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FOR THE DISCUSSION OF NEW TRENDS IN EDUCATION

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The Politics of Education

There is no more important measure of the level and character of a nation than its school system – the provision it makes for its young. This, it might be expected, would be the leading priority commitment of governments and political parties. Yet we are now experiencing what appears to be a deliberate attempt to create confusion and demoralisation in the education service – in a last ditch effort to make political capital by preserving all those divisive features which it has been a main aim, over the last decade, to overcome.

The central issue remains that of comprehensive secondary education. No one now speaks out openly for retaining the 11-plus – that has been entirely discredited on educational, psychological and social grounds. Yet, in spite of the moves to comprehensive systems, two-thirds of the children of this country are still being subjected to selection procedures. By

dealing with the matter with kid gloves between 1964 and 1970, the Labour Government left the way open for Mrs Thatcher's arid rule so that now the battle is having to be fought all over again. It will be – but this time we must make sure of definite action to introduce genuinely comprehensive education once and for all. This is the only way to defend the school system from the constant demoralising attacks by interested politicians, very few of whom use the schools for their own children.

The tactic now is to rely on a demagogic appeal to 'parental choice' or 'parental rights'. In debates in both Houses of Parliament this has been elevated to a main issue in a desperate bid to retain selective grammar schools and all the other pockets of privilege in the educational system. 'We are concerned,' writes St John-Stevas, 'not merely to preserve choice where it exists but to extend it, particularly in the

maintained sector . . . If parents want their children to be educated in comprehensive schools we will support them, but if other parents want the option of a grammar school we will see that their wishes are respected' (*The Times*, 13.7.74).

This must be rated as the most naïve, or the most deliberately obscurantist, statement made since 1944 by any political leader on education. For one thing, comprehensive and grammar schools – serving the same population – cannot co-exist. This is a matter of simple logic. As Tyrrell Burgess has pointed out, 'the chance to choose a grammar school destroys the chance to choose a comprehensive'. But, more important, how can Stevas provide grammar schools for all parents who want them? A grammar school is a selective school; its very existence implies the existence of at least twice as many secondary modern schools for the children rejected in the selective process (assuming 30 per cent selection). Yet nothing whatever is said about providing secondary modern schools for the parents who want to send their children to *them*.

Of course, St John-Stevas knows perfectly well that this makes complete nonsense from an educational – or even practical political – point of view. Its value as a policy is simply that it cashes in on certain present discontents. But objectively such a policy is the height of irresponsibility, since, supported by other sanctions, it will render the transition to systems of genuinely comprehensive schools that much more difficult, and so make its own squalid contribution to other attempts to demoralise the education service. This is hardly a policy to take pride in.

Certain of the mass media, aided by politicians of this ilk, have been working overtime to give the impression that comprehensive education has been a failure. They have battered on the difficulties, in particular, of certain schools in urban areas (especially London), which have their origin deep in social contradictions quite outside the school system itself. But what do these school systems have in common? That none of them are genuinely comprehensive! Most large urban areas (for instance,

Bristol, Manchester, as well as London) have not been able to establish such systems because they have not got legal powers to absorb voluntary-aided and direct-grant schools – as *Forum* has pointed out time and again since its inception. In spite of every effort, all these systems are creamed – in London by up to 17 per cent of each age group. In these areas there are two systems of schools: a 'comprehensive' system catering for the great majority of the children, and a selective area masquerading under various descriptions. It is noticeable that, in the present outcry, very few criticisms have been made of the still small proportion of genuinely comprehensive schools in the country.

What is the conclusion? Comprehensive education has been on the order of the day since the 1920s when nearly all the teachers' organisations supported it. What we have experienced since then is a long drawn, skilfully fought battle, carried out under various guises and slogans, which has had the single aim of preserving at all costs a divided system. It is time to put a stop to this, in the interests of the country at large. This means passing the necessary legislation to enable *all* grammar schools to come fully into local systems, putting an end to the direct grant list (an historical aberration), providing the necessary financial support, and so creating the conditions whereby comprehensive systems can at last be established. This should now quite definitely be made a statutory requirement.

Of course, there will be an outcry – just as there was over the health service in the late 1940s. But every heave into the future faces opposition from entrenched vested interests. That it can be done there is no doubt; nor that it will be done with the support – and to the relief – of the great majority of the nation. No one claims comprehensive education as a panacea. But it is the necessary condition for tackling educational issues within a firm, and above all, a rational structure. By this means the ground can be cleared for the development of a school system relevant, and adapted to, modern requirements; one serving the interests of the great majority of the nation.

The 'New' Sociology of Education

Olive Banks

Professor Olive Banks is a member of the department of sociology at the University of Leicester. Well known for **Parity and Prestige in English Education** (1955), as for her **Sociology of Education** (1970) and many other works, she makes here a critical assessment of new developments in this field.

During the past few years a new movement of thought has emerged to disturb the traditional sociology of education as it has been taught and researched in this country since the war. It made its first major public appearance at the British Sociological Association Annual Conference at Durham in 1970. At that time it was very much a minority approach but in the years between it has made rapid advances particularly in colleges of education, but also to quite a considerable extent in university departments and polytechnics. Moreover, even when their elders may be seen to scoff, the new thinking seems to have a remarkable appeal to the young student. The publication of the Reader, **New Directions for the Sociology of Education** edited by Michael Young, and the virtual capture for the new approach of one of the early Education Courses at the Open University probably accounts for much of the rapidity of the diffusion. It is true that the movement has yet to make any major contribution to the research field but this is hardly a criticism of any importance as the mounting, carrying through and, above all, the writing up and publication of a major research project is a long term rather than a short term operation. Certainly the ideas have been with us long enough, and have received sufficient public expression not only in general discussion within the discipline but also in print, to make at least an interim assessment not only valuable but indeed necessary.

It may be imagined that someone, like myself, who is heavily committed academically to the traditional sociology of education is hardly in a position to offer an independent assessment of a school of thought which offers a direct and indeed often a rather brutal challenge to my own work. Nevertheless, just because I am so thoroughly acquainted not only with the products but also with the development of the sociology of education in this country it may be that I am in fact in a better position than some of the newcomers to see the new ideas in a more long-term perspective. Necessarily, in a short article, this cannot be achieved either comprehensively or indeed systematically. I have chosen therefore to emphasise those aspects of the new thinking

which have general rather than specifically sociological relevance, or which seem to me to have particular importance.

It is useful to begin by comparing the salient points of the two 'sociologies'. Whereas the old was a development out of studies of social stratification and the division of labour, the new, it is argued, stems from the sociology of knowledge. More fundamentally, whereas the old was macro, structural-functionalist, and determinist, the new, it is claimed, is micro, interactionist and voluntaristic or activist. Much of this difference of emphasis springs from a different view of the nature of man in society. Esland¹ perhaps sums up the fundamental divergence between the two approaches in his contrast between a view of man as world producer and a view of man as a social product. It is indeed this image of man as constantly making his own world that underlies not only the new sociology of education but new directions within sociology itself. Moreover, because it stresses man as active rather than passive, it starts with man rather than society, and this explains its opposition to both macro-sociology and functionalism, both of which tend to take societies or social systems as their unit of analysis. Within the new approach there are, of course, a variety of views but all, it seems to me, share this concern to present man as making his own world.

New problems

The difference in emphasis which, as I have suggested, is not confined to the 'new' sociology of education but has borrowed heavily from recent developments in American sociology has led to the pointing up of new problems, and problem-areas, as well as the advocacy of a new methodology. Because space is limited I will not attempt to catalogue these in detail but pass on to what I believe to be the most fundamental. One of the claims made by Michael Young², and repeated by others, is that the sociology of education has hitherto taken educators' problems for granted, and in doing so neglected to ask questions

about what it is to be 'educated', or indeed what we mean by 'knowledge'. This has had important repercussions, particularly in the attempt to understand the reason for the failure of the working-class child at school. Although this problem has dominated the sociology of education in this country, it is argued that the traditional approach has failed to come to grips with it because it has neglected to examine the education that working-class children fail at. Instead, therefore, of examining aspects of the child and his home background and family life, researchers should, it is argued, pay attention to the actual processes by means of which rates of educational success or failure come to be produced. This may involve detailed and largely ethno-methodological studies of classroom interaction between pupils and teachers, with the emphasis as in Nell Keddie's study³ on the way in which children are 'labelled' as bright or dull, successes or failures. At a different level it may involve a study of curricula and the way in which they are used by particular classes or groups to dominate others.

The first question that must I think be asked is to what extent are we dealing with a 'new' sociology of education? Is it so radical a departure that we must scrap our textbooks and the texts that went with them, as some of its advocates seem almost to imply, or is it a new direction which builds upon rather than supplants the work of the past? Certainly, when we look at some of the new writings we may be forgiven if we cannot see beyond the polemics and imagine that what we have here is no more than off with the old, and on with the new. To dismiss it in this way would, however, be a mistake. Much of the polemical tone is no more than the fight of the younger generation against an older generation which always appears so much more firmly entrenched than it really is. There is the equally natural desire to over-emphasise both the necessity and the validity of any radically new approach in an established discipline. From this point of view the new sociology of education becomes, as Michael Young first claimed for it, a new direction, but one which is building upon rather than superseding what has gone before. Again, it is necessary to be brief, and I intend to do no more than pick out the most significant aspects of what is a highly complex process of development.

First of all, it must be admitted that the new approach has pointed up some very real weaknesses in the traditional sociology of education. There has been, for example, a heavy reliance on certain methods, particularly the large-scale survey and, with certain

important exceptions, a neglect of those methods which would throw light on the actual process of school achievement and school failure. It is also true that in the preoccupation with who is selected there is a tendency to forget, as Michael Young has argued, that education is about the selection of knowledge as well as people. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, there has often been the acceptance of a somewhat mechanistic relationship between the educational system and the economy and a neglect of the actual processes and, again as Michael Young points out, the activities and assumptions that are involved. These are all important new problems that cannot fail to open up the subject in significant and meaningful ways. In this sense, therefore, the new sociology of education has opened up a useful dialogue with the traditional approach which can do much to further our understanding both of sociology and of education.

Some dangers

Nevertheless, in spite of its great potentialities it does seem to me that the new approach carries within it certain serious dangers, not only for sociology but also for education and more especially the education of working-class children. It should be emphasised, however, that I do not see these dangers as necessary or inevitable consequences of the new sociology of education. Rather they spring from a too enthusiastic adoption of its principles and particularly from its adoption as an alternative to rather than an extension of mainstream sociology of education.

I have already suggested that one of the great strengths of the new approach is the way it has opened up new problems and new methods which have not only thrown up altogether new areas for study, but even more importantly, thrown new light on old problems. This widening of horizons will be altogether lost, however, if the new school, as I think it may properly be called, shrinks into itself and becomes partisan and even sectarian. Nor is this simply an academic possibility. There are some indications that this may be happening and that some at least of its supporters see the new ideas as a complete turning away from the mainstream of sociology. This is partly, as I suggested earlier, because of the need to establish itself, and indeed to legitimise itself in opposition to the traditional approach and particularly perhaps the traditional methodology. There are also, and to some extent for

the same reasons, strongly sectarian tendencies in ethno-methodology, from which it gets a lot of its inspiration. Behind all this, however, there are ideological and indeed political reasons which lead them to reject the post-war sociology of education and indeed a great deal of traditional sociology itself. This has its roots in the strong commitment to what I have called an activist as distinct from a passive or determinist approach to man in society. While this has its healthy side, in that it sensitises them to the problems inherent in a mechanistic fundamentalist approach, it can easily become a weakness if it leads them to ignore the extent to which man is a determined as well as a determining being.

Perhaps some examples will help to make this point clear. The traditional sociology of education in this country has been very much concerned with the relationship between the educational system, the economy and the division of labour. The Floud, Halsey and Anderson Reader⁴, for example, is very much concerned with the increasing subordination of the educational system to the economy. Similarly, my own book⁵, published in 1955, sought to demonstrate the dependent relationship of secondary education to social stratification and the hierarchy of occupations. Cotgrove⁶ and Musgrave⁷ both tried to argue that an outdated curriculum linked to powerful vested interests had done much to hold back technological and economic advances in Britain during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is interesting to notice that although much of this work dealt quite centrally with the content of education and thus with the curriculum, it is virtually ignored by the new writing in the sociology of education. This is undoubtedly because its major concern is with the economy, an area of little concern to the new approach, and perhaps even more significantly, because of its functionalist overtones. Yet to ignore the ways in which educational systems are linked to occupational structures is surely as harmful as to conceive of the relationship in an over-simplistic way. To question the extent to which an advanced industrial economy's need for skilled manpower actually requires a system of secondary and higher education as complex and expensive as that of the United States is a most useful exercise. To ignore altogether the structural constraints on educational systems arising from particular technological developments does not seem to be of any particular value and may well be harmful. We need, for example, to understand the links between industrialisation and literacy, and between bureaucracy and examinations if we are to comprehend the develop-

ment of educational systems in the past, and to plan for the future.

The concern for the realities of classroom interaction is again a useful antidote to a sociology of the school which has often been too closely tied to organisational theory. On the other hand, an exclusive attention to pupil-teacher interaction could not fail to have a dangerously narrowing effect on our understanding of educational processes. Michael Young has himself warned against such an isolation, but those who have followed his lead are not always able to sustain the sophistication of his approach. Gorbutt⁸, for example, writing on the new sociology of education has seen the issue very largely if not entirely at the level of teacher awareness, and makes a plea for a new model of teacher education and educational practice which would, hopefully, revitalise schools and colleges. It is all too easy, given such a framework of analysis, to fall back on a simplistic 'blame the teacher' argument which is likely to be even more harmful in some respects than the equally simplistic 'blame the parent' or 'blame the child' response which the new approach is concerned quite rightly to decry. Yet it is a dangerously easy trap for those who are over-committed to the 'activist' ideology.

