects the Moot chairman. Financial matters are controlled by a further committee, while staff appointments are made by an interviewing panel whose composition is adapted to the nature of the post.

The system can be slow and time-consuming and sometimes as a result the quality of the teaching may have suffered. There are two further weaknesses which, though they may apply equally to an authoritarian

regime, are disturbing. First, the fact that a decision is reached democratically does not of itself ensure that it will be effectively carried out. Second, democracy places a premium on articulateness, and those with less public verbal facility may feel that their views are swamped by their assertive colleagues. Michael Armstrong suggested that more policy-making should take place in small groups of those who work closely together each day.

At first there was no pupil representation at staff meetings, though there was a pupil majority on the student council for non-academic matters. This council was not altogether successful and died out mainly because the pupils (none, at that stage in the school's growth, above the fourth year) seemed unable to adopt a representative role, and tended only to speak to items in which they felt personally involved.

More recently the new fifth year pupils have been able to attend meetings of the Staff Moot. Serious dispute between staff and pupils would lead to a referral for further discussion under the consensus-seeking procedure mentioned above. However only a few pupils attend the Moot and those who take an active part tend to be highly untypical. The pupils share the staff dissatisfaction with this procedure, a fact which may hasten the evolution envisaged by Michael Armstrong towards discussion and decision through much smaller groups of those involved in daily contact.

As well as being engaged in evolving new methods of government, Countesthorpe has been equally concerned with the question of democracy in curriculum development. In the first instance it had been decided that all pupils should spend some time in all major departments of the school, but should be allowed some freedom to decide the detail of what and how they should study within them. This had not proved altogether successful, and Michael Armstrong raised three questions:

- a) Are we right to assume that all pupils are capable of being interested in all areas of the curriculum? If we decide at least to aim at that, should we meanwhile make some compromise with the present reality?
- b) Are we currently too half-hearted in failing to insist on our own requirements of pupils yet failing also to provide the guidance which will enable them to decide for themselves? Should we not on the one hand resist more strongly

pupil wishes which are purely whimsical while at the same time making far more serious efforts to discover exactly what the pupil really wants and needs?

- c) Pupils require access to a large number of specialised teachers and yet, if their individual academic needs are to be brought out and their capability for choice fostered, they must be well-known to few.

How do we resolve this?

As with the problem of democratic government, the answer might lie in breaking the school down into very small sub-units, each consisting perhaps of a team of six teachers of various disciplines plus a leader, the teams federated to share specialist facilities.

Having talked with great rapidity well over his time, Michael Armstrong apologised for omitting his intended reference to parents, governors, etc. It was hoped to find some mechanism whereby parents would be involved in the voting procedure—as the staff had at first been nervous of admitting pupils to the Moot, they seemed even more apprehensive of parents. Some conflicts of view were inevitable, though the situation in which some pupils passionately defended the school against their parents was particularly worrying.

Discussion

Questions were then invited from the floor and it was a tribute to the speaker's unusually frank blend of realistic idealism that so many of the audience, holding a wide variety of viewpoints, seemed to have been disturbed at what they had heard.

Several speakers referred to the many stresses imposed on teachers and wondered how many more burdens could be undertaken. If there was to be time for consultative democracy and the preparation of innovative materials, this time must be structured into the school day, and flexibility organised for teachers to withdraw from groups to work alone. Alternatively, an advantage of the small sub-units which Michael Armstrong had proposed was that consultation could be a continuous, casual process and need take up no extra time at all. It was suggested that the maximum size of such a working group might be ten.

An adviser from Fife described a Social Subjects project in which an experimental situation had been set up in which ten was the maximum number of

pupils per teacher, the pupils appearing in the mornings only. The fact that these conditions seemed necessary if integrated, individualised materials were to be produced only underlined the impossibility of teachers undertaking fundamental innovatory work in the normal school situation. A further depressing question was raised by the reflection that if Countesthorpe needed a born leader, a hand-picked staff and purpose-built premises, how could less favoured schools hope to move in the same direction? Would we need a new breed of teachers? Could training instil in them the self-confidence required for the democratic approach?

An answer was suggested by a speaker who felt that the democratic model of Countesthorpe was not necessarily a useful one. Democracy may not further innovation, consensus may never be reached; at the initial stage, priorities may not be established. There are managerial techniques that can interpret and carry out the majority view far more effectively than any rule by elected committee.

Another speaker questioned the age at which pupils could be considered suited to full participation, and the problems presented by the wide range of maturity in the 11-18 school were mentioned. The need for parental involvement was very strongly urged, as was the need to give more control to school governors and to make them more responsive to the feelings of the local community. At the same time the view that teachers themselves should play a positive and active political role was expressed by a trade unionist. Even if we have less practical influence than we may think, at least we should avoid dampening down the questioning spirit of our pupils.

For a Jewish refugee in the audience the main stumbling block to democracy in schools was compulsory religious education and for a West Indian it was our failure to provide equality of opportunity for black children. Antagonistic to the underlying assumptions of most people present, a city councillor deplored the abdication of professional responsibility by teachers who refused to give society the lead it needed—a lead demanded by the public. True democracy, she said, lay in responding to this demand rather than in handing over control to school children.

It was a stimulating session, and overran into the lunch hour. In the afternoon, Jack Walton of the Exeter Institute of Education introduced Dr M L J Abercrombie of the School of Environmental Studies, University College, London.

She began by referring to the natural resistance to innovation which operated on an organisational as well as on a personal level. A highly effective optical illusion based on our irresistibly held conviction that the wider end of a rectangle must be nearer to us than the smaller end set us off to a lively start. The moral was that we all interpret phenomena in accordance with our own personal interest. To receive innovation is difficult, to initiate it even harder. Slides of early motor cars looking almost indistinguishable from horse-carriages and of the first steamships with sails reinforced the point.

Strategies of Innovation

On an organisational level the strategies of innovation could vary. They could be slow through carefully chosen new appointments at the natural rate of staff turn-over, or rapid through decree provoking premature resignations. This latter method can only be used successfully when the innovator has the power to ensure that his decrees are carried out throughout the organisation. If not, he has first to change the attitudes of others. In any case, more co-operative participation inevitably leads to a loss at all levels of some individual freedom.

Dr Abercrombie took up a point made several times during the morning: that beyond a certain point change in schools must wait upon change in society. In terms of undergraduates, for example, it had been found that a number arrived at university unsure of their role and aims. A university, she felt, was not well-suited to help them at this stage, yet society had no alternative to offer them. The problem would not be solved without important social change.

At this point she suggested that we should move our chairs into a series of concentric circles to facilitate face to face discussion.

The first point made was that since the purpose of education was to prepare children to face life, this provided the criterion against which to judge the effectiveness of democracy and the value of innovation. An element in preparation for life which was referred to several times was the need to establish firmly in pupils' minds the fact that people can change society, possibly by contriving situations within the school in which pupils can themselves influence change. We were again urged to work through the teachers' unions ourselves to effect social change, though another speaker felt that teachers should keep in tune with the mood of

society and yet another, while accepting that schools had a role as agencies for modifying society at large, felt that the afternoon's discussion should be about innovation in schools, even if this was to be directed towards ultimate social change.

We were urged not to seek for change for its own sake, since generally speaking our objectives were unchanging and if traditional methods achieved them we should stick to such methods. There was a danger in middle class teachers indulging their liberal ideals at the expense of the real needs of the working class child. To avoid this we need carefully to evaluate what we are achieving.

There was a fair degree of disagreement. One speaker felt that the innovatory head should proceed slowly a step at a time, since too much change at once led to anxiety in teachers. Another argued that if one change was made care must be taken to ensure that all associated changes were made at the same time so that the main change should have a fair chance of success. It was pointed out here that in effect we had to decide whether we wanted piecemeal reform or radical revolution. One speaker felt that change left young children feeling particularly insecure; another argued the opposite. The view was expressed that the amount of change we could happily accept was related to whether we were the victim or the perpetrator of the change. Someone regretted that those who felt themselves to be victims seemed automatically to assume sinister political motives behind the advocates of innovation; another referred to the large number of teachers who acquiesced to change, secure in their determination to do nothing at all about it. The discussion came full circle with the comment that such resistance can be aroused among the progressive members of a school staff if they had not been involved in the initial policy-making. It was salutary also to be reminded that genuine innovation was a highly creative act and consequently rare.

Dr Abercrombie, in summing up, returned to her theme that innovation was relatively easy to introduce when it was not dependent on implementation by others. When it was so dependent, a managerial problem arose. If staff and pupils were to participate in decision-making (and education for democracy demands this) they must understand the objectives which were aimed at and the reason for the choice of means. Some of the innovations we had been discussing were so deep-rooted that they involved teachers in a profoundly difficult and disturbing process of coming

to terms with themselves. Intensely difficult though this may be, it must be attempted. The situation in schools was changing: we must respond to this.

New burdens

Jack Walton closed the conference by picking out some of the important issues which had been recurrently raised. Participation and innovation both impose extra burdens on teachers. If they are to accept these burdens they must understand the objectives and the strategies proposed to achieve them. All this requires extremely careful preparation from the start,

not only in determining the tactics to be used but also in estimating the resources which will be required and ensuring that they will be available. Finally it must be clearly understood that more participation will inevitably mean both a gain and a loss of autonomy.

It was an uneven conference, but though the parents, governors and local councillors present probably felt that most teachers are still apprehensive of extending democracy in education beyond the school walls, yet, this apart, a number of the inescapable and fundamental consequences of democracy and innovation in education were convincingly expressed. For many it must remain a disturbing experience.

Lady Simon of Wythenshawe

Lady Simon of Wythenshawe, who died peacefully at her home in Manchester on July 17 1972, at the age of 88, was—among her many other activities—a founder member of the Editorial Board of *Forum*. A member of the Manchester Education Committee for 46 years and of the Consultative Committee to the Board of Education in the 1930's, Lady Simon became, after the second world war, a strong advocate of the comprehensive school. In 1948, convinced by her knowledge and experience of American high schools and of the Scottish 'omnibus' school, she published *Three Schools or One*—the first popular but informed exposition of the case for the single school. Since that time she remained tenacious in pursuit of this objective; crowned by the resolution of the Manchester City Council, in July 1963 to bring in a complete system

of comprehensive schooling in Manchester—a resolution finally carried into effect three years later.

Lady Simon's passing will be mourned by a wide circle of educationists. Her advocacy of modern trends in education was influential and consistent. Old age brought neither diminution of energy nor of concern—nor did it modify in any way her consistently radical approach to the need for educational change. In this, however, her approach was never doctrinaire. As Mr Dudley Fiske, Chief Education Officer of Manchester, has written, she 'will long be remembered by the teachers and children of Manchester, to whose welfare she was so devoted', for 'she was ever the champion of children of Manchester, concerned to see that they and their teachers had the best possible service'.

Going Comprehensive: Staff Roles and Relationships as Factors in Innovation

Denys John

Denys John has been headmaster of Nailsea Comprehensive School near Bristol since 1959. He taught French in Yorkshire before the war and subsequently in the London area and at Bedales School, Petersfield where he was also Boys' Housemaster. From 1952 to 1959 he was headmaster of Devizes Grammar School.

Nailsea Grammar School became Nailsea Comprehensive School at midnight on the 31st August 1966. Before then my colleagues and I only dimly saw that many changes would result; some of them would be changes in the expectations placed upon us and others would be changes which we would have to initiate as responses to those expectations. Since then, like every other comprehensive school, we have found ourselves hosts to numbers of visitors nearly all of whom ask us 'What is it like to go comprehensive?' We have got used to answering that it is like moving out of the driving seat of a motor car on to the flight deck of an aeroplane. The conditions, dimensions and expectations are no longer just backwards, forwards, right, left, fast, slow but now include up and down, banking, side slipping, take off and landing. The possibilities and opportunities are vastly increased but so are the complexities of understanding, skill and evaluation which become necessary. When we take over the controls of the new mechanism, we can receive some help from the experience of others; we need a thorough ground base of theory; but in the end we have to improve our skills by making mistakes. The results may not be as catastrophic as an aircraft crash but experimenting with and on children is such an emotive exercise that teachers are often reluctant to be too adventurous. We remind one another of the nurse's advice that you can tell if the water is going to be too hot for your elbow if the baby turns red.