Working-class culture

It is in its treatment of working-class culture, however, that the new approach is at its most dangerously romantic and this is well demonstrated in Nell Keddie's new Reader, *Tinker, Tailor . . . the myth of cultural deprivation*. I have already paid tribute to the valuable contribution that the new sociology of education has made to this debate but this should not blind us to some less useful, and I would argue, possibly harmful arguments. Keddie is, of course, right to argue that all societies have 'cultures' in the anthropological sense of the word, which in their own terms, and in their own right, make for a perfectly adequate and in its context logical relationships with the world around them. In this sense it becomes not only meaningless but misleading to use the term 'culturally deprived' for working-class children. Nevertheless this argument is to a large extent irrelevant to the issue of working-class school achievement. What is at issue here is not the judgment in any absolute terms of working-class culture as 'good' or 'bad' but the possibility of a cultural discontinuity between school and home. Keddie seems to accept the

fact of that discontinuity but is unwilling to agree to the attempted destruction of working-class culture in the name of equality of educational opportunity. Instead of changing the children, which much compensatory education is all about, she argues that we should change the schools, so that they become places at which working-class children can succeed.

This is a plausible and attractive argument but it is by no means as straightforward as it appears at first sight. In one interpretation, of course, this might mean no more than the adoption of teaching styles and subject matter which would lessen the cultural discontinuity for the working-class child, but this is very far from the meaning that Keddie is implying. We must remember that the particular challenge of the new sociology of education is to the curriculum, and to what passes as knowledge. Accordingly schools, to become places where working-class children could succeed, would be radically different not only in their methods but in their goals. There is, for example, more than a hint in the Reader that literacy, that bed-rock of formal education, may need to become considerably less important. Postman⁹, for example, visualises a school in which television and records not only play a much larger role than in the past but to a large extent replace the printed word. Perhaps such a school would solve the problem of working-class failure, but only at a cost which I for one would not like to pay. For this point of view which implies that literacy is a 'frill' which can be dispensed with for all practical purposes, not only by working-class children but by society as a whole, is put forward with hardly a scrap of evidence, or even, it appears, much consideration for the consequences. But again it is the lack of concern with the ways in which the educational system relates to the wider social structures that leads to this lack of concern for the consequences of particular educational policies, and more especially for the unanticipated consequences of social action which was of such central interest to traditional sociology.

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Book notes

Beyond the Information Given, subtitled 'Studies in the Psychology of Knowing', was published recently. It is a large volume (500 pages) and expensive (£5.85), but gathers together what the editor calls 'an instructive sequence of some of Jerome S. Bruner's major ideas in the psychology of knowing'. These are grouped into five parts; the first two include papers on Perception and Thought, the third on skill in infancy, the fourth on representation in childhood (on cognitive growth) while the fifth is devoted to Bruner's main papers on education. There is much here of interest to **FORUM** readers. B.S.

'New Direction' Sociology and Comprehensive Schooling

Joan Simon

Primarily an historian of education (*Education and Society in Tudor England*, 1966 and *The Social Origins of English Education*, 1970), Joan Simon also first translated and published Luria and Yudovich's seminal *Speech and the Development of Mental Processes in the Child*, 1959 (now available as a Penguin). She turns her attention here to new developments in the sociology of education.

Only one field study relating to comprehensive schooling, framed in the light of 'new direction' sociology, has been published. A look at its conclusions will show how the particular approach and methods work out in practice. Also interesting is the way this school of thought has emerged in the context of educational studies – specifically in the department of sociology, the University of London Institute of Education. And the wide publicity gained though the flavour is anti-establishment and it is, as yet, underdeveloped.

Indeed, a strong supporter uses the term 'emergent paradigm', ie, model, since the 'new direction' is only 'being taught by a small number of lecturers in a handful of courses' in teacher education. And few of these have any research in hand 'within the theoretical framework' proposed – here presented as a radical breakaway from what is now termed the 'old', or 'mainstream', sociology¹.

Teachers nowadays are at the receiving end of a variety of theoretical approaches, formulated by philosophers as well as sociologists, whose specialist interests and dissensions thereby spill over into the educational arena. And now that comprehensive schooling is evidently here to stay it has become an object of attention. While fresh 'insights' (an in-word) may be provided, much confusion can be engendered, obscuring matters which most merit attention from the educational point of view.

In the difficult early days, by contrast, academics showed little interest in the unification of secondary education, how it could be achieved and what it could mean – with one or two notable exceptions from the

early 1950s. Little is understood, by those who have recently discovered this area, of the course of development which has shaped the present position, and the various stages are not, therefore, distinguished.

In any case, sociologists tend to rule aside historical formation and generalise from analysis of a given situation – an approach particularly questionable when hard and fast conclusions are attempted in a rapidly changing situation².

Educationists who have worked towards a common secondary schooling over the past twenty years have never thought this would be easily achieved, at a stroke, merely by reorganisation. There has always been a composite aim: reorganisation to abolish selective practices and enable a corresponding transformation of the content and methods of education, as of the whole pattern of relationships between teacher and learner and among teachers or pupils as well.

Clearly this process would take time. But then this could serve an aim usually very difficult to realise – namely, re-education of the educators in the process of change. This has been the pattern established so that it is *within* the schools that the experts on comprehensive education are to be found.

Nonetheless, comprehensive schools have necessarily been dogged by the actuality and concept of 'the grammar school'. It is a key feature of the doctrine of intelligence, as applied for purposes of classification, that the grammar school is taken as given and unquestionable – or the very yardstick of excellence in terms both of pupil ability and educational pattern.

Insofar as comprehensive schools successfully engage

in new educational departures, what might be called 'the grammar school syndrome' is overcome. Though, again, this is a process rather than an instantaneous cure. After all, there is not even a vocabulary before nonstreaming becomes the norm and even then there is often recourse to the term 'mixed ability' teaching – despite rejection of the theory of fixed levels of ability.

In outside circles clarification of the same order has been lacking and a generation of young teachers entered the schools imbued with limited expectations of working-class pupil performance. Even those sociological researches which did much to undermine 'tripartitism' turned on the relations between 'ability and opportunity', implying acceptance of the yardstick just when its deficiencies were exposed.

Belatedly this approach is now questioned by the 'new sociology', much as if a new discovery had been made. But the sociological approach is not conducive to comprehending the potentialities, or complexities, of the educational process. Specialist concerns of another kind reign.

Many aspects of the matter have been debated during the past twenty years, particularly in *Forum*, launched to assist in clarifying and realising a programme of educational advance in 1958. Various stages have since been passed through, and the files interestingly illustrate the accumulation of experience within classrooms and its analysis as well as the influences brought to bear from outside.

Characteristic of the politics of the matter today, when even a Mrs Thatcher failed to halt reorganisation altogether, are attempts to hinder or deflect any further general step ahead – by, for instance, deploring or deriding unstreaming. Attitudes to this question are a useful guide to assessing the nature of outside intervention.

The psychometrists, formerly the most influential among specialist 'experts', ceased to dominate the scene as 11-plus selection and streaming receded – procedures which they themselves ended by deploring. But, with reorganisation far from complete, the doctrine of intelligence – officially brought to bear since the 1930s to shape both external and internal organisation of the school system and teaching methods – is by no means entirely overcome, or superseded.

Rather there has been recourse to an environmentalist fatalism. For a low level of inherited intelligence substitute a qualitative deficiency in home background, language, patterns of thought, of an order unamenable to amendment – to which, therefore, educational con-

tent and method should be adjusted. This is the recipe as before. Nor is it any more palatable when prescribed in terms of respect for, rather than stress on the limitations of, working-class culture. As well campaign for schools in Wales teaching nothing but Welsh.

Meanwhile, philosophers of education have become vocal, so far mainly in the cause of conservatism in thought and practice. It is in opposition to this trend, particularly prominent in the London Institute of Education, as well as to a sociology stigmatised as functionalist, or adjusted to serving the *status quo*, that the 'new direction' in the sociology of education has been mounted.

What makes the educational field so attractive to the sociological innovator is that, in the words of Ioan Davies, 'it is perhaps the only area of research in industrial societies where all the major problems in sociological theory and method are focused'³. That, in the circumstances, is its misfortune. For the problems of sociological theory and methodology, deriving in disparate form from various founding fathers, are legion and highly complex; and the difficulties of approximating findings arrived at within different social frameworks immense.

'Innovation' in sociology may, then, imply little more than seeking inspiration abroad, and mixing new ideas in the French or American air in the way that best serves to challenge the prevailing certainties or habits of British sociology. Internal inconsistency is a likely result, besides a running battle with the 'normative' trend in the cause of an 'interpretive' pattern – a wordy war in a terminology often incomprehensible to the layman.

This is roughly the stage now reached. So that at present 'new direction' sociology is making use of the field of education, in a bid to devise a coherent theoretical approach and a viable methodology, rather than being in any position to give a lead to educationists.

This does not prevent ardent preaching of the word in some colleges of education, particularly in the London area. From these students emerge 'with **Knowledge and Control** in the bloodstream', or undigested ideas about 'repressive middle class culture' – as the head of a London comprehensive school recently deplored in discussing current problems.

Those now actively developing comprehensive education are learning to recognise 'the complexity of the social web in which schools are enmeshed' – in the words of the same report of a discussion among London heads in *The Times Educational Supplement* (7.6.74) –

and to avoid falling for easy nostrums. It is ironical that 'new direction' sociology should cross the wires by advancing an over-simplified credo and, moreover, one whose radical overtones mask a conservative stance so far as education is concerned.

Whereas deficiencies were once attributed to the individual child in terms of IQ, then to shortcomings of family or home held fatally to confine development, the 'new' sociology points an accusing finger at the teacher as the prime instigator of discrimination in the classroom. Or, rather, constructs an archetype – 'the teacher' – conceived of as an embodiment of the grammar school syndrome, and postulates that only a dose of 'new' sociological thinking can radically clean up the internal organisation of schools.

I

Now for the final paragraph of conclusions drawn from the field study mentioned earlier. Attention should be drawn to a general characteristic of the mode of presentation – 'it seems likely', it 'may well' be – indicating hypotheses inserted as against deduction from evidence presented. The paper derives from an MA thesis by Nell Keddie, 'The Social Basis of Classroom Knowledge: a case study'. It appears in a symposium edited by the thesis supervisor, Michael F D Young of the department of sociology in the London Institute of Education, ie, **Knowledge and Control** (1971). The four points may be numbered and taken in turn.

(1) 'Two panaceas currently put forward to reform the educational system are unstreaming and an undifferentiated curriculum. It seems likely that these prescriptions overlook the fact that streaming is itself a response to an organising notion of differential ability.'

The dictionary definition of 'panacea' is 'universal medicine' with vague overtones of 'a healing plant' – not the sort of thing anyone of sense would 'prescribe' to reform the educational system, as against dulling its pains. As for the second point, whoever could 'overlook' that the doctrine of intelligence has informed the practice of streaming? Either, then, the statement is ignorant or the term 'organising notion' carries a special meaning unfamiliar to most of us.

(2) 'It seems likely that the hierarchical categories of ability and knowledge may well persist in unstreamed classrooms and lead to the differentiation of undifferentiated curricula, because teachers differentiate in selec-

tion of content and in pedagogy between pupils perceived as of high and low ability.'

For this involved formulation, there may be substituted a summary of the information that is being generalised. Though far too little detail is provided to enable a full assessment of the school investigated, let alone the lack of historical perspective.

Teachers were observed in a comprehensive school humanities department introducing a fourth year examination course embodying history, geography and social science, to be taught across the ability range and 'enquiry based'. The fourth year is still broadly banded ABC 'by ability', though it is the aim to eliminate streaming if agreement can be reached among the staff.

Meanwhile, some teachers, duly quoted, continued in long-established habits of 'streamed' teaching, ie, showed a tendency to differentiate content and method in relation to 'ability range', or their perception of pupil reaction, despite the intention to introduce a genuinely common course. Off the cuff judgments of children from different social classes, or ability bands, in a classroom situation also differed in tone from those expressed by the same teachers in their role as 'educationists' in staff discussions.

This is about all that can be said, and it is not without interest in detail, however familiar to any teacher acquainted with the process of moving over from streaming to non-streaming. But there is no attempt to relate the points to the particular transitional situation in the given school, as against putting an interpretation on the specific interactionist moment observed. Instead, evidence relating to classes in a school as yet still banded is cited in support of an imported hypothesis that 'hierarchical categories of ability and knowledge may well persist in unstreamed classrooms'.

It is not clear where these categories are supposed to have their being, within teachers' minds or as an epiphenomenon of a classroom situation. But it seems probable that the next step will be to provide them with an origin, if only in declaratory fashion.

(3) 'The origins of these categories are likely to lie outside the school and within the structure of the society itself in its wider distribution of power.'

This interpolation appears to be a paraphrase of a statement by Bernstein, in a paper in the same symposium. If so, the original runs: 'How a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control.' This serves as stepping stone to the final hypo-

thesis – which, however, envisages nothing so radical as social change.

(4) 'It seems likely, therefore, that innovation in schools will not be of a very radical kind unless the categories teachers use to organise what they know about pupils and determine what counts as knowledge undergo a fundamental change.'