At first we only knew that the new conditions for which we would have to make provision would include a much wider range of ability of pupil (from non-readers to the intellectually brilliant) and a big growth in the size of the school (from 800 pupils in 1966 to 1,250 in 1971 and perhaps 1,800 in 1980). These were conditions which we expected to find *inside* the school and we made our plans to respond to them in our own

way. We also realised that *outside* the school there would be pressure and expectations both to retain traditional values and simultaneously to make new provision to meet the changed role of the school. At this time we were quite unconscious of the constraint which is placed upon change by the relationships and roles of the existing staff of an institution which is called upon to change its character.

Between 1966 and 1968 we tried to tackle three main problems. The first was curriculum change (humanities integration, team teaching, remedial attention, foreign languages, new subjects such as drama, citizenship, local studies, commerce, economics, rural science etc.). This question included the balance between teacher control and pupil choice in the 4th and 5th year options. The second question was that of pupil groupings for class teaching. Would we best fulfil the needs of the most able as well as those of the least able by a system of sets with remedial groups identified in each year? Were mixed ability groups necessary? Was this the way to avoid producing levels of ability which merely fulfilled our own predictions? Could some subjects (the 'academic' ones) be taken in ability sets and others (art, crafts, PE, games) be taken in mixed ability sets? Was this sort of compromise satisfactory or did it merely beg the question? The third question concerned pupil groupings for 'pastoral care' and posed for us the choice between a 'vertical' house based system and a 'horizontal' year group system.

Every teacher has views on these three questions and many hold their views with passionate conviction. Heads of traditional subject departments may embrace some new subjects enthusiastically, thus extending their sphere of influence, but they may reject others as encroachments upon their territory. Teachers whose experience has been largely or entirely with potential GCE candidates may well resent proposals for mixed

ability teaching. Remedial teachers who have found great reward in their paternal or maternal relationship with reluctant readers may instinctively argue that mixed ability groups deprive such children of the protective framework which they so desperately need. They may on the other hand advocate extraction as a better form of remedial treatment as it gives them small groups or individuals to deal with and gives freer scope to their real expertise in helping children with their specific difficulties. 'Pastoral staff' may advocate a 'vertical' house system on the grounds that the influence of older pupils is good for the juniors and gives those seniors the experience of responsible leadership. Others may defend the 'horizontal' year group system, arguing that the influence of irresponsible seniors is the cause of misbehaviour among juniors. Some pastoral staff see their status as strongly dependent upon responsibility for pupils of the full age range—senior as well as junior. Others point to an alleged disadvantage of the house system which is that the autonomy of house staff can only be exercised in social or pastoral matters and that, in all curricular questions (options, class discipline, examination entries, for instance), which are based upon year groups, house staff have to surrender to heads of department, academic co-ordinators or curricular directors.

Democracy and consensus

The head of a school faced with the need to manage a situation of change to meet the new demands of a comprehensive entry of pupils may think it appropriate to cut through the Gordian Knot of controversy and issue authoritarian instructions. Certainly this clarifies school policy. The weakness of this approach is that it fails to win the heartfelt support of a proportion of the teachers who will be required to implement the decisions made; indeed it may well be actively resented. A policy which is resented by even a minority does not get off to the best possible start. If the head is so conscious (as I was in 1968) of the need to harness the goodwill of his colleagues that he opens up every new important problem to discussion, he normally expects that a consensus of opinion will emerge and that this will give him sanction to make suitable decisions. He may feel that it will be helpful to set up working parties or study groups whose task will be to contribute towards the shaping of opinion and hence to the emergence of the desired consensus of opinion. This was

certainly what I hoped. But I was disappointed to find that, with rare exceptions, the more problems were subjected to open discussion the greater the divergence of opinion seemed to be. It is at this point that a head is tempted to revert to becoming an autocrat (a benevolent one, he hopes, but nevertheless an autocrat). Indeed assistant teachers, exasperated and exhausted by debate, long for a decision, and may well plead for 'firm leadership'. Disillusionment with democratic participation sets in and the cry is heard that consultation is all eyewash.

We were fast approaching this stage when, in 1968, Miss J E Richardson, at that time a lecturer (now a research fellow) in the University of Bristol School of Education, began a Schools Council Project which offered consultancy on the management of change and innovation. She came equipped with the conceptual background of the theories of institutional management developed by Dr A K Rice in the 1950s and 1960s, in co-operation latterly with Dr E J Miller, of inter-personal behaviour developed by Dr W R Bion and of behaviour in large groups studied by Dr P M Turquet. With this framework she inevitably brought also her own values and judgments.

For three years she attended virtually all scheduled meetings of the teaching staff—full staff meetings, senior staff meetings, standing committee meetings—and also certain other meetings of sections and study groups by invitation of staff members concerned. She deliberately refrained from placing before us any theoretical framework nor did she wave the banner of any preconceived assumptions. She merely listened to what was said during our deliberations and offered, from time to time, interpretative comments about the feelings, attitudes and relationships revealed by what was said. Anyone had the right, or rather the obligation, to dispute the interpretations which were tentatively offered. Indeed it was frequently the action of indignant denial which made us stop and ask ourselves whether, after all, there might not be truth in the way our remark sounded to this observer. If it sounded like that to her, it was enlightening to realise that it probably sounded the same to at least some of our colleagues. The fact that the speaker was not conscious of being motivated in the way suggested was, after all, no proof that the suggestion was completely invalid. We knew just enough psychology to accept the power of the unconscious mind.

Miss Richardson wrote for internal circulation among our staff group an interim report after the first

year's work, distributing it in December 1969. This consisted of a narrative of the deliberations she had attended ordered to throw light upon a number of concepts about group behaviour. By this time interpretative comments were increasingly being made by staff members themselves. A minor revolution in attitudes was quietly taking place. This was sufficiently marked for a colleague who had been away on secondment for two terms to complain at the first staff meeting after her return that everyone was speaking a different language which she did not understand.

In the summer of 1970, Miss Richardson began work on a new report incorporating the later as well as the earlier experiences, while still continuing her consultative work with the school. This report was revised and elaborated in close consultation with the whole staff group throughout the 1970-71 session. By July 1971 there was widespread agreement that it revealed some valuable truths. It was also agreed that, although staff discussions are normally private, the importance of the draft book was potentially so great to others, that we would have no objection to Miss Richardson's seeking a publisher. The LEA and the school governors were also consulted and they, too, noted the views of the school staff and approved the proposal. By December 1971 the final draft was completed under the prospective title of 'The Teacher, the School and the Task of Management'.

It would obviously be impossible as well as undesirable for me to attempt to anticipate in an article of 2,000 words the contents of a book of 500 pages. I may however try to point very briefly to two central discoveries which this experience has enabled us to make.

The first thing I have learned is not to seek unanimity of opinion in staff discussions and not to be disheartened when it does not occur. One now recognises the phenomenon by which attitudes are polarized in argument and one begins to develop the skill to detect the tendency in its early stages. It is often possible to see that the group is splitting a question into 'good' and 'bad' viewpoints and injecting the 'bad' into a subgroup where it seems to them appropriate. When the tendency is observed, attention is drawn to it by an interpretative comment, often from a young or relatively junior staff member—by no means only from the head. In this way there is hope of keeping polarization under control. At least it becomes possible to reduce the tendency for a discussion to be overwhelmed by extreme opinions passionately opposed to one another.

Conflict will always remain and we are quite content that it should be so. Few educational questions are so simple and straightforward that only one view is possible. But the conflict which is the natural product of the complexity of a problem does not inhibit decision-making in the same way as rival camps with opposing ideologies. When, in an institution, rival camps have developed as a response to the emotional need to seek support and to defeat opponents, the situation presents a particularly intractable management problem and one which imposes considerable restraints upon decision-making.

The second lesson which we think we have learned is to look below the surface of the apparently rational argument—in ourselves as well as in others. Attitudes to problems under discussion are not, as we often fondly imagine, formed solely by rational consideration of what best contributes to the objectives of the institution, that is, in a school, the needs of the pupils. There is a strong admixture of feeling which arises from the role identity of the teacher who presents the viewpoint. We all have vested interests. We all protect ourselves by means of our expertise in some given field. Deprive us forcibly of that protection and we feel very vulnerable.

Feelings and arguments

If, at this point, some reader is growing indignant at what he interprets as an attack upon teachers, I have quite failed to make my point clear. It is not that feelings—for instance about status and spheres of influence—are shameful and must be rooted out. On the contrary it is that they are natural and must be acknowledged. The shame with which we, from time to time, recognise such feelings in ourselves and the blame which we impute to others for similar preoccupations lead directly to a denial of their existence. We may well deny them but the feelings remain. And so it becomes necessary to justify these feelings by logical arguments, by rationalisations, some of which may be partly valid and some wholly fallacious. But they are held with all the tenacity and vehemence derived from deep personal involvement. When, in an institution, people can be freed from the fear of acknowledging that they have feelings, they begin to come to terms with them and use them constructively. Others begin to recognise their reality and even their validity. It becomes increasingly possible to plan innovation in a way which

The Humanities Programme in Thomas Bennett School

Peter Mitchell

Peter Mitchell was head of humanities at Thomas Bennett School, Crawley, until 1971. After a year as a research fellow at Sussex University he took up his appointment as Headmaster of Quintin Kynaston School, London, in September this year. He describes here the origins and development of the humanities project at Thomas Bennett.

The raising of the school leaving age has prompted much educational innovation for children of low achievement. Schools have been able to pursue educational change without the pressure of external mode 1 examination and their emphasis on pupils acquiring bodies of factual knowledge. The benefit of this opportunity to experiment can be seen in such projects as team teaching and integrated studies where staff have begun to work outside their discipline with staff from other departments. These 'ROSLA' or 'Newsom' courses have been particularly popular in that area of the curriculum broadly described as 'Humanities'. The Newsom Report and Enquiry 1 confirmed, what many teachers knew to be the case, that history, religious education etc. were held in low esteem by pupils with low achievement. They were bored by subject matter and learning experiences which hardly seemed relevant to their perception of their particular needs. When it is appreciated that these pupils see vocational ends as the principal purpose of education the prestige of the humanities area of the curriculum is hardly surprising. In many ways these under achieving pupils are displaying a realistic approach to what they consider to be of

value in their education and their reluctance to automatically accept the teacher's assessment of the correct curriculum balance shows an appreciation of what society will demand from them in the future. The notion of the 'ideal' pupil, who achieves examination success, includes as one of its qualities the acceptance of the teacher's learning as enabling the teacher to prescribe courses which go unquestioned as to their content and the learning experiences they involve.

While ROSLA has been the subject of considerable publicity in the past year the subject has been with us for a number of years and many schools are now in the advanced stages of planning their curriculum changes to meet the new demands. Where a school is streamed or broadly banded ROSLA is almost automatically perceived as a problem associated with the under achieving child. In the summer term 1966 the headmaster of Thomas Bennett school created a faculty structure which was designed to group together related departments in a way which improved communication in the school and at the same time encouraged innovation between related departments. The publication of the Schools Council working Paper II,

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takes account of these feelings, which acknowledges the threat present for someone in every change, and which ensures that in every policy decision there is also promise and increased opportunity implicit for those whose roles are threatened.

I will not claim that, at Nailsea, innovation is easy and rapid—only that it can be the outcome of consultative procedures and does not have to depend on purely autocratic decisions.

'Humanities and the Young School Leaver', coincided with the establishment of the humanities faculty (history, geography, social science, religious education, classics and home economics), and the first task of the faculty was to create an integrated humanities course which was to be taught to the lower of two broad bands in the school. The regional CSE board has an integrated studies panel and we were able to create a mode III examination based upon course work, project work and an oral examination.

Our early enthusiasm for innovation was in part sustained by the feeling that we couldn't possibly produce a course that was less motivating than the more traditional, single subject mode 1 CSE examinations in the humanities. Our discussions centred around such questions as—how can we make the work relevant for these particular pupils? What information do these pupils need about their community? How can we break down the barriers between their experiences at school and their future work in the community? In common with many such 'ROSLA' courses we chose to develop the course around a framework provided by studies of the individual, the family, the neighbourhood community, the town, the nation etc. This concentric approach was designed to explore how individuals develop as personalities and then to proceed to consider various types of community at increasing levels of complexity and distance from the pupil's own experience. The course had the advantage of beginning with the familiar but was unsure of the balance of emphasis between information about 'practical' living and analytical studies about society. Marten Shipman¹ and John White² have both discussed the limitations of these types of courses, and, during the first year of running the course we became convinced of the need to consider the curriculum provision for all abilities of children made by the faculty.

Two positive gains came out of the 'ROSLA' or 'Newsom' course. We had established a pattern of working together as historians, geographers and social scientists (anthropology, sociology, psychology and economics all being represented in the department) and we had introduced social science into the curriculum. Our reasons for promoting a greater emphasis on social science centred on the belief that they provided concepts which would help children understand more fully the complexities of their own and other societies, and that the inductive mode of inquiry, associated with studies in social science, would provide a framework of guidelines for developing pupil inquiries.

One year was spent planning the change from a humanities integrated curriculum provision for under-achieving children to a common programme for all children, to be set alongside mathematics and English, as the compulsory part of the curriculum. We were now beginning to consider the curriculum of successful pupils who would normally take O-level history and/or geography, and the level and quality of debate was of a different order than that we had engaged in when discussing a 'Newsom' course. An important concern was the assumption, by some historians, that social science, with its emphasis on the development of theories and generalisations, is in some sense incompatible with the work of the particularist historian whose concern is the study of unique events. This was a subject centred debate which is fairly typical of the type engaged in when discussing the curriculum of successful pupils. In initiating innovation it is necessary to explore fully these types of issues when it is appreciated that staff identity and status is closely related to what they consider to be the importance of their subject to the child's education. This should not, however, detract from what was our central concern with helping pupils to gain confidence in their own ability to form judgments through analysis and reasoning. The complexity of modern society, and the demands it makes on the individual's powers of judgment, suggest that an emphasis on factual information is an anachronism and that the emphasis should switch to learning experiences which develop skills of inquiry and encourage individual and group participation in making judgments.

Planning the design and development of the course went beyond the consideration of content and syllabus production. Discussions helped to clarify that in general the disciplines represented in the programme should be used to study problems that are of concern to young people and adults alike. We were conscious of the difficulties of dealing with these problems in the classroom—particularly of the tendency for discussions to lead to pupils taking up a public stance based upon their knowledge of the problem gained from the mass media, peer groups etc. Humanities teachers must face the fact that many pupils will assume that they know all there is to know about problems such as race, war etc. under consideration. Evidence presented by the teacher can be of little value in the face of such firmly held convictions. The planning of the course has therefore been concerned with identifying the concepts and methods of working that would bring children to an

understanding of what is meant by making an informed judgment. Implicit in this notion of the child making judgments is a reduction of the dominance of the child's learning by the teacher.

Clarifying ideas on what one hopes to achieve in initiating a major curriculum innovation can give an oversimplified picture of the curriculum process. When the team began to plan learning experiences and to select subject matter the constraints of working on a two year programme for the pupils' 4th and 5th years became evident. In the first 3 years the pupils followed conventional subject teaching and had little experience of how to respond to the opportunity to plan inquiries which involved handling a wide variety of evidence. Not only were the skills of inquiry often new to the children but the concepts of social science such as role, socialisation, peer group were also new. It was with these two points in mind that the planning of materials and learning experiences, for the first year of teaching the humanities programme in 1969-70, involved a high degree of pupil guidance, through work cards. Kits of materials were produced on twenty themes with the idea that pupils, where possible, would be handling raw data rather than the processed data of the text book. Kits were also favoured because they could be more easily subject to updating and improvement. An attempt was made to balance the control of pupil inquiries with opportunities for free inquiry which aimed to give pupils the opportunity to extend the range of their inquiries by including aspects of work in which they, as individuals, were particularly interested. Free inquiry also served as a means of evaluating the extent to which pupils were displaying a personal mastery over an inquiry process.

The pupils work in mixed ability groups for the first three years and, in the fourth and fifth year of the humanities programme, they are taught in one of three broad ability bands, into which the 14 forms are divided.

Examining work in the programme has been on the basis of mode III O-level and CSE examinations. Two grades were awarded in Geographical and Economic Studies and Historical and Social Studies. These titles describe the grouping of content for the purpose of assessment. The mode III nature of the assessment allowed us to include course work as contributing 50 per cent of the marks towards the final grade, the other 50 per cent being based on an examination paper. Eight periods per week are devoted to the course and pupils may be entered for a minimum of one CSE and

a maximum of two O-levels, on completion of the course. This represents an attempt to devise a common examination at 16-plus within the framework of the existing examination system. Unlike the common examination at 16-plus, under consideration by the Schools Council, it caters for all but a very small minority of pupils at the end of their 5th year.

The first two years of teaching the course took place under difficult conditions with four of the eight periods being spent in huts away from the humanities area. This difficulty exacerbated the problems which related to the teaching of new subject matter by inquiry methods. If this article is to be of value to other secondary teachers it should be frank about problems that can be attributed to innovation. The planning discussions, already outlined, eliminated many initial difficulties but on reflection it is clear that we should have given more thought to (a) pupil expectations in the learning situation and (b) the changing pattern of pupil-teacher interaction brought about by emphasis on individual and group work. We predicted that pupils would find the move from a basically didactic learning situation to classroom inquiries a difficult one; our response to this, by providing support for pupils through work cards, was miscalculated and allowed insufficient balance from other learning experiences, particularly, for example, opportunity for discussion. As has been pointed out, in *The Language, the Learner and the School* by Douglas Barnes *et al*, the work card can isolate a child from communicating with his peers and his teachers and inhibit the growth of language as an important precursor to the child understanding the subject he or she is studying. By seeing the pupil's inquiry skills developing over a 5 year period it is possible to envisage pupils displaying an increasing mastery over them, throughout that period, with decreasing control by the ubiquitous work card.

The changing pattern of pupil-teacher interaction that is implicit in a move towards greater emphasis on pupil inquiries was the second subject on which we miscalculated. The kit of materials produced by the 'expert' can become a barrier between teacher and pupil—quite the opposite of what was intended by having pupils working as individuals and in groups. This is, in part, explained by the fact that much of the subject matter was new to staff and outside their area of subject 'expertise'. It is also, however, true to say that the kit can be an effective form of classroom control. More awareness of the need for discussion and in-service training on this subject would have reduced

Home Grown Humanities Curriculum Project . . . An Exercise in Self Help

Joan Leighton

Joan Leighton is now a District Inspector at Manchester. Formerly deputy head of the Levenshulme High School for Girls, Manchester, she has contributed to earlier articles on important innovations at this school.

What should be the aims of humanities courses in the post ROSLA era? Laurence Stenhouse, in his introduction to the Nuffield Humanities Curriculum Project, designed for fourteen year old pupils of average and below average ability, gives some clear objectives: 'the problem is to give every man some access to a complex cultural inheritance, some hold on his personal life and his relationships with the various communities to which he belongs, some extension of his understanding of and sensitivity towards other human beings. The aim is to forward understanding, discrimination and judgment in the human field.' The optimism implicit in this statement is a declaration of faith in the power of the majority of pupils to understand their world, to identify with others, and to develop moral and aesthetic standards; the Humanities Curriculum Project, in both content and method embodies these principles and helps teachers towards promoting a technique which can raise the academic standards, develop the confi-

dence, and increase the involvement of the reluctant learner.

Most readers will be familiar with the HCP packs published by Heinemann, on War and Society, Relations between the Sexes, the Family, Poverty, Living in Cities and People and Work. Each pack contains the standard number of 200 items, biased in all directions, and including documentary reports, visual material, biography, poetry, songs, drama and extracts from novels. In addition there are tape recordings of some of the printed sheets and a teachers' section containing explanatory handbooks, bibliographies and lists of films. The central teaching method is by discussion, the teacher taking the controversial role of neutral chairman. It is important to point out here that a common misconception might be dispelled if teachers realised that the idea of the neutral chairman and the insistence on open-endedness apply only to the conduct of the actual discussions, and that there is a much

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its impact on the first two years of the course. With special reference to social science, it is also true to say that in studying subjects, such as education, the family and child development, we gave insufficient time and emphasis to the pupils' commonsense interpretations of the subjects.

The setting up of this programme was fortunate in the amount of outside help it received from financial support, research findings and examination moderators. Its eventual development, into an essential part of every child's curriculum, has rested, however, on the work of a group of staff who were able to translate

their ideas into an ongoing programme of work and, through their willingness to evaluate and revise their materials, to ensure that the programme would continue to develop. All teaching is now housed in a humanities area centred on a resource centre. How to knit the resource centre into an extension of the child's classroom inquiries is a current subject for debate.

¹ Marten Shipman: 'Curriculum for Inequality', in *The Curriculum*, ed R Hooper.

² John White: 'Instruction in Obedience'. *New Society*, 2.5.68.

wider framework of other activities—creative work, visits, outside lectures, drama, and film appreciation, which should both promote discussion and follow it up. If the teacher, misinterpreting the advice of the handbook, abdicates his fundamental role as guide to other activities, discussion will become superficial and sterile, and the chance to learn in depth and complexity will be lost.

This article is by no means intended to advertise the Humanities Curriculum Project as the scheme par excellence for this kind of work. It is rather to show how a Schools' Council Project may be used as a catalyst for innovation in other areas, so that the whole curriculum becomes more rational, coherent and logical.

After using the Project for two years in one particular school we realised that there were two main deficiencies in our implementation of it, and that the Project itself could be used to much greater advantage if these were remedied. First, although the collections of materials are well selected and provoked enthusiastic discussion and involvement, the pupils needed much more factual information, and second that more effective discussion and independent, well motivated work would be achieved if similar techniques were used lower down the school. This led us to establish the principle that a full range of CSE Mode III subjects should largely replace the 'non examination' courses, and that in order to avoid labelling junior pupils as exclusively CSE Mode III material we should create a two year integrated humanities foundation course for the first and second year, embodying some of the HCP techniques, from which pupils could proceed to take either 'O' level or 'CSE' courses or a combination of the two. This integration presupposes block timetabling, team teaching, multi-purpose work areas and more effective and consolidated use of audio-visual aids. It aims at study of topics in depth, and learning by individual assignment to suit all rates of progress.

The following scheme is still in the planning stage and its feasibility has yet to be proved but for what it is worth, readers might like to consider it. It is perhaps worth repeating that it is intended for first and second year pupils in an urban comprehensive school of predominantly working class children with a considerable number of immigrant pupils. The level of attainment covers the whole range and pupils are taught in mixed ability groups with occasional remedial withdrawal. The scheme is entitled 'The Manchester Child', its basis is local history from pre-Roman times to the present

day, and geography, English, RE, music, drama, dance and art are geared to this. The scheme is divided into two elements, element A consisting of co-ordinated subject lessons and element B of two or three afternoons of project activity including discussion, project and creative writing, art, music and dance drama, outside visits and speakers and community work. Some of these afternoons will take the form of joint sessions for lead lessons, exhibitions and demonstrations, and an end product is envisaged, probably taking the form of a theatre workshop style musical drama surrounded by an exhibition. Twelve periods a week will be given to subject skills lessons and six or nine periods to project activity. Tutors will be responsible for specialist teaching, project supervision, preparation of resource material and assignment cards and the continuous reviewing of pupils' progress.

It might be useful at this point to justify the choice of subject matter. Manchester is a cosmopolitan city, most famous for its crucial role in the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Our aim is to show that it is more than a Victorian city, and that it has been at the centre of national and international affairs since pre-Roman times. There will be a particular emphasis on invasion and immigration—Roman, Anglo Saxon, Danish, Irish, Eastern European and Afro-Asian; as well as the more detailed historical processes showing Manchester's part in the drawing up of Magna Carta, its contribution to Renaissance Education, its reflection of the religious strife of the sixteenth century, its affiliations in the Civil War, its links with Methodism, Manchester as the 'cottonopolis', as a haven for refugees, its housing of the first Trade Union and Pan African Congresses. Some attempt will be made to identify current problems of urban living as typified by Manchester.

The geography will begin as a local survey and will widen out into a concentric syllabus relating to national and world geography, following the themes of invasion, immigration and their motivation by studying overseas homelands. It will show the material basis for historical development and will involve the study of map reading, cartography, climatology, geology, land use, population, anthropology and economic geography.

Religious education will have three components, historical, comparative and moral: It will trace religious developments from pre-Roman and Romano British cults through the Anglo Saxon conversion, the Reformation and Counter Reformation. Anglicanism, Puritanism, Non-conformity, Judaism, Islam and

Teachers' Centres: Their Role and Function

J. Walton

There are now several hundred Teachers' Centres in the country, and it is clear that they represent a permanent addition to the educational scene. In this article, Jack Walton, Senior Staff Tutor at the University of Exeter Institute of Education, examines their development and makes some suggestions for the future.