Teachers cannot learn and change in the course of experience with unstreamed classes, it is inferred, but inevitably remain prisoners of the grammar school syndrome. Only if this hierarchical categorisation of children's abilities and subject matter is first erased is 'radical' change in the classroom possible. Otherwise teachers are likely to operate in the classroom situation as mere instruments of social control – classifying, distributing, transmitting, evaluating knowledge relating to children and curriculum in ways which uphold the existing distribution of power, or establishment educational ends.

In other words, reacting against old style sociological determinism which closes all doors – according teachers a niche in the social mechanism, with corresponding limitations of action and thought, which cannot be transcended – the 'new direction' offers the perspective of a radical reorientation of thought independent of any radical change in the realm of social control.

II

What prompts this form of talk? The theoretical point of departure. A chief complaint about the 'old' sociology is that it is 'positivist'. Briefly and crudely 'positivism' implies direct concentration on phenomena and their properties, including what are conceived of as invariable relations of co-existence and succession, which alone are held to be knowable. All other types of explanation are dismissed as metaphysical. To circumvent, or undermine, this position an approach is necessary which aspires to diagnose how a phenomenon 'comes about'.

Interpreting the field study described, Young explains that it applies ideas derived from A F Blum, who advocates that attention be directed not to phenomena themselves but to the 'organisational practices' which produce them⁴.

This enables the investigator to leave aside any examination of the theory or practice of streaming as a characteristic phenomenon of the English educational

system for many years – one whose influence has been many-sided but which is now being outgrown in comprehensive schools. Instead he can simply home on the everyday practice of a teacher in a classroom – taken as the immediate organisational form giving rise to the phenomenon of differentiation.

The attitudes the teacher displays thereby come to 'stand for' the whole edifice of differentiation of children and of subject matter and are analysed accordingly, leaving aside concrete aspects of this edifice which also directly influence children. It follows that it is not the primary task to reduce the actual edifice but to tackle manifestations of it in 'the teacher' mind – seen as the only influential factor within the classroom on a somewhat old-fashioned view of what constitutes the educational process.

Indeed, it is supposed – in the light of the directive theory which colours observation and analysis – that teachers actually 'construct' the operative 'bodies of knowledge' in the process of classroom practice, through the medium of their own perceptions. (Man creates his own reality, in sloganised form.) To discover what 'counts as knowledge' in a given classroom, then, it is only necessary to record how the teacher presents forms of subject matter to pupils of varying kinds, or how he scans classroom activity 'for appropriate or expected meanings'.

It is, then, a 'relative', or 'situational', knowledge the investigator seeks or posits. From the proposition that knowledge must be regarded not as absolute but as socially and historically 'situated', there is a descent to interpretation in terms of a specific activity in a particular situation. And the conclusion comes full circle.

Teachers' perceptions play the 'crucial part in the differentiating processes within the school', as Young summarises Keddie's findings, because of their 'hierarchical conception of "what counts as knowledge and ability"'. Given the approach and methodology this is a foregone conclusion.

Teachers do, really, have a hard time. They have disproved the findings of psychometry, forced on them for decades, by educating children well above the limitations of the 'unchangeable' IQ. They have broken out of the next vicious circle, postulated by a vulgarised sociological determinism – which preaches the inescapable limitations imposed on teachers by academic education, professional pressures, status in the social order, no less than on children of different social classes in terms of family background. For, far from operating uniformly as conditioned instruments of establishment

policy, teachers have undermined this by eliminating streamlining.

Now a 'radical' school of sociological thought pillories their thought processes in the classroom as the cause and origin of all the negative features of that long-standing establishment policy which may still persist!

It is no use proposing practical steps to eliminate these. Unstreaming is a mere panacea. Unless there is prior brainwashing 'the teacher' will, robotlike, negate classroom innovation by reimposing the harmful hierarchies. So much for the potentialities of education, in the view of the 'new' sociology, at any rate so far as teachers are concerned. They are presented, in stereotype, as unchanging, ineducable in the changing classroom or, for that matter, staffroom discussion. Some kind of instantaneous conversion seems called for.

How is this to come about – how can the 'categories' with which teachers operate be reconstituted, the 'bodies of knowledge' thought proper constructed? Presumably by reading what 'new' sociologists write. And certainly there have been large prints of the two symposia which, so far, constitute the main corpus of work. Though, equally certainly, these offer no clear strategy of advance in terms relevant to the school situation.

The papers in **Knowledge and Control** were brought together by Michael F D Young as a textbook for the Open University, where the social sciences have an important place and the 'new direction' a considerable foothold in expositions to a largely captive audience. On the Faculty of Educational Studies here is another former MA student of Young who also has a paper in this symposium, Geoffrey Esland. So does Basil Bernstein, while Young contributes both a general introduction and a paper – a five-fold contribution from the Institute of Education department of sociology. The other five papers are not all directly concerned with the sociology of education but have been selected to 'raise questions' in more general terms; one by Blum, two by Pierre Bourdieu of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, one by Robin Horton, Director of the Institute of African Studies in a Nigerian university, and one by Ioan Davies at a Canadian university.

The second symposium, edited by Keddie now at Goldsmiths College and published in 1973 by Penguin Education, reprints seven papers, all from the United States. It was under this imprint, it may be recalled, that several American texts on deschooling were put out simultaneously with considerable effect. And there is more than a casual connection between these and the

'radicalism' of new direction sociology – though Young specifically dismisses deschooling and like ideas as 'easy slogans'⁵.

The blurb summarises the intention of **Tinker, Tailor . . . the myth of cultural deprivation** as conveyed in the sub-title. 'The assumption is widespread and profound,' we are told, 'that there are inevitabilities which schools and other social institutions combat with difficulty and even against an almost crippling adversity.' Chief among these it is then stated – taking a secondary manifestation in more than one sense – is the concept of 'cultural deprivation'. This, Keddie argues, in her 'lucid and persuasive' introduction, should be recognised 'as a mythology developed to mask and support a class system to which we are all, wittingly or not, committed'.

The interpretation of the way the class system operates is, indeed, simplicity itself. 'Mainstream and middle-class values are one and the same thing' (pp 8-9), imposed on children in schools no less than by orthodox sociology in its terms. Much the same treatment is accorded to 'the formal logic of Western culture' – for all the world as if this heritage of human knowledge has owed nothing, either in content or form, down the ages to any other than a 'middle class'!

It is not the texts provided, and leant on to support this thesis, that should be held responsible, least of all that of Labov (1969) which constitutes a third of the book. For arguments are oversimplified in turning them to the support of so doctrinaire a one-sidedness.

It is the more surprising that this little paperback – 13 pages of an introduction of this order to seven previously published items – should have been uncritically acclaimed by Young, as an event of quite major importance, in a special article in **The Times Educational Supplement**. That his help with the introduction is specially acknowledged makes it difficult to distinguish his stance as more sophisticated than those of his disciples in this instance.

As Olive Banks suggests, Keddie provides a formula for actual cultural deprivation of the working class, even if inscribed on the banner of a campaign to eliminate the concept. For the inference is that to initiate children into matters which have been primarily reserved to a dominant class, and categorised in the institutions of a class society, is to be avoided on principle as a mere imposition of 'middle class' values.

Hence the newly qualified teachers who fail to contribute usefully in London comprehensive schools because imbued with the idea that they have no right

to teach anything to working-class children, as against respecting what they already have. They assume that to get on with them 'you must pretend to be working class', as the head already quoted put it. 'But children do not want you to play a patronising role.' This characteristic, if cutting, reaction to the do-gooder seems no more than deserved, given the claim of the 'new direction' to decide what is, or is not, good for the working class.

It is of a piece that, under the banner of a campaign to free teachers from the grammar school syndrome, 'new direction' sociologists join forces with the Black Paper lobby to deprecate unstreaming. And, almost, find common ground with the ideas of Professor G H Bantock about keeping 'the folk' happy at their own level.

Questionable advice apart, the inherent contradiction in which relativist sociologists are caught up is obvious. Purporting to chart a way of escape from conditioning or prescription, they themselves undertake to direct thought and policy into 'proper' channels – academically educated though they may be, and situated in universities or colleges, which might be thought suspect in their own terms. Not to mention the ready support received from such established institutions as the Open University, the BBC, *The Times*, the Pearson-Longman Penguin publishing empire.

To reply in these terms would be to acknowledge that their ideas may well have been 'constructed' in the 'interactional context' of dissension with mainstream sociology, and with the current tenets of the philosophy of education, to form that 'body of knowledge' about the educational situation they propagate – and seek to apply to deflect a practical programme of innovation.

But others, who have also been critical of aspects of sociology in the past, see no reason to bow to sociological 'necessity' as newly defined either and to adjust their practice accordingly. In their interactional context in the schools they have constructed other modes of thought implying other conclusions to which they prefer to adhere, as of proven effectiveness in educational terms in relation to both teachers and children.

III

From the London Institute of Education the 'new direction' has spread to colleges of education, especially Goldsmiths. But within the Institute controversy has broken out with philosophers of education. These have

hitherto tended to commandeer the area of educational theory, besides regarding the theory of knowledge as a particular province, and are sharply critical of the new attempts to develop a sociology of knowledge.

As Young outlines recent history, the department of sociology felt increasingly hemmed in, as new educational developments outran the scope of established sociological approaches and curricular matters came to the forefront in school practice and policy making⁶. This, with developments within sociology, prompted the new departure in the sociology of education, of a kind bound to precipitate conflict with the philosophers.

The arena for the resulting exchanges, appropriately enough since both parties see the colleges as the key position to control, is **Education for Teaching**, journal of the ATCDE. Three articles opened the issue of autumn 1972.

'New direction' sociology was described, by a member of a polytechnic department of education, as a revolutionary and very positive development. A student in training commented adversely, from this standpoint, on the imposition of directive ideas by philosophers of education. A philosopher inverted the chosen stance of the 'new direction' under the heading 'Knowledge out of Control'.

Subsequently (Summer 1973) Young responded and another proponent entered the fray, the sociologist S John Eggleston, professor of education at Keele. He has helped to prepare the ground with reviews in the educational press of books bearing on phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and ethno-methodology – 'the non-positivist approaches', as he here describes the matter, from which the new sociology 'springs'.

Welcoming the three articles as 'an important historical document for the future study of the sociology of education' in colleges, Eggleston describes the exchange as 'an almost classic model of the process of knowledge definition'. And compares the event with the earlier establishment among educational studies of what he chooses to call the 'hard philosophy' school. Thus 'knowledge definition', in the given interactionist situation, figures as a mode of staking out specialist territorial claims in the realm of educational theory.

Caution is, however, urged. It is an exaggerated radicalism to talk of revolution, of throwing 'mainstream sociology' entirely overboard. After all, it has produced not only consensus model but conflict model studies which are built upon by the 'new direction' – whatever the unwillingness to give credit to precursors – so better to think in terms of 'restructuring'.

An example taken is Keddie's criticism of the concept of cultural deprivation – there is nothing radically new about this, it has been done before. It might be added that relevant points about teacher-pupil relationships have also been made before, and better without accompanying obscurantism – for instance, by those connected with the London Association of Teachers of English.

Other observations suggest that, apart from some valuable 'insights' on the side, the main contribution has been a useful clearing of the ground for extending sociological research. Hitherto the sphere of operation has been restricted because the 'nature of educational knowledge' has been taken as given. Now sociologists can treat it as 'problematical', ie, focus studies on this aspect directly, by accepting the assumption that teachers' perceptions are the operative factor and can be deduced from classroom behaviour.

So, Eggleston concludes, theoretical contradictions should somehow be ironed out and the 'new direction' tacked on to the 'old' corpus – no awareness being shown of the confusion perpetrated in teacher education⁷. It remains to be seen whether a compromise will be consummated or confrontation continue. Meanwhile there has been plenty to talk about and G H Bantock has entered critically into the discussion at Open University level. Much name dropping characterises such discourse – Blum, Bourdieu, Cicourel and Katsuse, Merleau Ponty, Garfinkel, Schutz.

From the angle of the philosophy of education, which also has its orthodox and less orthodox wings, the 'new direction' has not only been labelled as rankly bad epistemology but attacked as crypto-élitist by J and P White, also of the Institute of Education. In reply, Young can only agree that 'cultural relativism' could 'legitimate a peculiarly vicious form of educational apartheid'; and note that this must be a danger if there is failure 'to make explicit the political grounds or starting points from which one is "relativising"'. This seems to constitute an admission of inherent weak-

nesses, only to be remedied by lapping over into another sphere.

It appears that in some colleges of education outside London it is now felt that not to revise sociology courses in a 'new direction' – little though this may be understood – means being old hat. And there are indications, in a field nowadays open to takeover, that CNAAs may be found a willing ally. Possibly a change of nomenclature as against 'old' and 'new', might help to prevent a mindless following of fashion.

That the literature should be critically studied is another matter. Like the so-called 'revolution in philosophy' before it, 'new direction sociology' of education may in some of its aspects assist experienced teachers in in-service or OU courses to become more aware of their own attitudes towards children and school organisation, and of their implications. And they are unlikely to be discouraged or misled by highly questionable nostrums.

It is brainwashing of a kind to hobble the prospective teacher, which derives from lack of respect for the educational process, that has caused complaint, insofar as it actively promotes the educational deprivation of children and young people.

Otherwise, do teachers in the schools have to bother about all this manoeuvring, taking up of positions, shooting it out, between disciplines aspiring to secure the commanding heights of educational theory? Perhaps not.