Whilst Teachers' Centres had existed prior to 1967 there seems to be little doubt that Working Paper No 10—'Curriculum Development: Teachers' Groups and Centres'—was the publication which caused most local education authorities to create these quite novel institutions. The rapidity of their appearance, in retrospect, is quite spectacular. According to the *Times Educational Supplement* local education authorities were positively responding to the suggestion in the Working Paper in the very week it appeared. A reading of this document and subsequent publications seem to indi-

cate beyond doubt that the Teachers' Centre movement can be regarded as an attempt to involve the teachers of England and Wales at 'grass roots' level in curriculum development.

Working Paper No 10 was clear enough about the tasks of the Centres whose growth and development it was encouraging. It stated quite definitely that 'the functions of local groups and centres will be threefold: the most important is undoubtedly . . . to give teachers a setting within which new objectives can be discussed and defined, and new ideas, on content and methods in

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Humanism in Manchester. All major contemporary religious beliefs represented in Manchester will be studied. Moral studies will follow the theme of the problems of a technological and multi-racial society. The statutory Christian period of religious education will of course continue. The aims of this section are to show the historical evolution of belief and to learn about other religions as a means of combating ignorance and prejudice and to promote tolerance and fellow feeling.

The English course will follow the main theme 'Children in History' through the study of all literary forms, using extracts from classic period works and modern historical novelists writing for children, for example Rosemary Sutcliffe, Geoffrey Trease, Henry Treece, Alan Garner, and folk tales, myths and legends bringing in Celtic, Roman, Anglo Saxon, Modern Irish, Welsh, Scottish and Afro Asian works as well as any local works, for example extracts from *Mary Barton*. Much attention will be given to creative

writing. The basic aim of the course is to personalise the historical movements being studied, to promote the child's powers of identification and expression and to discover how far literature mirrors, distorts and enriches real life.

Dance, Music, Drama, Art and Craft will combine together to follow the main themes using both improvisation and formal expression through emotion and situation. It is hoped to cover ancient and modern folk themes, classical and courtly forms, military, religious, pastoral, romantic, Afro Asian and Western popular modes.

Let me emphasise again that this syllabus is still in the planning stage and will be regarded as an experimental course subject to constant review. With it, however, we hope to provide all the children with a common but diverse cultural experience, to improve their motivation and understanding and to see the relevance of education in studying the problems of modern society.

The views expressed in this article are those of the writer and not necessarily of the Manchester Education Authority.

a variety of subjects, can be aired . . . A second function of some centres will be complementary to the first: the schools in the area of a local group may be among those which have been formally invited to give new materials their trial before publication . . . Thirdly where teachers locally are not directly involved in the trial of work which is being nationally developed by an institution in their area they should nevertheless be kept informed about research and development in progress elsewhere.' It seems to be clear that Teachers' Centres were to regard their responsibilities to be particularly in the field of curriculum development. They were, however, not expected to 'go it alone'. 'No local centre can expect to be self-sufficient over the whole field of curriculum development. It will need to draw support from many different sources, but particularly from the local education authorities and from the universities.'¹

Any attempt to consider such a widespread development as that associated with Teachers' Centres will tend to be partial and may very easily omit areas of excellence which for some reason have escaped the observer's eye. This brief paper draws attention in particular to the functions of Teachers' Centres as outlined in Working Paper No 10 and gives perhaps insufficient space to a consideration of other work of significance which has developed since 1967. These reservations must be remembered where critical comments have been made.

In the field of curriculum development I feel some concern that, with obvious qualifications, many Teachers' Centres have not yet assumed that dynamic role which I had at one time hoped would have been the case. The qualifications must include the minority of centres which are so obviously making an important contribution in this field. Noteworthy are those associated with the North West Regional Curriculum Development Project. It is interesting to remark that in their case there was an all-important link between the Centres concerned and Manchester University School of Education. Those many other Centres which may have tried so hard, but to date have been less than successful, seem to have suffered from what, with hindsight, appear to have been a number of built-in defects. Perhaps the most serious is that they have really been trying to exist on a shoestring—financially they have been badly supported.

Certainly, in 1967 and immediately after, financial resources were not easily available. Many centres in the late sixties were administered by spare time

wardens; that is, wardens who already had a full-time school teaching job. Many centres had no building which they could call their own. Very few supportive resources were available. In spite of these disadvantages many teachers, either as wardens or centre members, have valiantly attempted to make the Teachers' Centre idea work. Because of these financial restraints and shortage of time, much of the work undertaken has necessarily been of rather a superficial nature. From the beginning more fortunate centres with full-time wardens and permanent premises have, of course, existed. Obviously they have been able to achieve greater success.

A further initial limitation has been placed on many centres, particularly in rural areas, because of the tendency for them to be associated with primary rather than secondary education. Often the centre warden has been a primary head or assistant teacher. One could perceive that, apart from more rational grounds of non-committal to the local centre—less opportunity for secondary teachers to meet colleagues from other schools at the centre than is the case for primary colleagues—the primary school warden may have had difficulty in gaining credibility in the eyes of his secondary colleagues.

The status of the warden—or lack of status—has been inferred as a restraint preventing involvement by secondary teachers in particular. Status can be achieved in a variety of ways—by payment, by position in the educational hierarchy or by a sound acquaintance with the relevant field of knowledge. In the case of Teachers' Centre wardens, this field of knowledge relates perhaps particularly to curriculum studies. It may well have helped if wardens had received special training, for example, by taking an Advanced Diploma in Education. However, if the post were spare-time involving only a small honorarium in remuneration, training could hardly be considered.

Perhaps the spirit of Working Paper No 10 was interpreted as one of non-interference as far as the new Teachers' Centres were concerned. Local authorities, after initiating their local centres, may not have been anxious to become too involved with a teacher-run organisation. Universities and colleges may have had similar but stronger sensitivities because anyway the centres, in the universities' eyes, were ultimately the responsibility of the local education authority. These and other reasons may have left the initiative for approaches to other institutions to the centres themselves; these may themselves have been reluctant

to invite in outsiders for sustained activities because of the expense that may have been involved.

All these factors have often caused Centres to be less actively involved in curriculum development as originally planned and more concerned with the provision of rather low-level courses of a very much 'bread and butter' calibre. There are now signs that changes are taking place. The following figures are taken from a recent list of Teachers' Centres in England and Wales published by the Schools Council in May 1972².

	<i>Full-time</i>	<i>Part-time</i>
County Areas	160	93
County Boroughs	88	16
London area	60	4
Wales	30	4

These figures are not quite accurate as local education authority advisers have sometimes been listed as wardens. In their case the post of warden is just one of their responsibilities. Generally, however, there appears to be a considerable increase on previous years in the proportion of full-time wardens. Today approximately three-quarters of the total number of wardens are full-time. The proportion in rural areas, however, is far less than in urban areas. This overt recognition that the responsibilities of a warden require full-time professional attention is an important step forward. It is also interesting to note that these responsibilities are being recognised financially in the allowance associated with the post. As a result interesting people are being attracted to apply when posts are advertised. There is a case for making the remuneration as high as possible within teachers' pay scales in order to attract the right people. As there is no real career in being a centre warden, interested teachers will only regard it as a stepping stone to something else. A good rate of payment would ensure lively, committed wardens willing to devote their enthusiasm and knowledge to their centres for periods of up to five years. Any longer may not be good for the centre anyway. A postscript thought is that, assuming higher payment, local education authorities can insist on appropriate qualifications.

More and more centres are acquiring permanent and quite reasonable accommodation. This development is obviously linked with the move to appoint full-time

wardens. Today a revised concept of a teachers' centre is clearly developing—a concept which is perhaps the result of a more wholehearted commitment to the idea of teacher participation—but participation in what? Perhaps after five years the curriculum involvement needs underlining.

A number of factors reinforce my own optimism about the future of teachers' centres. Looking forward into the seventies it seems clear that the problems of curriculum renewal will not abate. In addition, as a result of local government reorganisation, local education authorities will be fewer and larger. Teachers may well feel the need for more local identification than previously. The reasons for establishing Teachers' Centres are just as important now, if not more so, than in 1967. There are other additional considerations. The growing interest in and need for resources may suggest that the most economic resources centre is that based on a Teachers' Centre, not on a school. The eventual result of the deliberations of the James Committee's report may indicate a further extended use for Teachers' Centres. Paragraph 5.43 states under the general heading of 'Action to be taken in the immediate future' that 'They (local education authorities) would study possible locations for professional centres and would take steps to build up some existing teachers' centres to the level of staffing and facilities they would need in order to become professional centres'.³

There appears to be a general move towards a greater professionalism in our attitude to Teachers' Centres. What is obvious now is that they cannot be created on the cheap. They need trained wardens attracted by good salaries. The wardens need the backing of secretarial and technical services. Their objectives need to be defined more clearly. If these and other conditions are fulfilled, Teachers' Centres will have a better chance of playing a vital local role in curriculum innovation—a characteristic which only seems to have been evident in a minority of cases to date.

¹ Working Paper No 10, *Curriculum Development: Teachers' Groups and Centres*. HMSO 1967, pp 6-9.

² List of Teachers' Centres in England and Wales. Schools Council, May 1972.

³ *Teacher Education and Training*. HMSO 1971, p 64.

Discussion



The Common Curriculum

If ROSLA is to follow the trend predicted by its enthusiasts, a sociological side-effect could well be an increase in the prestige value of old age pensioners, as black market prices are fetched in a white slave trade which carries off the unsuspecting elderly to be done good to by surplus adolescents. But as prices rise and reality is faced, a more appropriate expedient will need to be developed.

Curriculum is now the fashionable dilemma, though the features advocated by both the goodies and the baddies veer towards a similar conclusion. With very different sympathies no doubt, both the educational right and left are still able to justify different courses for two identifiable groups of pupils. However sympathetic teachers may be about the alienation felt by many youngsters from what the conventional school has to offer, the answer is not a curriculum divided into areas of academic and vocational knowledge, which enhances the prestige of one by examination status and papers over

the cracks of the other with trendy but meaningless labels. Divisive curricula produce divisive schools and all the evils of competition and hostility that go with them.

Roy Haywood's solution (A Common Core Curriculum - **Forum**, Summer '72), to quote a well-known understatement, is half way there, but in failing to break sufficiently with conventional organisation he perpetuates the inherent divisions he claims to have excluded from the start.

I certainly don't want to underestimate the difficulties of timetabling a 2,000-pupil comprehensive, but this is just the sort of size which provides maximum scope and flexibility for versatile option schemes. His Common Core Curriculum for the first three years is good (though I would question the need to set in English and Mathematics), but has merely delayed the 'too early channelling into educational backwaters' to a point at which division may be even more harmful.

If you are going to reject children, however well you tart up the procedure with attractive euphemisms, it could be argued that it is as well to do it early so that you can then condition them into apathy and the acceptance of their inferior lot. The unfairness of a taste of equality and respect for three years, snatched away at the point of maturity, is not going to escape many youngsters, and however sweet the palliatives they will want to know why what they are missing mysteriously brings in the bounty.

Roy Haywood's first mistake, therefore, is the division at 14 into two fixed groups, 60% geared to GCE/CSE and 40% CSE/Non-Examination pupils.

His second mistake is the myth of the Common Core Curriculum. Its only possible justification is that, in the name of equality of opportunity, all pupils will do the same subjects

but at the expense of individual choice and inclination. This is not the case, though, in Haywood's school. The lower group does a much greater amount of common work (21 periods out of 33) than the top group (13 out of 33), but at no point do they overlap. This quite obviously leaves the top group much greater freedom of choice and undermines the justification for thus restricting the less able. Equally, the two groups are clearly not organisational necessities, as he suggests. Only when I see favoured pupils studying Animal Behaviour and Auto Maintenance alongside O Level Latin will I cease to suspect the underlying intentions of curriculum arrangements like this.

There is an alternative, however, which Haywood does not consider. After a common curriculum in the 3rd year, all pupils at the David Lister take English, Maths and Games in the 4th and 5th years. The rest of their timetable is chosen individually from a possible two dozen options, all of which fulfil exam requirements. Only when they have made their choice in consultation with parents and staff is the timetable arranged. A certain amount of self-selection goes on, notably in science and languages, but in the vast majority of cases a fairly mixed-ability population is thrown up. My own subject, sociology, for example, mirrors the whole ability range. Those pupils who are unexaminable under the present system can nonetheless take part in the foundation course and concentrate their activities more totally on community action or individual projects later in the 5th year. All are exposed to the same prestige material, the same teacher and the same learning environment, with the maximum opportunity for each in the end to achieve success in his own particular way.

It is on this principle of mixed-ability groups carefully preserved in the structure of the timetable that the 4th/5th year

curriculum should be based. The scheme I've outlined is flexible enough to provide choice so that pupils can pick subjects or areas of study in various combinations rather than package deal courses, but within an overall framework based on a concept of unity. Only in this way can the potential hostility and resentment feared from a reluctant 5th year be reduced to a minimum.

JANE L THOMPSON

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Teachers' Centres

Since you departed from your usual custom of summarising the qualifications of contributors, I do not know with what authority Mr Hubbard and Mr Salt can make any 'Suggestions for a Strategy' for Teachers' Centres (Spring, 1972). Certainly I do not recall their being at any of the many meetings of Teachers' Centre wardens that I have attended.

Had this article been written a few years ago, it might have held some relevance. As it is, surely most of the suggestions made by its authors are normal practice in established Teachers' Centres?

There does not seem to be any such thing as 'a typical Teachers' Centre', so perhaps I may be excused for taking my own Centre in Luton as an example.

Although the LEA is comparatively small, and the Centre only serves

schools within a five-mile radius, we nevertheless can, and do, draw upon outside resources such as the county, the ATO and neighbouring authorities. There is close and constant contact between myself and several other wardens in South-East England.

There is a great deal of positive involvement by teachers, who not only lead most of our activities but control the Teachers' Centre Advisory Committee. True, we do not 'store' teachers' ideas in the way suggested in your article, but when we did take a small step in this direction, we found that ideas that seemed good at the time were not completely acceptable a year later, largely due to rising standards.

As your writers suggest, we do attempt to keep an up-to-date catalogue of local resources, which this year will probably be given to each new teacher in the Authority in addition to the usual school distribution. We also have frequent meetings of probationary teachers.

We have a thriving social club affiliated to the Teachers' Centre, catering chiefly for young teachers of which there is a large number in the area. This is organised quite separately from the Teachers' Centre, although both organisations derive considerable benefit from the other's activities.

Admittedly we have not yet had any parent/teacher meetings here, but we have held several non-teacher activities: industrial training officers, school welfare and clerical assistants, social services, local government officers and playgroup leaders.

Above all, I hope that this Centre does not 'represent an unconscious adherence to a more traditional view of the profession', as Messrs Hubbard and Salt suggest, but provides a neutral meeting-place where teachers of all shades of opinion between 'traditional' and 'progressive' may discuss their various points of view and come to a deeper understanding of professional issues - to the ultimate

benefit of the children they teach.

This Centre is not yet three years old. It has a long way to go before it can match the achievements of some other Centres, and I am certain that it has by no means reached the peak of its attainment, yet already seems to be in need of a more advanced strategy for the future than your article put forward.

J R G LARGE

Warden, Teachers' Centre, Luton.

(The views expressed here are the author's and not necessarily those of the local authority.)



A Panel Chairman looks at CSE

P. L. Uglow

As Chairman of the English Panel of the South West Examining Board from 1963-70, P. L. Uglow has seen the valuable effect that the CSE has had in breaking down barriers between teachers. He here describes the new procedures and opportunities that CSE has opened out to teachers and pupils.

'The CSE is concerned with measuring the achievements of the pupils, and the responsibility for doing this should be fairly in the hands of the teachers. The Boards provide the framework within which the teacher is enabled to exercise his responsibility in as professional a way as possible, thus bringing about a close integration of teaching and examining roles.' So runs a report of what one of our leading educationists said about the CSE. He was, of course, defining precisely what teachers understand by the phrase 'teacher control'; this is in effect, freedom for a teacher to frame syllabuses suitable for the needs of his pupils; freedom to give children knowledge, to train their skills, to exercise their intelligences, aptitudes and abilities so that they will be able to cope adequately and independently with a variety of situations and problems; freedom to set schemes of work, projects and question papers; finally, freedom to use his powers of judgment and knowledge of his pupils to assess the quality of their achievements within a given context.

The CSE regional boards provide the means by which these objectives can be reached; they also provide, by moderation procedures, the necessary safeguards for the maintaining of standards acceptable to the teaching profession and the public. One of the most effective methods of allowing teacher control consists of a simple tiered system working from local to regional level. A region is divided into a number of advisory groups each containing, say, twelve participating schools. These advisory groups form working parties in each subject, and all the participating schools in the area take part in their deliberations. A member of the working party is elected to sit upon the Board's

subject panel which is thus enabled to reflect all shades of opinion in the region. As the panel is responsible for the drafting of syllabuses, for the briefing of examiners and moderators and for collating criticisms and suggestions from the working parties, it is possible for any teacher participating in the examination to influence its content and procedure. Most schools accept this form of control and seem willing to enter their pupils for a Mode 1 examination set by an external examiner on a syllabus prepared by practising teachers.

However, the majority of Boards provide three modes. Mode 2 gives freedom to a teacher to submit his own syllabus. If it is accepted by the Board's moderator whose function it is to act as an arbitrator between teacher and Board, and to ensure comparability of quality and difficulty between different syllabuses, then the Board will accept the responsibility of setting question papers upon the syllabus. Mode 3 offers the greatest freedom in that it allows a teacher to submit not only a syllabus but a question paper as well. Both, of course, are subject to the scrutiny of the moderator whose task involves highly developed skills in his subject and also in examining techniques.

Not many teachers favour Mode 2, although it seems to offer freedom to the teacher and an answer to the critics of Mode 3; these latter, aware of the restrictive nature of teaching to a question paper, assume that fore-knowledge of the actual questions places a teacher in an awkward if not impossible situation. They ask two questions of a teacher preparing his candidates for Mode 3; does he deliberately underteach the topics suggested by the question paper, thus penalising

ing his own pupils? Does he overteach them, thus possibly giving his pupils an advantage over those who take Mode 1 or 2? They ignore the vast numbers between the extremes who indulge in a kind of voluntary amnesia and work conscientiously through their syllabuses hoping to produce students, independent in thought and capable of tackling any reasonable question paper. In some regions more and more teachers are turning to Mode 3 because they are becoming increasingly skilled in examining techniques and because they can see themselves as a professional body whose integrity and judgment can be relied upon.

Some regional boards offer an extra measure of teacher control, generally in three stages. When the examination scripts have been completed by the candidates they are not sent to external markers but are marked by the candidates' teacher according to an agreed schedule. He places his pupils in what he considers to be an order of merit and attempts a grading (1 to 5) on the quality of the work he has before him. This primary marking places the responsibility for assessment firmly on the person who has been most concerned with the candidates; he is faced with making a realistic appraisal of what he has been teaching, why he has been teaching it and how successful his efforts have been.

Moderation

The second stage consists of moderation; each local subject working party meets under the supervision of a Board officer whose function is to ensure adherence to a strict security procedure; border line scripts are passed around the moderation table with the result that teachers are now obliged to make an appraisal of other school's work, and at the same time to relate their own standards to what others deem acceptable. Throughout the meeting it is the quality of the work that is being discussed, and, at the end of a long day each meeting will have established what it considers to be the lowest quality of attainment acceptable for each grade. All three modes will have been dealt with and some teachers, perhaps the majority, will return to their schools with their primary assessment list amended.

As with the preparation of syllabuses, the moderation process works from local to regional level. After completion of the working party moderation all the scripts are assembled, subject by subject, advisory

group by advisory group, in a central office where they are at the disposal of the final moderation team consisting of the Board's examiners and moderators, and those members of panels responsible for supervising local moderation meetings. These men and women will have had a varied experience of CSE standards over the region, and their task is to ensure that no injustice has been done between school and school; that inconsistencies brought to light by statistics are examined; that teachers' reports (and each teacher may compile a dossier on any of his pupils) are considered carefully; that a final look is given to Modes 2 and 3 in relation to Mode 1; that the grades awarded are, in their opinion, a true reflection of the quality of work submitted for assessment.

Those Boards which have initiated such a system of internal marking and moderation have done more to serve the concept of CSE as a teacher controlled examination than those which have fallen easily into the old groove of the externally set and marked examination. The majority of teachers are delighted to be allowed to emerge from the closed shop of a single school, and, in spite of the tensions which sometimes arise, not many would deny the value of such an exercise in moderation to teacher and taught. Many who have been jogging along over the years have been jerked into a very real awareness of standards of attainment by Modern School children far from what they had considered possible. Preconceptions have been swept aside and, what is more important, teachers have been forced to think about the quality of work and level of attainment that should be associated with grade 4—that grade which 'a 16 year old pupil of average ability, who has applied himself to a course of study regarded by teachers of the subject as appropriate to his age, aptitude and ability, may reasonably expect to secure.'

Now, of course, the CSE is to disappear because a merger between it and the GCE is imminent; let us hope that the co-operative and individualised structure which so many Boards have striven to build will not disappear too; for, if an examination is to reflect what is being taught in schools and if schools are individual entities enjoying a responsible freedom to provide what they think is most suitable for the needs of their children and society in general, then the CSE Boards with their emphasis upon teacher control of syllabus content, question papers and examining techniques, have tackled an important educational situation successfully.

Comprehensive Education in West Germany and Austria

Dr Peter Seidl

Peter Seidl has spent a year at the School of Education, University of Leicester, on a Leverhulme Trust fellowship, studying problems of comprehensive education. He is an Austrian and a research worker at the Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft at Innsbruck.

Despite the differences in the social and historic background there is one common feature in all the countries of Western Europe: the need to change and improve their educational systems. Furthermore, all countries face the reality that explicit measures to facilitate the management of educational change are necessary, that innovation and improvement cannot be left to chance.

Western Germany, Austria, Italy and France are behind other European countries in terms of comprehensive reform. Only in the last few years have we seen a reform movement similar to what has been going on for the last 15 years in Sweden or in Britain. But despite all the efforts there still prevails the traditional picture of a highly selective school system based on the idea of grading down all the pupils who can't cope with the standards set by historically evolved curricula and inflexible teaching methods.

Reform in West Germany

'Two decades of Non-Reform in West German Education' is the title of an article in the *Comparative Education Review*, written in 1967 by the leading German educationist S B Robinsohn. Even if the situation has changed rapidly since 1967 we have to look for the reasons why there was so little change in the education system after the war. It would not be true to say that there was no reform movement at all during that period. There were a lot of minor experiments and some administrative measures in secondary schools. But there was almost a total lack of thinking on overall revision of the aims and the structure of the school system.

The main reason for the delay of the reform is certainly a political one. Up to 1969 West Germany was firmly in the hands of the Christian Democratic Party which is ideologically strongly opposed to the concept of equality in education and has considered

comprehensive schooling as a radical idea. But this does not explain why the states run by the Social Democrats didn't change their school system. The second reason lies in the lack of educational research. There was a strong philosophical-historical tradition among educationists in Germany universities. Members of that clique were opposed to the concept of empirical research and preferred speculation about Plato's and Pestalozzi's ideas on education to the reading of foreign research work and to investigation in schools. Because of the power and appointment policy of this group, research institutions had to be built outside the traditional universities. The third reason for the two decades of non-reform lies in the lack of central co-ordination and planning because of the cultural federalism of the different states. The principle of cultural federalism which was introduced by the Allies after the war and was eventually included in the Constitution (*Grundgesetz*) has never worked well. The period from 1949 to 1971 is a history of unsuccessful attempts to co-ordinate the reform ideas on a central basis. Only since the creation of the German Council of Education in 1965 has there been any progress in the reform policy.

The first step of giving the government power to decide education policy was taken in 1969 with the extension of government authority to the field of educational planning. The first important state document is the 1971 interim report of the educational planning committee composed of members representing central government and the federal states. The committee was set up on the initiative of Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1970.

Integrated Comprehensives

The proposals of the planning committee basically conform with the Council for Education's recommen-

dations, though some of its aims are more explicit, for example the commitment to try out and gradually introduce integrated comprehensives. The first version of the plan included the recommendations that all children attend a so-called 'integrated' comprehensive school by the early eighties and that all universities be transformed into comprehensive universities. But the representatives of the conservative-ruled states did not accept the complete abolition of the traditional tripartite division of the secondary school. They wanted to retain this division in what they call a 'differentiated' comprehensive school, in which various types of secondary school are comprehensive insofar as they share a common campus and facilities. After many compromises there was agreement on a general formula leaving the kind of comprehensive reform again to the politics of the federal states. Nevertheless the proposals are considered as a base for the common planning of educational reform in Germany.