After all, it is not in the form of struggles between rival academic subjects that the future direction of education will be decided. These merely reflect the real conflicts being worked out in the arena, through particular pairs of spectacles, usually a good deal behind the times.

And if teachers don't get on with the next stage of innovation, what will there be for the 'experts' to talk about, next time round?

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Curriculum Design in the Primary School

Ernest Choat

Ernest Choat, head of the education department at the Rachel McMillan College of Education, examines the implications of curriculum studies for the primary school.

Although various aspects of the curriculum have received attention in recent years, curriculum design in the primary school has been neglected. New techniques have been adopted in many schools, eg integrated day, team teaching, vertical grouping, etc, but, frequently, explicit direction is lacking within the adoption. This suggests a need for composite curriculum design to give the teachers an awareness to what they are aspiring by their teaching.

Schools are established for a purpose and, by law, children are required to attend them. Therefore, specifications should be evolved towards which each school is attempting to strive, otherwise there is no reason for the school's existence. The initial consideration is the ultimate aim for the school. There is much questioning by philosophers of education as to what constitutes an educational aim. In the context by which the head teacher determines the 'aims for the school', he is fashioning a philosophy of intended outcomes for the

children in the school. This philosophy may vary according to the head teacher's attitude towards education, the staff at his disposal, the area in which the school is situated, the school building, etc. The significance of a philosophy is such that objectives cannot be formulated until they are geared to achieving specific notions.

Objectives present to the teacher a definition for her teaching. Their relevance as expressed by Kerr (1968) is:

'For the purpose of curriculum design and planning, it is imperative that the objectives should be identified first, as we cannot, or should not, decide "what" or "how" to teach in any situation until we know "why" we are doing it. The task of identifying objectives calls for precise thinking and is a difficult exercise. Thus, few would disagree with Richard Peter's view that "education is initiation into worthwhile activities", but before such a generalised statement can be useful to the cur-

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1. David Gorbitt, 'The New Sociology of Education', **Education for Teaching** No 89, Autumn 1972, p 76.
2. As, for instance, in the case of Julienne Ford, **Social Class and the Comprehensive School** (1969). The initial studies referred to are R Pedley, **Comprehensive Education, a new approach** (1956) and B Simon, **Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School** (1953), **The Common Secondary School** (1955).
3. Ioan Davies, 'The Management of Knowledge: a critique of the use of typologies in the Sociology of Education', in **Knowledge and Control** ed Michael F D Young (1971), p 284.
4. In the introduction to **Knowledge and Control**, pp 8-10, in which the paper cited also appears: Alan F Blum, 'The Corpus of Knowledge as a Normative Order' Intellectual Critiques of the Social Order of Knowledge and Commonsense Features of Bodies of Knowledge', pp 117-32. For the final paragraph cited from Keddie's paper, p 156.
5. Michael F D Young, 'Educational Theorising: a radical alternative', **Education for Teaching** No 91, Summer 1973, p 11.
6. Michael F D Young, 'An Approach to the Study of Curricula as Socially Organised Knowledge', first delivered to the British Sociological Association annual conference 1970, in **Knowledge and Control**, pp 19 ff.
7. S J Eggleston, 'Knowledge and the School Curriculum', **Education for Teaching** No 91, Summer 1973, pp 12-18. He has a book forthcoming, it is here noted, **The Sociology of the School Curriculum** which will carry the discussion further.

riculum builder, we must decide what is “worthwhile”... Teachers have in mind certain cognitive skills, attitudes and interests which they encourage pupils to acquire by the provision of appropriate learning experiences. It is in this sense that we speak of curriculum objectives as the intended outcomes of learning.’

Taylor (1968) states that content, teaching methods and purpose constitute the operational curriculum but, by virtue of the effect which it has on these stipulations, organisation must feature, too, as an integral part of curriculum design. Apart from determining how the specified objectives are to be pursued, the content which is to be selected, and the teaching methods to be employed, organisation of the school, school day, and classroom justify equal attention. It is the failure to appreciate the relevance of organisational aspects that has caused misunderstanding in some schools when changing to a ‘progressive’ system, and has resulted in a breakdown of intentions.

A further consideration when planning the primary school curriculum is the role of the child. Throughout his schooling a child is maturing. Pickard (1965 p.9) says that maturation is the process of growth and development of mind, and should not be confused with the process of learning. During maturation the child is preparing for the years ahead when he will take his place in society. He is acquiring the values and customs of society, familiarising himself with the laws and history of his culture, and the rituals expected of him. He is attempting to form a picture of his environment, and discern where he fits within the picture. Growth, therefore, incorporates the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of the child, and it is the concern given to these aspects which has occasioned change in the curriculum in the primary school.

Minimal regard is paid to the developmental criteria with the traditional curriculum for, usually, the head teacher is the sole arbiter of what it contains. Having decided the organisation—normally streamed classes, class teaching, and sectionised teaching periods—he selects the curriculum content. This is a detailed ‘scheme of work’ to cover the respective years of the school, and stipulates the material to be taught within the years. The prerogative remaining to the teacher is method and this, more often than not, resolves itself into a ‘blanket’ approach for the whole class.

‘Progressive’ schools have removed from this rigidity of compartmentalisation. The children, no longer streamed by age and ability, are in non-streamed

situations which may entail groupings that span more than one year of a completely mixed ability range. They may not be in a ‘closed’ classroom but in an ‘open’ complex where either team or co-operative teaching is followed. Such organisational changes abandon the fixed time-table with the school day becoming integrated without defined times for certain activities or areas of work to be undertaken. With this change has come the adoption of the new approaches which enable the integration, also, of curriculum content by the use of projects, assignments, etc.

Although the acceptance of flexibility allows for the recognition of the child as an individual, provisions need to be made in the approach to learning in order to be able to meet the requirements. The teaching area, whether a classroom or ‘open’ complex, must be organised so that the children are conversant with the routines by which they are required to conform. They must be made aware of the activities with which they can engage, the materials, books, apparatus, etc at their disposal, the presentation of the work they are undertaking, and how they are able to secure the attention of the teacher when it is desired. All of these arrangements have to be organised by the teacher; they do not occur by chance.

Meanwhile, preparations are necessary by the teacher as to how she is to implement her teaching. The enumeration of objectives permits her to elicit the learning experiences appropriate to each child’s needs. Account should be taken of the physical, social, emotional and cognitive determinants, and the degrees of expectation appertaining in these spheres to the children. If the activities and modes of learning are to be at the individual pace and stage of psychological development of the children, systematised planning is essential. Consideration must be given to which aspects of curriculum content are relevant to specific children. The teacher must assess the appropriate time for introducing certain knowledge and skills to the children. She will determine which teaching methods suit particular learning experiences. Decisions will be necessary on which occasions it is deemed expedient to continue with individual learning or (for social reasons also) to group the children as a class.

Within the realm of curriculum content, account has to be taken whether disciplines can be integrated successfully or the desirability that some, eg reading and mathematics, should be specialised. If integration of content is adopted within the curriculum, some degree of balance should be sought by the teacher, otherwise the children will be deprived of certain subjects. Attention

to these prerogatives should not minimise the teacher's understanding of each child as an individual but, as Hirst and Peters (1970 pp.71/73) point out, the integration of subjects creates vast demands on the knowledge and ability of the teacher involved. In less competent hands, integrated work can degenerate easily into pursuits which have little or no educational value. Ideas can be given without relativity to learning, activities followed which are meaningless, and discoveries undertaken for no useful purpose. This aligns with Pring (1970) who states that curriculum integration is pursued frequently without any analysis of the nature of knowledge which in turn must indicate the lack of clear objectives. However interesting content integration may be, and however occupied some children may appear, it cannot be attempted unless the teacher has definite goals accruing from the exercise.

An indifferent appreciation by the teacher of the implementation of the curriculum can lead to a lack of regard of what is being achieved by the children. A system of evaluation should be instituted to gauge what learning is taking place, and that an attempt is being made to meet the children's other needs. Evaluation is an integral part of curriculum design as it entails the measurement of the means being used to secure the desired objectives. As such, evaluation is a continuous process that requires the keeping of records to show the progress (or otherwise) that each child is making, and is an indicator of whether the means are succeeding or failing in their purpose. All too often the blame for the lack of success is attributed to the children whereas the onus may be the teacher's with inadequate organisation, inappropriate materials, incorrect methods, and a failure to assess the children's learning abilities. Therefore, evaluation for the teacher is as much an evaluation of her endeavours of teaching as it is of children's attainment.

Although evaluation is offered to the teacher as the means for measuring her practice, examinable criteria are necessary before it can be operated. This, in turn, requires a theoretical understanding of what is being attempted. Educational theory is rejected by many teachers, but the implementation and validation of practice is irrelevant unless predetermined with a rationale. Curriculum design in the primary school, a purposeful delineation in theoretical terms, affords the teacher a clear-sighted appraisal of her intended practice and its subsequent outcomes.

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Newly Qualified Teachers

A new scheme for newly qualified teachers has been started. Teachers in their first year of teaching may take out a subscription to **Forum** for half the normal price, fifty pence (50p). Students in their last year at Colleges of Education (and those in University Education Departments) who wish to take advantage of this concession are asked to fill in the form below.

Name

Address

College

I shall be in my first teaching post in the Autumn of 1974. I enclose 50 pence for a reduced subscription to **Forum**. Return this form to the Business Manager, **Forum**, 11 Beacon Street, Lichfield.

Discussion

A Criticism

Two contributions to your Spring issue (Vol 16, No 2) call for comment. Having studied the report of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement on Science Education in Nineteen Countries, I was astonished to read that your reviewer, Guy Neave, had found in it evidence supporting the view that the mean level of science achievement in older children is higher in non-selective rather than selective systems of education. It may well be, but I'm afraid there is nothing in this report that enables one to make a judgment one way or another on this issue. The section from which this conclusion is extracted is in fact one of the most obscure of a number of almost equally obscure sections of the report. The statistical table which is presented in the review is, in fact produced by making, in the case of this country, at least two totally unjustifiable assumptions about the relationship that exists between the total and the sample population in the country. One is that it is assumed that everyone who does not go on to this later stage of schooling will have scores under those of the 25th percentile; the other is that school is the only institution in which science education takes place for pupils in the 16-18 age range. Both these assumptions are manifestly false and, as no attempt has been made to quantify them, any conclusions based on these assumptions must be dismissed as worthless. It is a pity that both the authors of the report, who did enter a half-hearted caution about interpreting their figures, and your reviewer, did not look a little more critically at this data. No cause is well served by a lack of rigour in the interpretation of suspect data.

The second comment concerns the rediscovery by my old friend Jim Eggleston of 'criterion tests'. A great deal could be said about this latest attempt to reconcile examining and

education but a few points will suffice for the present.

First, there is the underlying very doubtful assumption that education is about goals that are both known and capable of being specified. Secondly, there is the assumption that knowledge of particular criterion levels reached in specific skills is more useful to a future employer or educator than an umbrella statement. (One sees no evidence for this and, even if one did, would one consider it educationally desirable to introduce tests that might turn out to be more self-fulfilling than the eleven plus ever was?) Thirdly, there is the reinforcement of the pass/fail concept which is inherent in a 'criterion test' approach and, fourthly, there is the very great danger of curriculum stagnation inherent in any test that is mistakenly thought to have a time independent constancy. (Efforts to show whether or not reading skills have been depressed by modern methods indicate the dangers inherent in setting such a standard.)

There is, of course, no doubt, that a grade, expressive of general performance in a subject area, is destructive of information. So, too, is a 'criterion test' which does not specify the 'marks' gained on individual questions within that test. The problem is not one of information destruction. It is, for the society which the school serves, one of selection. And, as radicals, I would have thought readers of *Forum* would wish not only to see performance at school more independent of home, but also to see performance at work and in further education even more independent of achievement at school. Why should a failure to reach specified 'criterion levels' at school be held against a person for the rest of his life? Surely, given the variations that exist between schools, the need is not for more specific tests but for even more general ones which give employers and admissions tutors no grounds, other than random chance, for deciding who they take on in their establishments? The sad truth is that

'criterion tests' are just another red herring being dragged into the discussion of that total contradiction in terms which the expression 'examination reform' represents.

BRYAN R CHAPMAN,
Centre for Studies in Science Education, University of Leeds

And two replies

Professor Eggleston writes:

1) While it would be silly to assert that all the goals of education are known and capable of being specified, it is equally clear that some of the goals of education can be specified.

2) The assumption that information about attainments may be useful to 'employers and educators' may be true if this information can be made more accurate and specific. What may be much more important, however, is that it may be useful to the pupil in making informed choices about his own future.

3) If we accept as a preferred alternative to a reasonably precise formulation of achievement 'even more general ones' (than we have at present) then it is likely that one or a few trivial criteria may be used for judgment rather than a more comprehensive array of criteria some of which match the aspirations of teachers and pupils.

JIM EGGLESTON,
School of Education, University of Nottingham

And Dr Neave:

In reply to Mr Chapman's sundry observations. The importance of his criticism is, of course, inversely proportionate to the length of his letter. Obscurity – like obscenity – lies in the eye of the beholder. That he finds one passage obscure, whereas I do not, tells us nothing about it whatsoever.

Of course, students leaving school before 18 do not necessarily have science scores below the 25th percentile. But since those who continue their science education, even

through FE, are a miniscule proportion of all school leavers, his remark serves to reinforce a basic premiss of non-selective education: the more students remain in school, the less wastage of talent and ability.

Furthermore, since Mr Chapman's criticism must apply to all education systems where students quit school before 18 (even to Sweden where 85 per cent of the age group are still in full-time school based education at 17), it can pertain only to the world of religious – or statistical – perfection.