Discussion about the reorganisation of the whole education system is accompanied by individual experiments concentrated in Berlin, North-Rhine-Westphalia and Hesse. The first state integrated comprehensive schools (which are characterised by a system of unstreaming in some subjects combined with setting for academic subjects and option courses) started in 1968 in Berlin. In 1969 the German Council of Education proposed to set up 40 experimental comprehensive schools with a highly elaborated organisational structure. Since then the number of comprehensives has grown faster than even the most optimistic reformers could have believed some years ago. In 1971/72 there were 81 'integrated' and 42 'differentiated' comprehensives. So far only Socialist-run Hesse, in its school statute of 1969, has committed itself by legislation to development along comprehensive lines. But North-Rhine-Westphalia is in the final stage of a bill for the introduction in 1977 of the comprehensive university: a combination of all existing forms of tertiary education. North-Rhine-Westphalia is also most advanced with its plans for the integration of academic and vocational courses in the upper secondary schools. Thirty-six integrated colleges are to be set up by 1975.

New developments in Austria

If the German situation can be characterised by Robinsohn's phrase 'two decades of non-reform', the Austrian situation could be headlined '25 years reform-discussion taboo'. There was an almost complete lack

of discussion about basic changes in the education system—as, for instance, the introduction of the comprehensive school—in the post-war period up to 1969. The reasons are similar to those in Germany except that there was no conflict between the government in Vienna and decentralised political bodies. In Austria school policy is heavily centralised. The lack of reform discussion is surprising if one remembers that Vienna was called the 'pedagogical Mecca' shortly after the First World War. Vienna was not only a centre of famous psychologists but also for school experiments, mainly introduced on the initiative of Otto Glöckel. Among many others the world-renowned Wittgenstein and Popper were involved in the reform of Austrian schools at that time. In 1928 3,000 children went to the so-called 'allgemeine Mittelschule' in Vienna, probably the first state comprehensive school in Western Europe. Unfortunately the reform movement, which had been destroyed by the political struggles during the thirties, was not continued after the Second World War. Most of the experts who left the country didn't come back to Austria.

After the Second World War the reform movement was not taken up again. There was some discussion about the principles of educational policy in the closed circles of political party leaders. This discussion came to an end when a compromise was reached and the Education Act of 1962 was introduced. The changes in the organisational structure of the school system created by the new act aimed mainly at facilitating transfers between the different types of secondary school and providing opportunities for pupils of the secondary modern school to get qualifications for university entry. Following this 'reform' it was generally held that the Austrian school system, which had been praised since the times of Maria Theresa, was still one of the best in the world. Even the socialist party put forward no reform proposals until 1969. Reviewing the educational literature of that period, one would have to look hard to find any mention of comprehensive schools.

The reform discussion began with a very trivial issue. Many parents were opposed to the prolonging of the grammar school course to 9 years instead of 8. In 1969 a referendum was held and 350,000 people signed against this measure which was due to be introduced according to the Education Act of that time. This was not only seen as expressing opposition to the issue at stake but as a general feeling of discontent with school policy in Austria. As it was an election year even the

ruling conservative party couldn't overlook this fact. The former Secretary of Education was replaced by a new Reform-Secretary who had himself signed the referendum. He introduced a school reform commission in the summer of 1969. As the reform-discussion taboo was broken all the political parties put forward school programmes with the socialist party demanding comprehensive schools.

Political change

The present movement towards comprehensive education is mainly caused by the change of political leadership in spring 1970. After the school reform commission came out in favour of experiments with comprehensive schools the government was quick to set up 10 experimental schools in September 1970. As there would be no majority for an overall change of the education system in parliament (for such a change a majority of two-thirds would be necessary) the socialist Secretary of Education urged the expansion of the experimental range provided by the Act of 1962. Finally there was agreement that up to 15 per cent of the schools could be included in the experimental scheme. The present plan is to try out comprehensive

schools for a period of 5 to 7 years, to collect empirical results on the achievements of those schools and to come to a decision about the total system afterwards.

There are several snags which could prevent the movement towards comprehensive education. First of all there is still the idea that more educational opportunity can be provided by a simple change in the organisational structure of the school. Basic curriculum changes are therefore unlikely not only because of the administrative attitude of reformers but also because of the necessity to compare the results of comprehensives with those of traditional schools. The second problem is that most comprehensives are or will be established alongside the existing grammar schools, so that comparability, which is the basic idea of the whole experimental period, is non-existent.

Despite the weakness of the reform movement and of discussion during the 25 years after the war, West Germany and Austria have now taken the first steps towards comprehensive schooling. Even if future school policy depends largely on the result of the next general elections it seems impossible to stop the reform movement and to have another decade of non-reform in either country. There is a common interest in school reform now, as well as established reform institutions and research programmes which will continue whatever the political leadership.

FORUM

The next (January 1973) number of FORUM will be a special issue on the education of the 16 to 19 age group. It will deal with the various new solutions now being tried out in different parts of the country.

This will be followed, in May 1973 (Vol. 15, No. 3), with another special issue on the Middle School. This also will include material on the various new types of middle school which have been coming into being in the last two or three years.

Appraisal of Comprehensive Education: the NFER's third report

Brian Simon

*A Critical Appraisal of Comprehensive Education*¹ is the third and final report of the NFER's Comprehensive school research project, originally set up in 1966 by Anthony Crosland. Owing apparently to lack of funds, it was not possible to carry through the entire original programme—a fuller assessment planned earlier had to be dropped. This report, therefore, is on a relatively modest scale; data being confined to only twelve schools. As the authors rightly point out, no claims can be made for the general validity of the findings as regards comprehensive schools as a whole. They are presented as a series of case studies—nonetheless interesting for that.

The title of the book seems a little misleading. What the research team has done is to attempt to assess how far these schools are achieving the objectives of comprehensive schools as defined in 1966 by a group of philosophers and educationists. These objectives themselves, incidentally, would be worth a critical appraisal. But even here the team run into difficulties. Some of the defined objectives were so general that they could not be translated into behavioural terms for research purposes. In effect the team picked areas for research and then attempted to show the relevance of their findings to the defined objectives. Insofar as this was carried out successfully, the term 'critical appraisal' may reasonably be applied, though in my view it is hardly accurate.

The twelve schools studied were specifically chosen to cover a variety of geographical areas and of sizes (from 240 to 1,800)—seven of them were of 900 pupils or less. Ten were orthodox 11 to 18 schools, reflecting the heavy preponderance of this type of comprehensive in the original NFER survey. Two were Leicestershire plan high and upper schools. All except one were involved in the second stage of the NFER project.

A number of points emerged from the study of interest to *Forum* readers and this review will concentrate on these. One of the enquiries focused on the allocation of resources within the schools. This certainly raises a fundamental issue concerning objectives: where should the major effort of the school be concen-

trated—on the most advanced pupils? the slow learners? or equally on all pupils? This analysis is correctly related to a point in the original Statement of Objectives that one object of the comprehensive school is to ensure 'continued equality of opportunity throughout the secondary stage of schooling'.

The study is concerned with allocation of 'teacher resources' (based on status of teachers and class size) and it concludes that, while the resources in comprehensive schools are 'by and large more "equally" distributed than between secondary modern and grammar schools', yet the more advanced pupils in terms of ability and aspirations, and hence streams and bands, tend to be allocated a higher proportion than others. It may be argued, then, as the authors put it 'that new meritocratic barriers are being erected in place of the old social ones'. Certainly this chapter should encourage schools to re-examine current policies and to make explicit the objectives which underly them. In raising this question in a disciplined and objective manner, the NFER team have done an important service to comprehensive education.

There is also an extremely important chapter on remedial departments and slow learning pupils. There are two main policies here: integration or segregation; which is the most effective system? Although there is much discussion on this as well as empirical experience, this is, I think, the first time anyone has attempted a comparative evaluation. Although the study concludes that, for these schools, neither of the two methods shows an advantage in terms of test scores, it indicates that where there is full integration in mixed ability groups, the slower pupils do not remain unnoticed and their handicaps ignored—their gains in test scores are similar to those of segregated pupils. When slow learning pupils are integrated, however, they wish to stay longer at school than the others, have more favourable perceptions of the school and are more fully involved in physical activities. While a caution is added as to the generality of these findings in view of the smallness of the sample, this evidence should certainly be taken into account in current discussions in school as to the strategy most likely to achieve success.

The study finds a general tendency in the schools

¹ NFER. 1972, 240 pp, £3.25.

studied 'to move towards teaching groups spanning a wider range of ability'—a finding which confirms the results of a survey conducted in December 1971 for the second edition of *Halfway There* (to be published in October). Two of the schools later joined by a third used complete mixed ability grouping in the first year. Where streaming or banding is used, it was found to be significantly related to social class, a 'greater proportion of middle than working-class children being found in the upper streams and bands' (page 44). Nevertheless the study did not bear out Julianne Ford's findings that streaming and banding in comprehensive schools tend to underline class differentials in educational opportunity; 3 of the 4 schools studied here 'gave no support to this hypothesis'.

There are interesting remarks about the effects of streaming and unstreaming throughout the study. The move to non-streaming in one of the schools (in a rural area), for instance, has shown 'almost complete disappearance of the delinquent sub-culture' (page 111), and the authors appear to indicate that the balance of advantage in terms of social development lies in this direction. As far as intellectual or academic achievement is concerned the evidence from this study is still inconclusive either way and the authors conclude by

directing our attention to the Banbury study, which provides a controlled situation for the study of parallel streamed and unstreamed groups aged 11 to 15. No indication is given when it will be completed and published.

Only a small proportion of the results of the study—which has been widely noticed in the press—has been referred to here; those particularly related to *Forum's* interest. What now? This is the last of the NFER project reports. Now there are no plans even for monitoring developments in comprehensive schools, let alone for making any kind of comparative evaluation of different types of school. The DES provides minimal statistical information in their annual reports—and only covering what might be called external features. It is the responsibility of no research body to undertake this work and the funds to carry it out are difficult to get. The government seems fundamentally disinterested, if not actively hostile to comprehensive education, and yet more and more schools are involved. This is a highly unsatisfactory situation, particularly at a time of rapid educational change, and it is to be hoped that one, at least, of the grant distributing bodies (which include the DES and the SSRC) will show that they are able to take a responsible attitude to this question.

Heads of Departments? (continued from page 30)

Humanities Courses and co-ordinated topic work are increasing. If the head of department takes part in such developments he will find that he not only has a management problem within the school organisation but also he may be undermining the basis of his professional position. This may account for the fact that subject integration has been more acceptable for the less able. However, with the raising of the school leaving age the pressure for a broadly common curriculum is increasing. If there is to be an effective implementation of such a curriculum then heads of departments must play a positive part. They must not simply celebrate the successes in their subject area but must be prepared to use their strength with others. Obviously we are suggesting that the head of department must be given some training in curriculum theory and in managerial skills. The traditional assumption that he emerges on appointment with full powers displayed

and ready is not likely to produce a situation that makes innovation feasible.

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The In-service Training of Teachers in Sweden

Harold Knowlson

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It is difficult to understand and make judgments about the training of teachers, particularly in-service training, until one knows something about the educational system which the teachers serve. A knowledge of the educational aims and methods of a country may not make much sense until one has some knowledge of its history, its geography, its social structure and present-day politics.

The comparative study of in-service training is not, therefore, an easy task; one ought to begin with the country itself, progress to the educational system that serves its present-day needs, have a look, on the way, at initial training which prepares the teachers that operate this system and so, at long last, come to study in-service work. Such a thorough study would take more time than most of us have at our disposal; the account that follows is an attempt to summarise Swedish in-service training arrangements following the most recent of a number of visits to the country.

The administration of education in Sweden is a three-tier affair, consisting of central government, the 23 'counties' and the hundreds of municipalities each with its director of education (who is often a serving headmaster).

There are two main agencies for in-service training with, it would seem, rather incomplete mechanisms for co-ordination. (Readers may find this a situation they have met elsewhere!) Attached to each County Board, with its team of senior administrators (called 'inspectors') are consultants in a number of fields—in the education of young children and in subject areas. These consultants live a double life; for part of each week they teach in local schools within the County whilst their remaining time is spent in advising colleagues and in arranging courses for them. The in-service work of a county is co-ordinated by an in-service training officer who occupies a post of considerable responsibility.

Swedish schools have five days each year that are described as 'study days'; the staff are on duty but no pupils are present. The days are devoted to a varying range of activities including individual study, participation in study circles, study sessions with the head of the

school and study visits to other schools. For subject-based work, local courses may be arranged which are attended by teachers from a number of neighbouring schools. The work going on during these days may differ considerably between urban and rural areas where distances between schools, particularly secondary schools, may be very considerable indeed.

Clearly these study days represent a component of in-service training—a period of compulsory study—not represented in our own varied pattern. The evening and weekend course, so popular in this country, is not such a prominent feature of the Swedish scene.

The County Board staff responsible for in-service training—the in-service training officer and the consultants—make a considerable contribution to the 'study days', though another contribution takes the form of study handbooks produced by the colleges of education, the other main agency for Swedish in-service education.

There are six senior colleges, in Stockholm, Linköping, Malmö, Gothenburg, Uppsala and Umea and a number of smaller ones. The smaller colleges seem to restrict their work to initial training but the 'big six' operate as a consortium under the supervision of a central government agency known as 'L3'. Each member of the consortium takes responsibility for areas of study; Gothenburg is, for example, responsible for mathematics and science, Malmö for work with those who teach in the first six years of the nine-year comprehensive system, Stockholm for art and craft, Uppsala for modern languages, Linköping for Swedish and music, and Umea for history, geography and religious education. Whilst the production of study handbooks for use during 'study days' and otherwise, is an important function of the group of colleges, perhaps their most significant role is the mounting of a consolidated programme of summer schools.

Members of the teaching profession are invited to make suggestions for the courses that will be provided in the following summer; these suggestions are considered by the in-service training officers of the six colleges who accordingly make their proposals to the

National Board for Education. Following appropriate consultations the summer programme, in the form of a handbook, is distributed to the schools.

The 1971 programme included more than two hundred residential courses in an immense variety of subjects, lasting one to two weeks and taking place in late June and in July. (In Sweden the summer vacation is earlier than ours.) Most courses were intended for 25 to 30 teachers but for the 224 courses there were no fewer than 39,389 applications, an average of 175. (Many teachers apply for more than one course.) The number of applications for particular courses varied from seven, for a course on the Italian language (to be held at an hotel in a delightful holiday resort by Lake Siljan), to 950 for a course on the diagnosis of learning difficulties.

Whilst selection of applicants for some courses is undertaken by the College concerned, most of the rather complicated forms the teachers fill up go to Stockholm where they are dealt with by a computer which selects, on the information given by teachers, the most suitable people for each course and which prints off a list of selected applicants. This process seems rather typical of the way in which any kind of selection procedure (and selection is avoided wherever possible) is undertaken in Sweden. Admission to colleges of education and the filling of posts is almost always done on a points system and without recourse to the interview.

The college arranging the course receives, from central government, the funds needed for tuition and for the subsistence of the teachers who attend, no fees being payable. In England and Wales, do we not waste much time and money by asking teachers to pay fees to the academic bodies holding courses and then to recover some or all of this money from an administrative body—LEA or other employer?

At the conclusion of each of these residential courses each member is asked to complete another rather complicated form on which he awards marks for the subject material, method of treatment, materials and apparatus used for each topic of the course. He is also asked to award marks for the advance information given to him, for the accommodation and for the food! Finally he must grade the course as a whole and is invited to add special comments, with notes about topics that could have been omitted or added.

Swedish teachers seem to comment freely and are sometimes highly critical, though the report forms are unsigned! When I visited a College in the late summer,

I found the in-service staff collating the reports for its own courses and writing reports. Here again the Swedish love of 'points' is evident and the marks given by teachers were duly added and averaged. Naturally the whole of this procedure is intended to help the College in-service tutor and his staff to offer improved courses in future years. Sometimes there is a follow-up enquiry after the teacher has returned to school and has been able to try out suggestions in the classroom. It would be interesting to compare impressions expressed on the last day of a residential course held in a comfortable hotel in a wonderful holiday resort, with all costs covered, with the later reports, perhaps written after a hard day's work in the rather dreary days of the early Swedish winter. Perhaps some Swedish computer does indeed undertake this task.

As in this country, the whole business of teacher education, including in-service training, is under review in Sweden. The proposal has been made that the six large Colleges with in-service departments should take more responsibility for in-service work—there are no Institutes or Schools of Education as we know them here. This proposal is causing some concern in the County Boards, some of which would, it seems, like to retain and perhaps extend their responsibilities in this field; here is a situation that could breed animosity and rivalry unless it can soon be resolved. Some of the County Boards no doubt feel that the Colleges are geographically remote; they criticise the way in which areas of study are geographically attached. Because Malmö, in the south of Sweden, has responsibility for what we would call primary work, only developments taking place in this field in southern Sweden will be disseminated throughout the country. I was unable to assess whether there was any justification for assertions of this kind.

It would certainly seem that if the six Colleges *are* to play a larger part in the national in-service provision, the allocation of subject responsibilities between them would have to disappear and each College would have to provide local courses for teachers in all types of school and in all specialist subject areas.

Educationists in this country have long been interested in Swedish education; the Swedes had early experience of the comprehensive school. Although we may not be happy to accept all their procedures for our own in-service education, we have many problems in common and we must admire the Swedes for tackling them in a characteristically energetic and systematic manner.

Heads of Departments?

Colin C Bayne-Jardine and Charles Hannam

Colin Bayne-Jardine is headmaster of Culverhay Comprehensive School; Charles Hannam is lecturer in Education at the University of Bristol and one of the authors of the recent Penguin **Young Teachers and Reluctant Learners**.

As the role of the headmaster today is being challenged and scrutinised¹, that of heads of departments also demands careful analysis in the context of the changing secondary school. Promotion and advancement are not easy to come by in the teaching profession. In secondary schools at least one way up the greasy pole is to become a head of department. This appointment was first developed in grammar and independent schools when the curriculum was clearly divided into subject areas. In the period immediately after 1944 heads and administrators who had thrived in the hierarchical environment of the armed forces wished to see their new armies divided into clearly defined cohorts, with themselves at the top of the pyramid and with the head of department corresponding to the company commander. If the main purpose of the secondary school system is to create the illusion of permanent stability and to perpetuate itself, then the pyramid type of organisation might work. However, the unthinking continuance of existing institutional patterns can only be acceptable in circumstances such as those of the period when Cistercian monks founded monasteries, each one carefully moulded on the parent house. During the present period of change such acceptance of existing patterns can only lead to sterility and ultimately to organisational breakdown. Basil Bernstein writes 'In crude terms, it could be said that the nineteenth century required submissive and inflexible man, whereas the late twentieth century requires conforming but flexible man.'²

In subject departments managerial skills have rarely been considered when the tasks of heads of departments are analysed. It may be valuable here to outline a number of 'pathologies' that could affect the working of a department and make curriculum development and innovation difficult.³ The 'ritualist' head of department frantically hides behind a mass of detail: tidy mark lists, text-book registers and lengthy departmental discussions over the choice of 'O' level board rather than the educational implications behind the choice of

'O' level or CSE mode III. Such discussions seem to be on the level of an argument as whether silk or nylon rope is better for hanging instead of concentrating on the desirability of abolishing the death penalty. The dangers of this sort of argument are clearly shown in an article discussing the approach by which means take precedence over ends, by I McMullen.⁴ The 'neurotic' worries ineffectively about the problems of carrying a theory into practice. If, for example, a department wishes to change over to project work and use a wide variety of sources, he spends too much time on dithering over publishers' catalogues. As a result he puts in a late book order and uneasily his department is forced to resort to much used, familiar notes. The 'clever young man' who has been promoted over the heads of a number of colleagues often resorts to the 'robber baron' pattern. He forces his department to adopt certain strategies which are intended to give the impression of effectiveness but the response is often a paralysis of will and no genuine change takes place. He can be driven into sullen isolation by the old hands or he flees elsewhere, seeking further promotion and leaving those behind even more convinced of the uselessness of innovation. These examples stress the extent to which failure to define the role of head of department within a secondary school organisation leads to stress and sterility. The real losers from this power-game will be the children. So often the most respected and effective teacher is the 'rebel' who opts out of the organisation and withdraws into his own classroom where traditionally he has great freedom from departmental control. Excellent as such an individual's teaching may be, an organisation which fails to harness these talents must be ineffective.

It is time that secondary schools escaped from the compulsions of the hierarchical organisation and encouraged more radical approaches. Under a faculty structure alternative groupings are feasible and existing experiments have proved them effective. The new salary structure has somewhat flattened the pyramid

but the whole concept of such a structured organisation must be questioned. The pyramid simply encourages non-communication and lack of involvement by those who are not specifically rewarded for 'responsibility'. There is the gruesome folklore of departments in which there has been polarisation to the extent of complete non-communication. Notes are passed about to avoid painful personal confrontation. Sometimes there is a denial of any deep problems and a jovial banter conceals deep hostility. The forces facing a new head of department at present are so daunting that he may avoid serious analysis of the situation and pretend that the comfort of his colleagues is all that matters. He may well know that the text-books are not right for certain groups of children and that the syllabus is dull and outmoded but he will let sleeping dogs lie in the name of departmental harmony. We are not denying that a leadership role is required but we would argue that the traditional organisation of secondary schools makes the task of a head of department difficult because it forces him to adopt a style of leadership that is no longer appropriate.⁵

A brief analysis of the tasks that might be performed by a head of department will show even more clearly the absurdity of the traditional situation. There are few books that deal with this problem but one of them is Michael Marland's.⁶ Not only ought a head of department to teach effectively but he must also speak for his subject within the school. He must deal with administrative chores: form lists, examination arrangements, mark schemes, book and stationery orders. He must keep in touch with academic and curriculum developments. He must discuss appropriate schemes of work with members of his department and look after their welfare. Newly-appointed staff and particularly those in their first year of teaching look for someone in their new school who will help them along and support them and if the head of department fails to do this they will be in serious trouble. The head of department must communicate with the school organisation on behalf of his colleagues and keep in touch with the pupils. It is not surprising that amidst these pressures the constant cry of heads of departments is a demand for more time. Furthermore it is understandable that most heads of departments are cautious when facing the demands made by plans for curriculum innovation. No single person should be expected to be effective in so many directions. A departmental organisation which mobilises the skill of its individual members would be better able to cope. The skills required to carry out the tasks

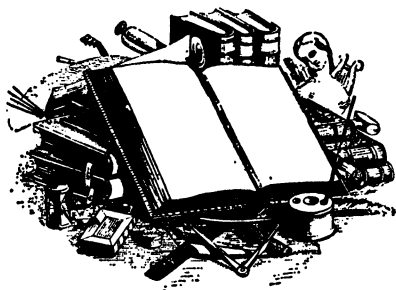
described are not exceptional. Given the opportunity most teachers could happily undertake specific tasks such as a scheme of work for a particular group. The head of department must be regarded by the secondary school organisation as a co-ordinator and enabler and this primary function should not be swamped by tasks that have been his lot traditionally but which do not really concern the fundamental work of the school.

The recognition of skills and potential within any group requires maturity and it is not easy to assume leadership without destroying the potential of the group. Traditional expressions of power within the school can no longer be taken for granted and in a period of change all powers need to be looked at and new forms of delegating responsibility must be tried. A change of image is not enough⁷, there must be a genuine shift in power. For example if the head of department delegates this must be genuine. It is not enough merely to dole out the examination marking or other routine tasks. Regular departmental meetings, preferably structured into the timetable, are essential. Regular meetings will enable the members of the group to come to terms with the fact that there will always be some conflict and that this need not be destructive. The group will begin to feel that they are involved together in an enterprise and that each member's contribution is valued in its own right. There is no doubt that it takes time and perseverance to develop a working relationship. Emotional outbursts or silent abdication of any responsibility are the ways in which the struggles for leadership so often resolve themselves in schools.⁸

In this country we must face the situation that the subject dominated curriculum is not only the norm but is defended by powerful academic interests. We have argued that the head of department at present is an unsatisfactory part of the school organisation. This is underlined when there is any attempt at curriculum innovation. It is interesting here that some comprehensive schools have appointed directors of studies. Their task is to break down the subject barriers and they are often seen as a threat by heads of departments (see Bernstein *op. cit.* p 221). In the nature of the appointment the head of department has a natural vested interest in his subject. If the place of his subject in the curriculum is threatened then he will feel that the basis of his power is questioned. Curriculum developments in some comprehensive schools are destroying subject barriers. Such developments as Integrated Science,

(continued on page 26)

Reviews



New Resources

Area Resource Centre, an experiment, by Emmeline Garnett, Edward Arnold (1972), 116 pp. £1.70.