Thirdly, the title of the article involved schools alone.

Finally, though it would not be charitable to cast Mr Chapman in the role of the 'little Englander', I think I have anticipated his motives in the last paragraph of the article

'... tantine iniuria cenae
tam ieiuna fames, cum possuit
honestius illic
et temere et sordes farris
mordere canini.' (Juvenal, *Satires*)

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A comprehensive scheme for science teaching

The following is an outline of a course for all abilities in the first year of entry of a 13-18 sixteen-form-entry comprehensive school. The idea is applicable to any school but the one shown is designed for the special circumstances in one school.

Without getting involved in a complex debate about 'child-centred' or 'subject-centred' curricula, I see my own problem as this:

To arrange subject-matter so that all children are given an opportunity on their own terms (as far as possible) to be introduced to a view of the world which has a science bias.

Objectives must be simple and attainable:

1. To enable students to find their own levels and areas of interest.

2. To be able to assess and monitor Objective 1.

The Scheme

Briefly, the system consists of three-week stints of programmed or semi-programmed work, followed by a one-week discussion session in a Digression (D) period.

The three-week sessions are divided into three main bands of 'academic', 'outdoor', and 'society' science.

For the first term and a half, students would be free (depending on the outcome of D periods), to proceed further with 'A', 'O', or 'S', or to switch to any other of the three. In the second term, students then choose within their band, one of three branches.

These 'branches' are:

- A1 – biological sciences
- A2 – physical sciences
- A3 – integrated science
- O1 – plant and animal husbandry
- O2 – ecology
- O3 – construction, servicing and maintenance related to 'outdoor' activities
- S1 – science in art, music, history
- S2 – science in home/house
- S3 – conservation/environment/consumer

In the third term, after sampling (if necessary) in the three branches, students then settle down to do the work they have chosen in the fourth, fifth and sixth years.

Comments

1. The scheme is designed to be operated by eight teachers, taking two classes of thirty students each and using eight laboratories.

Programming (or individualised working) may tend to isolate the teacher and the students, so the role of the teacher in this scheme is of great importance and it is in the 'D' weeks that the teacher must act as counsellor, motivator, persuader, as well as science oracle when required, for it is anticipated that the 'D' week will provide opportunity for students' questioning which may be inhibited

during the 'work stints'. The 'D' week is most important, because it is in these weeks that the student decides whether to proceed with work already sampled or to change to another band.

The importance of the 'D' week can be seen by the fact that in that period the student decides, on the basis of help, advice and guidance from the teacher, where to work during the next 'work-stint'.

2. We have a lot of work to do, both writing courses and in the matter of assessment. Work has already started on the former and my present thinking on assessment is in the direction of the award of credits or certificates, indicating mastery over some particular task, problem or concept, rather than giving marks based on tests which have a 'science' framework.

It is most essential that every student is successful, and if it should be found that a worksheet or programme is so constructed that a student is having no success, then the work will have to be re-written so that the student does achieve success. Conversely, this method will also apply to a student who finds the work much too easy.

3. It might be argued that this is a mere shuffling of cards. It is not intended to be. I am spurred on to design new courses because I am convinced that all Nuffield and Schools Council science courses are not for all children. Lord Boyle (*T.E.S.* 11/1/74) said that 'the concept of existing science courses was still too difficult for all but the most able children. There was a lack of carefully thought-out strategy for mixed ability teaching in science'.

I am confident that the course as a whole will depart completely from the 'I am a scientist, going to teach you my bit of science' roundabout.

What this work sets out to do initially is to help students in a school where science is compulsory, to choose what they feel capable of, and are amenable to, doing.

D H LAWTHER,
Sittingbourne, Kent

The sixth former's concept of teacher-role

(Summary of a recent survey)

1. What the pupils think?

A great deal of armchair philosophising has taken place about the role of the teacher. Articles and books have been written which analyse teacher-role in sociological and psychological depth. Most of this literature, however, if it has been of an empirical nature, has tended to view the situation from the standpoint of either the teacher or part of his 'public' – the most important sector, i.e. the pupils, often being excluded. There are a few notable exceptions and it is interesting to note the findings of various researches over the years in relationship to this theme:

1. Kratz (1896). His findings suggested that above all children expected 'help in study'.

2. Hollis (1930). He noted that children expected patient help in problem solving.

3. Michael (1951) (in America). His researches supported the view that older adolescents judged methodology in teaching to be important.

Musgrove F W (1961) *et al* have contributed important findings in their research of pupils' expectations of teacher-role. However, there would seem to be uneven research into the concept of teacher-role since, even taking into consideration what has been written, the pupils' viewpoint is hardly represented in comparison with the volume of literature which teachers have written about themselves!

Bearing some of these factors in mind, it seemed that it would be useful to investigate the sixth former's concept of his teacher's role. The findings of the survey are clearly of particular interest to teachers who are involved with sixth forms in large comprehensives which are somewhat removed from the more 'traditional'

sixth forms of the small grammar school. The basic assumption behind the research was that sixth formers would have a new image and set of expectations of their teacher's role and its performance.

2. The findings

Four comprehensives were involved in the inquiry. Two schools had a catchment area which could be termed rural, the other two schools had a catchment area which was industrial. Two hundred sixth formers were involved in the investigation. They completed adjective check-lists which aimed at giving a profile of the personal qualities of their 'ideal' teacher and a questionnaire which included concepts of role performance, social distance and the degree of teacher involvement in directing their studies.

The findings indicated that the sixth formers expected a 'natural' gap to exist between the teachers and themselves in a social setting; for instance they did not expect to visit a teacher's home informally. In a work situation they expected a relationship of collaboration rather than subordination. They anticipated receiving direction from their teacher but also to be allowed to make decisions for themselves. It was interesting to note that 70 per cent of the sample of 200 sixth formers had expectations of being taught vocationally biased subjects. There are clearly curriculum implications here and if school resources are lacking, pointers towards extending collaboration with Colleges of Further Education in the form of more linked courses.

The personal profile which emerged of the teacher was that of an informed adult who was not a 'rubber' man. Their 'blue print' for a teacher of the seventies had the following components:

a) an individual who was organised in his work but possessing personal warmth; being exceptionally clever was not important;

b) certain personal qualities surprisingly in some cases carried little weight. The age of a teacher, marital status or conventional morals were not considered as important.

The profile indicated also that the sixth formers' concept of a teacher was removed from the public stereotype of a teacher which tends to be that of a 'conformist'. The image was that of a teacher who had authority (as opposed to authoritarianism) in his relationship with his pupils but who was also an understanding person with a sense of humour. The pupils dismissed the notion of predictability in the performance of teacher-role. It is possible that the pupils associated predictability with boredom. The sort of teacher they sought was a person who possessed chiefly a quality which can only be termed as 'genuineness' irrespective of age, qualifications or social status. It is refreshing to note that the sixth formers did not give weight to the more superficial personal qualities but favoured qualities which were more than 'skin deep'.

3. Conclusion

Most teachers are hopefully sensitive to the expectations of their pupils, but it is easy to become complacent and adopt a role which takes into account only our perceptions of its performance and then begin to wonder why we meet with conflict. Indeed, public pressure can sometimes induce us to perform our role in a way which perhaps, as educators of children, we know might not be a true performance. For instance, a plea for rigid discipline in circumstances which do not require such controls on behaviour. If there is to be a real relationship between ourselves and our pupils in which intellectual development can take place, then frequent re-assessment of our role, its performance in relationship to our role-set, and, against a backdrop of progressive social change, is very necessary.

It became apparent from the

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Comprehensive Education for the 16-19 Age Group

FORUM REPORTER

Interrelations and interactions between schools and FE Colleges in promoting education for those over 16—this was the subject of the annual conference organised by *Forum* and the Campaign for Comprehensive Education this year. Held at Friends Meeting House, London, on 29 June, it attracted teachers and representatives of LEAs, governing bodies, parents organisations—about 180 in all.

Those presiding over morning and afternoon sessions represented the two chief institutions involved—Dame Margaret Miles, formerly head of a notable London comprehensive school, and Fred Flower, Principal of Kingsway College for Further Education. Five speakers gave a brief outline of varying developments and over thirty contributions came from the floor.

Opening the conference Margaret Miles outlined the aim—to consider how far the various patterns developing are compatible, or can be made compatible, with the principles of non-selective comprehensive education. It was not intended to go into such problems as examinations but to gather experience of what exactly is going on—in terms of provision in school or FE college or combination of the two—and how far it meets the needs of the majority.

This was the trend of subsequent discussion. The atmosphere was cooperative—little dogmatism, no confrontations, though problems and dissensions were freely aired. The emphasis was on formulating guidelines, assessing new departures, and defining the necessary conditions for further advance.

New forms of cooperation vary considerably. At Barnstaple a single college (formerly a technical and FE college) now provides all post-16 courses, part-time and full-time, for North Devon (while also continuing some specialist courses drawing students from a wider area). The college draws on four 11-16 schools with some 3,000 pupils in this age range, and these five institutions make up the Barnstaple Reorganisation Complex.

An Academic Board for the Barnstaple Area (ABBA) is the directing body, an initiating and innovating one, educationally rather than administratively oriented. It comprises the four school heads, the college principal and vice-principal (who is also director of studies to the complex and as such responsible to the LEA) and, from the LEA, the chief adviser and adviser on curriculum development.

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findings of the inquiry that the sixth formers did not expect either a 'permissive' teacher or a remote academic conformist. Perhaps, charisma and leadership are the words which spring to mind in consideration of the findings. Have we forgotten these in our efforts to stress in teacher training the components of affectivity and neutrality in the relationship between pupil and teacher? There is a time for these components, but it would seem not at the expense of good old-fashioned charisma and leadership. Is the 'seventies' teacher so very different from the teacher of past decades? Certainly authoritarian

teachers cannot survive the pressures from large alienated adolescent groups in schools, yet the sixth formers expected authority in their relationship with their teacher—an authority, perhaps, such as exists between the initiated and the uninitiated. There are many questions which have been left unanswered in this discussion, but it is hoped that it will begin to provoke us as teachers to take a suspecting glance at ourselves.

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This functional connection of heads and advisory staff, fostered by the LEA, is a new departure. And a fruitful one, in the view of Peter Lineham, vice-principal of the college and director of studies more generally, who gave the account.

The West Oxfordshire Centre of Advanced Education, again fostered by the LEA, also comprises four schools and a college, but in this case all five provide post-16 courses. Here there is a directorate comprising the five heads and a secretariat consisting of a senior member from each institution whose main function is to administer a common system of entry. These two bodies come together as a management board about every six weeks. And the authority has recognised the need for top level planning by appointing a joint panel of governors, drawn from the boards of governors of all the (constituent institutions). This meets twice a year with the management board to receive full reports.

The most significant aspect, said Mr B H C Robinson, head of Henry Box School, Witney, is that the LEA has left the educational institutions to operate the entire scheme in cooperation, provided that staffing ratios are observed.

Other solutions

In Leicestershire, where the break is at 14, subsequent courses are provided in the upper schools, which are now becoming community colleges, and, in parallel with these, in FE Colleges. The Principal of Bosworth College, Timothy Rogers, said that 60% of his students opt to stay on after 16, but honest assessment, both of their social and educational needs and of available resources, reduces this to 50%. The others could best find what they sought in FE colleges or employment. By contrast in West Oxfordshire the proportion staying on after 16, which has been steadily increasing, was 37% last year.

At Darlington, as in North Devon, there are 11-16 comprehensive schools but two separate colleges provide post-16 courses—a sixth form college and a technical college which also offers A level courses. There was a plan to combine these but, after long delay, Mrs Thatcher turned it down, aided by the fact that all the teachers' unions were opposed. Now, under local government reorganisation, a new LEA has taken over, Durham County Council, which appears to be considering a rationalisation; that is, to confine A level courses only to the sixth form college.

At present—according to Mr P G E Griffin who became head of the sixth form college last January—cooperation between the two colleges, each of which has the characteristics of its type, is minimal. This is in large part because of the attitude of the staff of the sixth form college which developed from a boys' grammar school.

But there are wide differences. The technical college, with new and lavishly equipped buildings and serving a considerable area, has 400 full-time students, 7,000 part time, 175 full-time and 220 part-time teachers and over 50 ancillary staff. The sixth form college, less well housed and equipped, has 450 students, 45 teachers, three lab technicians and a half-time library assistant.

While most of the students in the sixth form college come from Darlington, only 50 full-time students at the technical college do. Between them the two take 380 such students from a possible 1200-1300. A common front is presented to the schools insofar as representatives from each visit together to present post-16 opportunities. But in the nature of the case these are rival recruiting agents.

In all these instances there was stress on the fact that provision is now much better, for those over 16, than it was before reorganisation. But there was no attempt to minimise the problems of coordination, which entail much time and effort even within a single institution as at Barnstaple, not only because of the inherent difficulty of working out the requisite courses but also the different traditions and habits of schools and colleges and their staffs.

Problems of cooperation

While the outlook of a former grammar school staff appears to be the problem at Darlington, in West Oxfordshire the technical college staff have been upset. For initially cooperation was between this college and a single grammar school, but the county has since 'gone comprehensive' and the college is now linked with four 11-18 schools. Consequently there is a fear that it may lose A level courses, or otherwise be pressed aside by the schools.

Equally, should A level courses be removed from the Darlington technical college, existing difficulties may be underlined. As it is courses vary considerably there. The sixth form college has 29 A level and 26 O level options and a flexible combination of subjects. The

technical college has 19 A level and 17 O level courses in inflexible combinations—in addition to 5 OND courses, 6 two-year vocational courses with an O level entry requirement, 6 with none.

The problem here is that there is insufficient encouragement for the middle range pupil to stay on, let alone the late developer. Paradoxically, the technical college has entry requirements, the sixth form college does not, but on the other hand its courses are mostly unsuitable for the less able pupil. At present there is only an odd CSE, some 'AO' courses, and a possibility next year of CEE; though facilities are provided to resit GCE.

On the other hand the prospectus of the West Oxfordshire Technical College proclaims that, like the schools, it is non-selective and provides, besides a range of recognised courses both academic and vocational, 'general courses designed to provide the less able student with some basic educational and social skills before starting work.' By comparison, the school programmes in the same publication of the West Oxfordshire Centre of Advanced Education, tend to emphasise A level work. Only one of the four institutions involved specifies CSE—a former modern school, while a former grammar school doubts there will be enough students for O level courses in the sixth unless there is combination with other institutions within the centre. Of the 21 A level subjects offered at the technical college most are in science, with, also, English, French, geography, art, economic and social history, sociology.

When such points, relating to organisation, were taken up from the floor it was argued that the points system, according a high rating to A level courses, is the main factor putting things out of focus. Schools apart, this deflects colleges from meeting local FE needs. But in London there are moves to channel funds to pre-O level courses, create sub-O level work and have senior lecturers coordinating this. It is also envisaged that there should be a spread of function as between local and area colleges and that FE should be placed end-on to higher education.

The social mix

The rigid departmental division in colleges was one of the problems emerging, the lack of coordination within these. One of the merits of the single college is that it forcibly mixes teachers of different ideas and backgrounds. Even if the result may be abrasive this

is healthy and provides a stimulus to sorting things out. Moreover with a preponderance of part-time students the 'tertiary' college, as at Barnstaple, is likely to give these—the majority of those over 16 in education—full attention.

As for coordination between institutions, there is the problem that LEAs usually have two departments dealing with schools and colleges. On the other hand, as was emphasised, where there is coordination, it is largely because of the initiative of the LEAs concerned.

When there is a 'mixed economy' said a college principal, the LEA's role is both crucial and novel—even unnatural in relation to former patterns. Hitherto it has been provider of resources, made over to others to use. Now it must overview an area and see its resources in terms of institutions—which implies interference with these, or intervention. This calls for adjustments and a new outlook on both sides.

An example from Harrow of healthy administrative intervention is that a working party of heads and officials has been set up to get some common thinking. The new Rotherham LEA is appointing an FE adviser to further collaboration between a sixth form college, an FE college, 11-18 comprehensives and colleges of education.

Leeds, said an assistant education officer, has set up two working parties to go into the needs of the 16-19 age groups and future development of both FE and adult education. Another assistant education officer deprecated too easy a dichotomy between teachers thinking in educational terms, LEAs in financial terms. A former teacher, he had witnessed earlier professional differences about secondary reorganisation. Now colleges were replicating the experience, a salutary one.

Other speakers underlined the importance of avoiding discouragement of the 16 year old wishing to continue; eg of providing opportunities for resitting O level whatever the form of institution available as well as a range of choice. While colleges do not do badly by able students who know what they want, they invariably fall down in the case of those who are uncertain; nor will CEE be of help here though within the framework something might be developed. A teacher in a college with 1400 full-time students, 600 following academic 'sixth form' courses and the rest not, said there is no sign of mixing; this is by no means automatic.

As for the break at 16, both Mr Lineham and Mr Griffin who had previously taught in comprehensive schools, said that they had feared this. But with thorough

preparation and a good liaison problems could be overcome. Because the 16-year old has to take decisions about his future, a quite new level of personal and vocational guidance is evoked. At Barnstaple this has led to close cooperation between teachers and advisers, with the careers service linked in with education.

Dr Edmund King, of King's College, London, outlined the position elsewhere in Europe where similar problems are being tackled. There has been an enormous increase in enrolments, both the size and speed of growth are unprecedented. Here, in 1964, there were 14.5% in full-time education up to 18. Last year (according to figures extracted with difficulty from the DES) there were 36%. But France has 46%—about the average proportion in other countries, though in Sweden the figure is 85% of whom 17% are returners for both academic and vocational subjects.

Administrators are contending with a changing structure of employment, the 'uncertain' young adult, the need for more provision for girls. But the new factor is a new **kind** of young adult and that it is the first time any school system has had to cope with so many—a new type situation. More specific questions should be seen as the idiom of a particular country and efforts made to recognise the **generic** problem—though it takes various forms in different countries and to this extent there may be differing solutions.

Fred Flower underlined that any attempt to rationalise all provision for the 16-19 age group in a single institution—either FE or school—would be premature. What is important at present is dialogue and interaction and he would deprecate any sudden attempt to close the gap, for reasons of economy or administrative convenience, before educationists do so themselves.

A common curriculum?

It is within the organisational context that there are efforts to extend educational opportunities, to provide a more comprehensive education, and this aspect was also discussed.

An introductory talk by Malcolm Skilbeck, professor of education at the New University of Ulster, Coleraine, examined the complexities of discussing a common curriculum. From whose standpoint should it be common—that of teachers, pupils, parents? A variety of experiences and perceptions are operative in recognising common ground. Then, even if school

and college teach the same syllabus this alone does not override wide variations in attitude and ethos.

Secondly, various kinds of case can be made for a common core—in terms of a common culture, greater equality, universal educational elements. The obstacles are, however, great and some may easily be listed. Pupils look for quite different things from continuing education, teachers differ in outlook, professional competence, and attitude to a common curriculum, there is the examination structure epitomising assumptions about bands of ability, and much conservative criticism.

But at another level things that need doing may clearly be recognised. (1) A cooperative effort to agree on objectives by teachers and by teachers and pupils together. (2) The working out of a broad general framework within which choice can be exercised alongside universal elements. (3) More help to pupils in defining their objectives. (4) Positive steps to foster inter-institutional relations locally. (5) Provision for two staples of a common curriculum—the civic element and interpersonal relations, including sex education.

In sum, no one can disagree about the need to discuss practical ways of moving towards a **more** common curriculum. And this is the form the discussion mainly took. Practical examples cited, in relation to the institutions covered, indicated that many working parties have been established to probe and study this issue. The problems of inter-departmental cooperation at Barnstaple were indicated—where single departments may have up to 30 full-time staff—but advances have been made in formulating a general studies course.

The main difficulties in planning courses are (1) providing the kind of certification which helps motivate students, by satisfying them and their parents, without letting it become dominant; (2) convincing teachers that traditional academic and vocational courses need much closer scrutiny than many are at present ready to give them; (3) related to this, the need to learn to **redeploy** rather than tack on extra courses—as is necessary when resources are limited—which implies uncomfortable reappraisals for some.

Another point emphasised concerned changes in the employment pattern. There are now fewer in manufacturing industry so education need not be so job-oriented as formerly, but rather seen in terms of a multi-job career. This again points to the need for a more general, rather than a specific education.

Southampton had colleges from 16 with traditional sixth form courses, much like Darlington. So a queue

built up of those wanting an alternative—a more general education, neither academic nor vocational, and treatment as mature students. This is what is lacking—nor will CEE provide it. It was emphasised that girls particularly need a course of general education given few other options under 18 and the need for this as a base for later courses.

A possible balance of 20% common core and 80% elective in the curriculum was suggested. But attention was drawn to the common experience there is outside school or college, making for something nearer a balance of 50/50. Perhaps it would help to think of the curriculum in terms of skills and concepts necessary to the average pupil, as is done for earlier stages.

Young adults are of various kinds, some want to stay in school and be looked after, some can't wait to go. For several the discussion reinforced a feeling that 11-18 comprehensives are the perfect solution for many, but there must be an outlet for those who want to get out.

Fred Flower underlined how new the problems are. Up to 1947, apart from an extremely small section, adolescents were in the home or at work—they were not the responsibility of schools or educationists, who are now expected to do an unfamiliar job.

An adolescent need is to identify with and try out roles—to find adults to interact with, discuss with, measure themselves against. In institutions there are only teachers—not the most typical section of the population but a very specialised one.

This underlines the advantages of mixing adults and adolescents. At present most FE colleges are not sufficiently large, but there can be a perspective of many more adults studying alongside adolescents who do not yet know where they are going.

Some conclusions

Summing up Brian Simon, co-editor of *Forum* and professor of education at Leicester University, outlined some of the main points made. As against the stage of compulsory schooling, comprehensive education for the 16-19's must be envisaged in terms of the whole range of 'volunteers' for part-time and full-time courses and be responsive to particular demands and needs.

Not until the whole age group is involved can there

really be talk of comprehensive education—so a first target is to increase the proportion. Meanwhile attention is turning to a possible common core, objectives which facilitate a common educational experience, ways in which individual experiences may be cemented by common relationships.

Not so long ago the issue was non-streaming in the junior school; then the 11-14 stage in comprehensive schools where a common core has increasingly been found feasible, in some cases in a non-streamed situation. Now schools are working out a core for the 14-15's and the next stage has come up for discussion.

Only as more direct experience accumulates can there be greater clarity. But the issue is being tackled in a variety of settings, despite the problem created by the deepseated dichotomy between academic and vocational studies and institutions differing in terms of history, ethos, internal organisation, teacher attitudes.

Solutions range from a pattern coordinating many institutions to the concentration of choices in a single one. In between are consortia, linked courses, looser forms of cooperation. Among pressures noted are a demand for a new form of general education, both from pupils and because of changes in the employment pattern. Here, at least, the technological, economic and educational fall into line.

The experience of other countries warns that the new kind of demand from young adults of the 1970's has tended to increase very rapidly. It was a cardinal mistake in the past to plan secondary schooling in terms of existing provision and current demand, so enshrining institutions which in time became the chief barrier to advance. The discussion had shown an awareness of the dynamics of the situation and the need to allow for growth—implying resistance to any premature demand for rationalisation for other than educational reasons.

Fluid, flexible, organic—these terms, used by Malcolm Skilbeck, suggest variety in a context of wholeness, that a unified form of growth is a desirable aim. In pursuing it there is much to learn from those already well on the way, from both their dissensions and problems and their achievements.

*Verbatim reports of some of the introductory talks at this conference will be published in **Comprehensive Education**, journal of the Campaign for Comprehensive Education.*

Community Involvement in Chinese Education

Peter Mauger

Peter Mauger is head of the education department, Coventry College of Education. He visited China in April 1972 and reports here on his impressions.

With the growing emphasis on community schools in this country, it is instructive to observe the efforts of the Chinese leadership to involve the whole people in every aspect of education. A visit to China, described elsewhere¹, and subsequent reading has impressed on me the degree to which Chinese peasants and workers do in fact play a very active part in education from kindergarten to university and beyond.

Even after the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty in 1911, Chinese education was still one of the most élitist in the world. The long period of preparation before taking the examinations which alone qualified men for positions in the administration, conferring great privilege and power, as well as the very nature of those examinations, placed these positions in practice beyond the reach of the overwhelming majority of the people. Thus, if the revolution was to be accomplished this system must be smashed and replaced by one in which the people played a full part.

Education expanded enormously between liberation in 1949 and 1966, but in content and method it altered little. There was a constant struggle between the two lines, the one led by Mao Tse-tung insisting that mass education was the only way to build socialism, and the other led by Liu Shao-chi, later to be characterised in the Cultural Revolution as the leading revisionist, who said in 1956, 'universal education is still not too urgent now. The question now is still higher education and the need for specialists'.

By 1966 China's socialist economy was well established, but the educational system still favoured the sons and daughters of the former bourgeoisie and leading Party people who were able to gain entry for their children to certain especially favoured schools which more or less guaranteed entry to higher education and so to posts in the country's administration. Soong Ching-ling, Sun Yat-sen's widow, wrote in 1965:

'It is unimaginable to think that after our working people made such sacrifices to win power we should fritter it away just by neglecting to educate succeeding generations in what it took to obtain that victory. To think only of their present happiness, of exposing them only to the "peaceful sunshine" and "clear blue skies" would be wrong and doing an injustice to their future well-being . . . the working people must educate their children from the standpoint of the working class.'

The Cultural Revolution

These were the reasons for the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to about 1968, or more properly perhaps the first Cultural Revolution, since Mao Tse-tung has said that many more will be needed before full socialism is achieved. The extraordinary, indeed unique, character of this revolution was that it was called into existence by Mao Tse-tung against the bureaucratic sections of the communist party; it was an enormous mass movement of students, workers and peasants. There is no space here to describe this fascinating era: suffice it to say that schools (which had been closed) were re-opened from about 1968 with very general prescriptions giving great freedom of interpretation and opportunity for adjustment to local conditions. Mao Tse-tung had given this advice: 'There is no construction without destruction. Destruction means criticism and repudiation, it means revolution. It involves reasoning things out which is construction. Put destruction first, and in the process you have construction.'

The general principles upon which schools were re-opened can be summarised as follows:

Courses should be fewer and better.

The length of school life should be shortened.

Education must be combined with productive labour.

Politics is the soul, the commander of everything.

Most teachers are comparatively good and should be encouraged to join the struggle and emancipate themselves in the course of it.

Leadership in education should be firmly in the hands of peasants, working class and the People's Liberation Army, and each educational institution should be managed by a revolutionary committee including these elements and also, of course, teachers, parents and pupils.