Schools Council Integrated Studies, First Stage Units, Schools Council Publications/Oxford University Press (1972): Two Teacher's Handbooks:

Exploration Man, 115 pp, 75p;

Communicating With Others and Living Together, 179 pp, 75p; Two materials units, each including pupils' pamphlets, tapes and slides.

Emmeline Garnett, now Warden of Wreake Valley College, Leicestershire, has written a very readable and honest account of the Leicester and Leicestershire Resources Development Project of which she was formerly Director. **Area Resource Centre** describes the trials and minor triumphs of this offshoot of the Nuffield Resources for Learning Project, set up to discover the possibilities of co-ordinating school-based curriculum initiative on an area basis. In some ways Leicester/Leicestershire was a model area for such an experiment in that it contains – pending Maude reorganisation – two local authorities almost completely

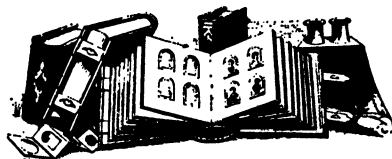
opposed in philosophy and faced with different problems, the one internationally famous for its version of a comprehensive reform, the other hanging on to selection as long as possible. Leicestershire has a wide variety of conditions ranging from mining villages to commuter suburbs. Leicester is a compact city with large plans for redevelopment, decaying central areas and sizeable communities of people from Pakistan, India and the Caribbean.

In these diverse circumstances it was probably optimistic to expect very close co-operation in curriculum development. Nevertheless, Miss Garnett and her team achieved some measure of success in uniting teachers from city and county. The main problem, as she reports it, was not antagonism but apathy, caused mainly through difficulties of communication. The book describes in detail the projects sponsored by the Centre and carried through by teachers, working often in out-of-school time. Their efforts set into harsh relief the non-involvement of the vast majority of teachers in an area including one of the most 'progressive' authorities in Britain. The message is fairly clear. If educational change is to come from the 'grass roots' it will need a network of localised resource centres in direct contact with schools but outside them, each feeding a larger area centre. The book is a valuable introduction to the problem and possibilities.

Emmeline Garnett's team was basically employed making curriculum materials in print, sound and photographic form. The inspiration derived ultimately from a national source – the Nuffield Resources for Learning Project. Another national project concerned with materials and new learning situations was the School Council's Integrated Studies Project under the direction of David Bolam at Keele. The Project's aim was to investigate the pedagogical and material requirements of integrating humanities subjects and the materials

produced include an invaluable *Introduction to Integrated Studies*, the first of two Handbooks. This analyses, with great candour, the difficult business of integration using new techniques of student-operated resources learning and various forms of teacher and student grouping. The First Stage materials now published on language, communication, simple societies (the Borneo Land Dyaks and Tristan da Cunha) and ancient China in multi-media form must be accounted one of the 'best buys' yet in humanities materials in Britain. The rationale is explicit and down to earth. Unlike Miss Garnett's team, the Keele Project was unable to count on the support of any notably 'progressive' authority, or of teachers familiar with new techniques, yet they demonstrated the viability of non-streamed groups, student self-direction, 'resource-based' work and subject integration in a wide variety of schools ranging from co-educational comprehensives to boys' secondary moderns. The material itself is of high quality and is so devised that the most dependent teachers will sooner or later venture to add 'locally-grown' resources to it. But most important of all are the handbooks which contain invaluable ideas and a great deal of common sense about the right and wrong ways of starting team-teaching, integration and much else. The Keele Project is to be congratulated on producing such generative material.

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A Follow-up Study

From Birth to Seven, by R Davie, N Butler and H Goldstein. Longman (1972), 198 pp. £2.

This second report of the National Child Development Study contains a much fuller analysis of information collected about the seven-year-olds born in early March 1958 than was possible in the preliminary report, **11,000 Seven Year Olds** (1966). The findings have been written up in **From Birth to Seven** for a wide public, including teachers and parents, in a paperback edition which avoids technical jargon and without the statistical appendix of the hardback. Chapter 3 summarises the earlier report whose main conclusions remain unchanged.

The study tried to disentangle social class from other features such as family size, position in family, sex, educational level of each parent, home accommodation and whether the mother works. It compares the influence of these and other factors on attainment in reading and arithmetic, social adjustment in school, physical development and impediments, and various patterns of behaviour at school and at home.

Some of the findings may give guidance for future national and local policies in the provision of education and other social services. For instance, the study has isolated certain perinatal circumstances which may be useful predictors of children likely to be at risk in showing mental retardation. It reveals relatively low attendance at welfare clinics, a low level of immunisation and an under use of the whole range of treatment among the semi-skilled and unskilled manual working class: this clearly has a bearing on failure to detect defects early in the life of children in this section of the community.

Other findings are of more direct relevance to primary teachers who could anticipate need for positive

discrimination in the form of extra and individual help before backwardness or learning difficulties become apparent.

Seven-year-olds from families of five or more children were found to be about twelve months behind only children or those with one brother or sister, and being among the youngest in a large family was most disadvantageous. About half the backward readers had earlier shown severe problems of adjustment to school, so this in itself may be taken as a warning signal.

Boys are slower at learning to read and show more difficulty in adjusting to school but are slightly better at arithmetic than girls. Junior school teachers must therefore expect to have to continue the teaching of reading with a considerable number of boys.

None of the background factors are nearly so significant as social class in influencing a child's progress at school. The major distinction is between manual and non-manual, though there is a trend from the favoured professional and managerial to the most disadvantaged unskilled. Moreover, a large number of inhibiting factors tend to coincide for a proportion of children from the latter who are thereby disadvantaged in numerous ways.

It would clearly be useful for primary teachers to be well informed about each child's home circumstances in order to anticipate problems. But a quarter of Social Class V children attend schools that maintain virtually no contacts with parents. 'One might have hoped that efforts by the schools would go some way to redressing the social class imbalance but instead it appears to accentuate it' (p 137). Positive and informed support by parents is critical in mitigating unfavourable circumstances, but non-manual parents are more likely to know how.

Evidence concerning size of classes and schools is puzzling and inconclusive. Small separate infant

schools seem to succeed best – marginally best if these are over forty children to a class.

Larger classes may well impose more formal teaching, and 'small' classes of up to thirty children may still be too big for any but exceptionally skilled teachers to succeed with informal methods. Even so, class size is much less significant than sex or whether the child started school before or after the age of five – girls and early starters do better.

Follow-up studies of these children beyond seven years will show how persistent or ephemeral some of these factors are. Why do so many leave school at the earliest legal opportunity when 82% of all parents said they wanted their seven-year-old to stay on?

NANETTE WHITBREAD.

City of Leicester College of Education.

A Primer

Why nursery schools? by G M Goldsworthy, Colin Smythe (1971), 120 pp, £1.85.

Mrs Goldsworthy has arrived at her position empirically. This position she states, as only ladies who have to do with very young children can, emphatically, and she justifies all her pronouncements first by leading with a pithy aphorism, then illustrating the point with an instance drawn from her vast experience, and finally rounding the case off with an apt child-anecdote, or a piece of verse – or worse.

Of course, the recipe brews a good parents' evening concoction – the kind that sends mums and dads home, nodding and warm, tip-top full of wise saws, and re-assured by homely commonsense sagery. It's not to my taste, though I must admit to enjoying the flavour of some of the child anecdotes. This, for instance:

Child: 'Ain't God wonderful? He made everything – you and me, Mums and Dads, the animals and the birds

and the trees – and he did it all with his *left hand* too.’ When I questioned him about this his reply was: ‘Every time I go to church they say that Jesus is sitting on God’s right hand so he only had his left hand to do everything with, didn’t he?’ (Incidentally, working-class usage like that knocks Bernstein’s Restricted Code thesis for six, doesn’t it?)

On the whole, this is not the book for teachers who are beyond the *Happy Venture* stage in educational literature. It could be useful, though, to anyone who needs a Primer of Nursery Education. Even though they are simply stated, the objectives Mrs Goldsworthy sets for Nursery Schools to attain are sound. One is conscious that there would be fewer educational misfits and casualties if they were nationally implemented.

DERRICK METCALFE

Attitude or circumstance?

The Plowden children four years later, by G F Peaker, NFER (1971), 50 pp, 95p (by post £1). Paperback.

Hadow, The Report on Early Leaving, Crowther and Newsom all recognised that it was the home which exerted considerable influence in the educational attainment of the child. **Plowden** also recognised this influence, so much so that the Committee felt it would be wise to see if the actual factors which created the deficit could be identified. For this reason it instigated The National Survey of Parental Attitudes and Circumstances Related to Schools and Pupil Characteristics.

This survey appeared to indicate that parental *attitudes* were more important than socio-economic status as a determining factor, though many had doubts about the absolute validity of the category. Certain aspects which were ascribed to *attitude*, it was felt, might well have been better described as *circumstance*. Assignment is not a matter of purely theoretical interest

as might be supposed. *Attitude*, as the Plowden Committee recognised, is capable of being altered (cf Vol 1 para 102); *circumstance* requires political change before it can be altered.

Gilbert Peaker’s volume is a follow-up to this earlier study, and the author re-examines 2,350 of the original 3,092 children who were within the Plowden sample. Peaker’s ‘prime object . . . was to obtain some quantitative estimates of the extent to which home background and early schooling influence later achievement’. What was found was that two-thirds of the mean achievement of the children could have been predicted from a knowledge of home and school factors discovered four years earlier – that is, from *circumstances*.

Now, a book review is no place to enter into what must be a complex argument on the implications of Peaker’s major finding, or upon the subsidiary conclusion he draws from it that, because ‘literacy at home’ is the largest constituent of the ‘parental circumstances’ variable, the problem boils down to a simple matter of ‘language’. However, the entire problem should be argued, and I strongly urge readers to buy this booklet, to study it in conjunction with Plowden – and then commence the argument.

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Research frustrated

Young People and Society, by Ted Tapper, Faber & Faber (1971), 176 pp. £2.75.

I take it—though Mr. Tapper himself is a little coy on the point—that **Young People and Society** is based upon an academic thesis. I will therefore not blame the author too much for the actual structure of the book except to remark that it is rather a pity that we have no better way of allowing men like Mr Tapper to demonstrate their knowledge of ‘the research’ and their intellectual

ability in weighing evidence than to set them the frequently unrewarding task of enumerating once again the well-worn findings of Floud, Holly, Ford and the like and further requiring them to provide more ‘empirical evidence’ to add to or subtract from these luminaries’ contributions.

What frequently happens—and it seems to have happened again with Ted Tapper—is that the academic requirement to provide ‘empirical evidence’ conflicts with the physical possibilities so that a great deal has to be wrung out of a very little. Furthermore the requirement to produce enlightenment by the pound weight leads to a series of very similar exercises in different sections of the work—in this case there are chapters on ‘Education and the Socialisation Process’, ‘Social Class and Schools’, ‘The Structuring of Aspirations’, ‘Political Socialisation’ and so on. This is not to say that these matters are not intrinsically interesting or that a worthwhile book couldn’t be written around any one of them: just that in the form that Mr Tapper is constrained to write they are bound to be rather uncritical of research and basic assumptions. Much of the book reads like a Sociology of Education primer. Yet there are signs of a lively mind struggling to get out. By far the best part is the final chapter on social and educational change *vis a vis* reform, particularly comprehensive school reform. Like Julianne Ford he comes out for nonstreaming as the only just basis. Like her too, unfortunately, he fails to see that egalitarianism is not the only question at stake—or even the most interesting. Predictably, perhaps, Ted Tapper’s 1,482 fourth formers questioned in their five grammar, five modern, one bilateral and two comprehensive schools (both streamed) couldn’t tell him or us much that we didn’t know already about ‘political allegiance’ or ‘educational aspiration’. Sadly there is very little, either, about ‘young people’ or ‘society’ in terms of a critical analysis of the situation.

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