A New Type of Schooling

Schools re-opened and out of the experiences of the Cultural Revolution curriculum and administration were transformed. The Ministries of Education and

Higher Education had been abolished during the Cultural Revolution, and have not yet been re-introduced. Of the many plans formulated during this period the one that received the greatest attention came from a county in Kirin Province and has become known as the Kirin Programme. It was introduced by a long article in the *People's Daily* on 12th May, 1969. The editorial note accompanying the draft programme is illuminating in its invitation to study and adapt the programme to local conditions encouraging local initiative.

'We are publishing the "Programme for primary and middle school education in the rural areas (draft)" worked out by the revolutionary committee of Lishu county, Kirin province, for general discussion. The programme was drafted by the revolutionary committee of the county in co-operation with other departments. We made some modifications after consulting the poor and lower-middle peasants, teachers and students in a number of communes. Some of the differing views are put in brackets. We hope that the poor and lower-middle peasants, revolutionary teachers and students and the People's Liberation Army commanders and fighters supporting agriculture throughout the country as well as the comrades concerned on the revolutionary committee in various provinces, regions and counties will take an active part in this discussion and put forward their suggestions for additions or modifications. This will help us pool the wisdom of the masses, sum up experience and take into consideration the diverse conditions in various localities. We shall be able to improve and enrich the content of the programme and make it more suitable to the actual conditions in various places after it is discussed for some time and revised.'

The draft programme covered every aspect of education. Primary and middle schools in the rural areas were to be managed by the working peasants, the aim being to educate the young people to be 'reliable successors to the cause of the proletarian revolution'; the prime aims of political and ideological work was emphasised.

An uninterrupted nine-year system of schooling was recommended, local needs and conditions determining the division into stages. Schools should be local community schools, the old system of examinations should be abolished and with it the practice of pupils repeating a year.

The job of hiring and firing teachers was placed in the hands of the appropriate revolutionary committees after full discussion by the working peasants. The curriculum was suggested in broad terms, eg, that of the primary school was proposed as follows:

'Five courses are to be given in primary school: politics

and language, arithmetic, revolutionary literature and art, military training and physical culture, and productive labour.

Five courses are to be given in middle school: education in Mao Tse-tung thought (including modern Chinese history, contemporary Chinese history and the history of the struggle between the two lines within the Party), basic knowledge for agriculture (including mathematics, physics, chemistry and economic geography), revolutionary literature and art (including language), military training and physical culture (including the study of Chairman Mao's concepts on people's war, strengthening the idea of preparedness against war, and activities in military training and physical culture), and productive labour.

With regard to the importance of the various courses, politics is of primary importance and should be put first in order, relative to productive labour and general knowledge and culture. But in arranging time, more periods should be given to courses in general knowledge and culture. It is appropriate for these courses to account for about 60 per cent of the periods for study in middle school and not less than 70 per cent in primary school.'

During our visit in April 1972 we were able to see how the Kirin programme was working out in practice. Every revolutionary committee, which combines the functions of our Boards of Governors and Staff Councils, was chaired by a peasant or worker. At Peking University, for example, the Vice-Chairman was Chou Pei-yuan, a world-renowned physicist, and the Chairman a young 32-year-old worker from the nearby printing works. At Nanxiang the chairman of the revolutionary committee managing all the schools in the commune was a middle-aged peasant who clearly understood the guiding principles behind the schools and conversed with authority and friendliness with the teachers present. We asked them how the Kirin programme had influenced their management of the eight primary and 13 middle schools in the commune, and though the question must have been unexpected, the answers were given fluently and with confidence, indicating that they were fully familiar with the draft programme. They had adapted it to suit their conditions, adding a foreign language (being so near Shanghai, the leading industrial port in the country), increasing the length of schooling from nine to ten years (because they felt able to do this), and paying more attention to mathematics.

At Liu Ling, just outside Yen-an, the chairman of the revolutionary committee managing the school was a working peasant, illiterate before liberation, and it was clear to us that the people of the commune were running and financing their own schools.

Higher Education

Since the cultural revolution, in an effort to increase the percentage of working class and peasants in higher education, the whole selection process has been transformed. No longer can young people go straight on to higher education after completing middle school (our secondary school). Instead they must spend at least two years in a factory or working on a commune in the countryside. Each year available places in institutions of higher education are allocated by regional revolutionary committees to communes and factories. Candidates have to make written application and these applications are discussed in detail by their workmates, their good qualities and shortcomings being openly and frankly expressed. The applications are then forwarded to the regional revolutionary committee which sends them on to the higher education institution concerned. The criteria for selection are:

1. Completion of middle schooling.
2. At least two years in work on a factory or commune.
3. Good socialist consciousness, proved in practice; that is, the approval of workmates of suitability for higher education.
4. Good health.
5. In general aged from 21-24 and unmarried.

This method of selection is regarded extremely seriously, as shown in these extracts from an article in the journal *Red Flag* (September 1973):

'The question of whom to enrol and train is directly related to the political orientation of education. Under the rule of the revisionist line in education before the Cultural Revolution, the old entrance examination system of enrolling college students was a major trick by bourgeois intellectuals to dominate the schools. Superficially, it meant that "everyone is equal before marks" but, in essence, it meant dictatorship of culture by the bourgeoisie aimed at shutting the door to colleges to workers, peasants and soldiers and their children. It directed young people down the wrong road of "studying in order to become officials" and "giving first place to intellectual development" and enticed them into climbing the "tiny pagoda" or the steps to becoming an intellectual aristocrat. Colleges began to reform the system of enrolment after Chairman Mao's July 21 instruction, thus satisfying the wish of millions upon millions of workers, peasants and soldiers. The selection of college students from among workers, peasants and soldiers is a revolution in the history of education and an important achievement of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution . . . Students should be selected primarily on the basis of their political consciousness and practical experience.

The educational test is given to verify the student's practical experience and ability to analyse and solve questions in practice by using fundamental knowledge. Thus the selection can be well made on the basis of moral, intellectual and physical qualities, not on the basis of memorisation of middle school texts . . . The right of enrolling students is now in the hands of the masses. This embodies the leadership of the working class and the supervision of education by the workers and peasants.'

An article in *Peking Review*, 21st September, 1973, emphasises the responsibility of the people in this task, 'To invest the masses with the power of enrolling university students as is done today embodies working-class leadership and supervision by the worker and peasant masses in education. Here recommendation by the masses is basic, not something to be trifled with as mere formality. The masses know best who are up to the requirements to go to the university and who are not and they are the best qualified to give recommendations. It is wrong for decisions to be taken by a few people behind the backs of the masses.'

Education must be combined with productive labour

This slogan is an essential part of Chinese education today at all stages. Even in some kindergartens children help in the productive process. For instance, in a Canton kindergarten we saw four-year-olds trimming the rough edges off toothpaste tube caps with blunt scissors and bending little cardboard cartons into shape. They took obvious pride in their work and we were told that workers from the factories concerned regularly visited them and made them feel that even at their tender age they were an active working part of the whole community.

Primary and middle schools have their production workshops and at a middle school in Peking, for instance, instead of the ubiquitous pipe rack the pupils were making parts for transistors, printed circuits and the wiring for the electrical distribution system of the Peking two-ton delivery truck. Workers from these factories did regular stints of teaching the pupils and we were told that this was common all over China. In fact the distinction between worker and teacher was becoming blurred, giving point to Chairman Mao's dictum 'Every capable person can teach'. This regular contact with workers in the factories which sometimes takes place in school workshops and sometimes in the

factories themselves, and the equally regular work on the communes that every school child experiences every year, bring them into close contact with the working people of China. The teachers also participate in this work, 'learning from the peasants and labouring people', thus guarding against the danger of regarding themselves as a privileged élite.

Examinations

Controversies over examinations rage as fiercely in China as in this country. There have been attempts in some higher education institutions to reintroduce entrance examinations as the final step of the selection process described above. Chang Tieh-sheng, for example, faced an examination in physics and chemistry for entrance to Tsinghai University in Peking last June, after five years working on a commune, where he was so well regarded by his workmates that they had made him a production team leader. Instead of answering the questions he wrote a letter to the examiners, raising these questions about examinations:

1. What do they test – book knowledge or the ability to analyse and solve problems?
2. How important is the examination in relation to performance in work and ideology?
3. What effect does the examination have on the student?

He complained that the examination came at the busiest season as far as commune workers were concerned, and he believed that his sound basic general knowledge, his good work experience and his increased political consciousness qualified him for a university place. The letter was published locally and in the *People's Daily*, and discussed all over China. The resultant public pressure not only resulted in his admission to Tsinghai University to study water conservancy, but in the decision that in 1973 examinations would play no part in the selection of students. And Peking University has decided that all new students will be given a six months general course before starting their main subject.

Peking University has also pioneered a unique 'graduation examination'. Feng Hsien-ming, a student in the economics department, told *Hsinhua News Agency* (5th January, 1974) how he and eleven other students took their graduation examinations at a nearby coal mine. They were asked by the miners to lecture

on various topics of socialist political economy. They worked three months on investigating labour productivity and then prepared 16 lectures, which were later printed by the coal mines as reference material for the miners to study political economy. At the end of the three months the students were accompanied back to the university by a dozen worker representatives who said to the school authorities: 'We miners think these students are up to standard.'

Community involvement could hardly go further!

No one, least of all the Chinese themselves, who constantly emphasise their shortcomings and ask for criticism, would claim that these examples are as yet typical. But everyone we met was keenly aware of the primacy of education in the development of a socialist China, and was also convinced education was a lifelong process in which they were involved every day, and that it was too important a matter to be left to the teachers. The whole community was responsible for, and actively engaged in education at every stage.

¹ **Education in China**, published by the Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute, 24 Warren Street, London W1P 5DG, January 1974, 30p.



A Confusion of Expectations

Annabelle Dixon

A member of the **Forum** Editorial Board, with experience of teaching in primary schools in London, Annabelle Dixon has now been teaching at the International School at Geneva for two years.

Ask children to draw a picture of school, and the chances are, even if they themselves have experienced nothing but the most modern of buildings and the most child-centred of education, that they will draw desks in rows and a teacher clad in gown and mortar-board, a cane in one hand and a piece of chalk in the other. Stereotypes seem as attractive to children as they are to adults, and they bear about the same distant relationship to real experience as instant custard does to the genuine article.

Nonetheless, the power of stereotypes is not to be underestimated; one of the more salutary things about working in the kind of international school where I am teaching at the moment, is the degree to which one finds oneself responding in terms of cultural stereotypes. Needless to say, the topic of 'national character' is discussed often and at length, the more seasoned hands offering the benefit of their experiences and a fund of anecdotes. The benefit seems to be that, for every instance confirming a stereotype, a counter-instance can be quoted. Untidy, but vitally necessary in this kind of school if stereotype is not to take the next, predictable step into prejudice.

Cultural stereotypes seem to be largely limited to statements about national temperament however, ie the excitability of the Italians, the openness of Americans, the charm of the Irish etc; their informative value is little if one wants or needs, to know anything else. What is interesting to an international school is whether or not there are certain, recognisable national or cultural attitudes to education and children. Perhaps, hardly surprisingly, this does seem to be the case: what is of particular interest is whether this is further compounded by social class, occupation and/or socio-economic status. That is to say, in this context, what would the differences in attitude towards education be between upper-middle class, well-off Turks, and, say, middle class professional Americans; or, changing it about, wealthy upper-middle class Americans

and professional middle class Turks? Generalising, perhaps rashly, I would say that the impression is similar to that which I formed in England, ie, those who have pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps (to encapsulate many a weighty sociological statement) are those who are most concerned and have the strongest attitudes on this subject.

These differences in attitudes hold more than academic interest, however, as any expectations of school and education are based on such attitudes. An international school, like most other multi-national organisations, is fraught with misunderstandings on a greater or lesser scale, and many of these can be traced to this confusion in expectations. It sounds a relatively simple, even foreseeable matter until one tries to sort out who is actually doing the confusing, let alone analyse the nature of the variously confusing expectations. And this on a relatively restricted subject: I have read many scathing and cynical comments about the UN but the very fact that its members are still more less on speaking terms, I now respectfully recognise to be no mean achievement.

I can only describe the kinds of confusion in expectations that have come my way, teaching as I have done here, a class of eight/nine year olds and a reception class of five year olds. Interestingly both showed up a subtle difference in parental expectation according to the age of child I was teaching, a point I shall elaborate further on. As I indicated above though, the problems of whose expectations are confusing whom, mean that it is not just a simple one of parental attitude and expectation. It was, I realised, mine as well. A realisation that was as good for the soul as it was helpful in foreseeing future misunderstandings.

Like many students, I had a course in comparative education when I was at college, the outcome of which I'm ashamed to say, was merely to reinforce the thankfulness I felt at being British, rather than to stimulate me into further reflection. I'm still unrepentantly thankful

that I'm a British teacher, but there's nothing like a spell at teaching in an international school to make one realise the extent of one's own unverballed set of assumptions and the reality and force of other national education systems. It has often been the odd comment or observation that has thrown it into sudden perspective: the Japanese parent who was anxious to know when all the class were going to be allowed to copy the best pupil in each subject; the interested surprise of a Swiss visitor that order could be kept without pulling at the children's ears; the worry of an American mother that if her child was to stay in the same class at six, as he had been at five, he would be bored by having to repeat exactly the same work.

On the whole, I have found that most parents seem to expect that their children will receive the same kind of educational régime that they would have received had they been in their own country, and are often puzzled when they realise the differences. Some, though, seem to have followed a comparative education course in their own country and come knowing what to expect if their child has a British teacher. A mid-west American, ex-teacher herself, said she had read of the British approach to primary education—'It doesn't work, you know'. Yes, she'd read about Piaget too—it was not a conversation to be pursued. She was, in her turn, I felt, as grateful to be American as I was to be British; after following what was ironically supposed to be a course in foreign educational systems, designed to widen both our horizons and lessen our nationalism . . .

As I have already suggested though, the basic differences in expectation seem to be not so much national as predictable from socio-economic status. Within this, the critical factor seems to be the manner in which this status has been achieved. This touches on yet another set of expectations: to those people who are unfamiliar with the school and Geneva as a whole, 'International School', particularly in Switzerland, carries with it overtones of the international jet-set, of wealthy tax-dodgers and the like. Certainly this sort of private school does exist in Switzerland, but they have to be seen to be very fashionable, concerned with training for entry to the fashionable world, and last but not least, situated somewhere high on a ski-slope. The International School in Geneva fails, fortunately, on all three counts. It does have its share of children from well-off families, but on the whole, the majority are from salaried personnel of either the various international organisations that have their headquarters in Geneva (and there are

literally dozens) or of large, usually American, companies. For a good many, the children's school fees are met by the organisations or the companies. For some, the stay in Geneva is part of a brief European stint before returning to the parent company in the States. Office staff are needed by these various organisations at all levels, the status being disguised under the term 'management' on official forms.

Thus, contrary to expectation, certainly to my own expectation, the children's backgrounds, and that of their parents, are very diverse. To some, it is true, education is valued for itself, school being regarded as a civilising process; to others, it is essentially the means to a meal-ticket, preferably a better meal-ticket than your neighbour's. The difference in attitude and expectation between these polarised groupings has been necessary to learn. The former, while obviously not dismissing the advantages in economic terms of education, somehow take it for granted that their children will get by all right: they ask questions about changes in educational practices as they see them but do not seem, at least overtly, particularly bothered by them. The latter, on the other hand, *are* troubled by anything that does not resemble their own pattern of education; one which usually seems to have been particularly arid and competitive. It is possible that this group has travelled further in socio-economic terms than the other, having had to start farther back and make their way by their own abilities and travail. Their high need of achievement being matched or even nurtured by a corresponding level of anxiety; this, in fact, is in agreement with some of McClelland's work on motivation and the need for achievement. These are the parents who are most bothered by changes in the external order of a classroom, and the evidence of any art or creative work beyond a few paintings on the walls, particularly with the older children.

I referred earlier to the differences in expectation between the two groups when it came to the younger and older age of child, and it is interesting that because children of five years old are not usually considered of 'school age' except by the English, there is not so much marked difference in what they think of as suitable provision for this age child. It is here that the English parents stand out, because they show their anxieties about children's reading, for example, a good year before it worries their American counterparts! This is the kind of instance where national expectations and assumptions become evident. British parents,

while seeming quite glad for their children to have a British teacher, murmur uneasily about the 'playway' system of education on occasion, but do not seem unduly bothered by the evidence of provision for creative work and science for the older children. American parents, at risk of generalising, are quite happy for their five year olds to be in what they term a 'stimulating environment'. This much, I suppose, has percolated through from projects like 'Headstart' etc. However the impression seems to be that by the time they are eight or nine, they should have grown out of this childish need for stimulus and creative work, and be getting down to a multiplicity of rote memorisation tasks.

Sometimes one has to guess what the various expectations or educational concerns of the parents are, for the simple reason that they speak neither French nor English; the school takes in children from sixty-two nationalities and the problems of communication are easily imagined. For a time, I shared the parents' blithe assumption that children would 'naturally' pick up English as either a second or third language. It is true that for a number of children this is no problem and to hear a child switch from say French to English and then to Hungarian, for example, make one feel linguistically very inadequate. However, as many children seem to have this gift in about the same proportion as there are children who are particularly gifted at anything, but for the majority it can often be a real struggle. Those who find it most difficult are the children who have parents of two different nationalities, which is not at all uncommon, and where a dominant language has not been established. It does not seem to bear any relation to the child's intelligence, but they do have a great many problems in structuring what they want to say in any language, and when they do learn English it tends to be monosyllabic; it also noticeably effects their progress and understanding of mathematical concepts.

In relation to this, another expectation that I held, and which many still hold outside the school, is that the children are generally of high ability; certainly the school has a good proportion of these children, but the spread of intelligence approximates a normal distribution curve more nearly than not. For instance in my class this year I had three children who would be reckoned to be about

75 or below in IQ and about two children over 140. The fact that the majority are of middling ability poses some problems and reassessment for the school, particularly in senior departments. To be more determinedly comprehensive, as a growing number would like to see it, will take time to establish in reality.

Finally, to many latter-day primary teachers in Britain the name of Geneva is more than familiar. Wistfully, those of my acquaintance speak of my good fortune to be working in the same city as Piaget himself; indeed to be working in the very same school that his research students use for their studies. At least in Geneva I can surely establish a class on Piagetian principles without meeting hostility. Happy expectation. Gently I have to disabuse them: Piaget is a prophet without honour, not only in his own country's primary schools, but in the international schools that share some of that same country.

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Reviews

Interdisciplinary research

Success and Failure in the Secondary School, by Olive Banks and Douglas Finlayson. Methuen (1973), £1.75 paperback.

Within the last few years the prevailing methodologies of sociological and psychological research into education – at any rate in the ‘West’ – have begun to be seriously and, to some extent, successfully challenged by psychologists and sociologists themselves as well as by teachers and educationists. Already some of the more valuable insights acquired through this body of research are in danger of becoming ignored or discredited. It is good, therefore, to be able to welcome a study which clearly and selfconsciously illustrates both the merits and the acknowledged limitations of contemporary research into the factors underlying school achievement.

Olive Banks and Douglas Finlayson call their book **Success and Failure in the Secondary School** but they concede at once the narrowness of their interpretation of this somewhat ambitious title. They are concerned, in the main, with exploring the process of achievement among a small sample of ‘boys of average and above average ability undergoing academic examination courses in three schools’ in a northern city. One is a traditional grammar school, one a grammar-technical school, the third a comprehensive school where they consider only the children in the top academic streams.

They restrict the scope of their inquiry still further by concentrating on two groups within each school, those who were ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ inasmuch as ‘their performance in school examinations departed significantly from what might have been expected from their 11 plus scores’; ie, ‘those boys who are sometimes referred to as over- and under-achievers’.

Readers of *Forum* may well be sceptical if anything of value can come out of so disturbingly circumscribed a study. And the authors admit that ‘by accepting this situation we may be regarded as reactionary and unprogressive’ by those who subscribe to ‘certain ideological positions’. ‘But,’ they protest, ‘we make no apology for our concern with what is rather than what ought to be. By adopting this viewpoint we hope that the book will make an empirical, as distinct from an ideological, contribution to an understanding of the problem of social inequality in relation to school achievement.’ And so, indeed, it does for all its narrowness.

The book investigates the personality and motivation of the over- and under-achievers, their social background, in particular the way they have been brought up at home and the effect of the school on their achievement. Each chapter, in addition to presenting the authors’ own findings, reviews the work of other researchers. So the book presents as comprehensive an analysis as anyone could wish of the available evidence on the factors which may underlie school achievement in a traditional academic setting.

Perhaps the most interesting finding, and one of the more firmly established, concerns the importance of ‘love-oriented techniques of discipline’ as a factor in school achievement. In a fascinating, though tantalisingly brief, account of differences in the family background of the ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ working-class boys, the authors establish that there is, in their sample, a clear relationship between love-oriented discipline and success *within* the working classes.

‘In general the pattern of responses with respect to disciplinary techniques was strikingly different in the successful and in the unsuccessful groups. It was not simply that parents of unsuccessful boys smacked more, although they did, but rather that they followed a pattern of discipline in

which smacking was combined with material deprivation, shouting, nagging and telling off. Although parents of successful boys occasionally smacked, it was very rare for them to use this particular combination of techniques. They also tended to have a warmer, more approving and less critical relationship than parents whose sons were in the unsuccessful group. Where the parents of an unsuccessful boy had a close and affectionate relationship it was often combined with smacking, shouting and material deprivation rather than with love-oriented techniques of discipline.’

Such parent/child relationships and techniques of discipline were more important in differentiating between the parents of the ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ working-class boys than socio-economic factors, and more important also than simple parental pressure to succeed. Thus ‘it seems possible to maintain that parental pressure on a boy to succeed, unless it is exercised in an atmosphere of love and warmth which presupposes sensitivity on the part of the parents to the individuality of their son, seems more likely to be associated with conflict within the family and with failures than with success at school’.

Above all, the book’s strength lies in its acceptance of the necessity for interdisciplinary research in education, yet I doubt whether, in the end, the authors fully comprehend the kind of interdisciplinary effort that education requires. They conclude with the assertion that ‘what this study has demonstrated is the necessity for focusing research attention on the interaction effect between pupils, the homes they live in and the schools which they attend. The ways in which the effects of the home relate to the personality and motivation of the child and how these in turn relate to the effects of the school, are essentially part of a two-way dynamic process. If this view was given more recognition then the design of educational research studies would begin to reflect some of the

complexities of the achievement process'.

Doubtless. But the recognition requires more than a coming together of sociologists and psychologists. Equally it requires, in my view, the participation of practising teachers (I would be prepared to argue for pupils and parents as well) in the research process itself.

I suspect that it also requires some reconsideration of the assumption that the 'empirical' and the 'ideological' contribution to an understanding of the problem of social inequality in relation to school achievement are wholly separable.

In the meantime, Olive Banks and Douglas Finlayson have brought new insights to bear on what is still the most fundamental problem in education.

MICHAEL ARMSTRONG
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Care and control

Pastoral Care, by Michael Marland, Heinemann Organisation in Schools Series (1974), pp 248, £3.50.

The Government and Management of Schools, by George Baron and D A Howell, The Athlone Press of the University of London (1974), pp 245, £4.50.

These two books make significant contributions to the growing literature of school organisation and management.

The first is primarily concerned with organisation and management inside schools. Michael Marland is Headmaster of Woodberry Down Comprehensive School in London, and has already contributed a useful book, **Head of Department**, to the Heinemann Organisation Series (1971). He now combines his own wide experience with that of five more specialist educationists to produce a book which is readable, practical,

based upon a clearly developed theory, and related to the research literature.

The authors do not pretend that they have final answers to the problems of providing pastoral care to the secondary school pupils of the seventies. But they do insist that there is a body of knowledge and certain clear principles of which schools need to be aware, and on the basis of which they must devise their own nearest-right answers.

Pastoral care is defined as 'looking after the total well-being of the pupil'. The first part of the book examines why pastoral care is both more necessary and more difficult to provide than in any previous period. Marland's analysis of the historical, social, technological and economic background to the problem is a useful discussion document; it might well be read in conjunction with, for instance, Peter Drucker's **Age of Discontinuity** (1969). It is followed by an excellent chapter on the organisation of pastoral and teaching groups, which should be required reading for all Heads and senior staff. There are chapters on the possibilities of counselling, and an informative account of the support services available to schools. Much of this information is likely to be unknown to a majority of teachers, certainly to those who serve in schools where an information-clot occurs near the top of the hierarchy.

Ways of achieving an effective working relationship between home and school are examined, and a number of useful case-studies outlined. The problem of how to keep effective records of pupils' development is discussed, and the need to define the purpose for which records are to be kept is emphasised.

In a useful final chapter, Marland insists that care of the individual pupil must be institutionalised. It is far too important to be left to chance or good intentions. Care and organisation are not opposed to one another; on the contrary, effective care can only be achieved through thoughtful,

detailed organisation. There is much food for thought, much practical advice in this book.

The book by Professor Baron and D A Howell is a pioneer study of how schools in England and Wales are governed. It results from a research project carried out with DES support by the Department of Educational Administration in London University, 1965-69.

The study begins with a concise historical introduction, in which the origins of present-day practices and problems are identified. There follows an interesting and informative account of how school government developed following the publication of the White Paper, **Educational Reconstruction** (1943), the passing of the 1944 Act, and the promulgation of Command Paper 6523/1944, which gave that Act effect.

The authors examine relationships between central and local authorities on matters of school government, and describe the various ways in which the 1944 Act was interpreted. The constitution and composition of governing bodies and management committees, their functions, and their relations with LEAs and Heads are discussed and illustrated by numerous examples. One chapter is devoted to the government of independent, direct grant and voluntary-aided schools.

The book concludes with an informative and thoughtful survey of present-day conditions and trends. It suggests that forms of school government based upon the 1944 Act may soon require substantial revision.

This is a lucid, closely argued book, which should be read by all those concerned with the government and management of schools.

PATRICK BAILEY
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A mixed bag

Teaching Mixed Ability Classes, by A V Kelly, Harper and Row (1974), 122 pp., paperback.

The last five years have seen a very great increase in nonstreamed forms of secondary school organisation, particularly for younger age groups. This is therefore obviously a title with wide appeal to those made anxious by having to face considerable changes in their ways of thinking. I wish I could say that its appeal is matched by its helpfulness. Unfortunately much of the book reads as though it were written by a Black Paper enthusiast at gunpoint. 'Actual movement about the school during lesson time is in most cases not advisable', we read in the chapter on Team Teaching. This quotation, as a matter of fact, captures the peculiar flavour of the writing, which is often reminiscent of a Victorian sex-manual – if such a thing could be imagined. 'No loss of rigour is entailed,' we read, in mixed ability teaching. The book abounds in phrases like 'Many teachers favour . . . '.

In fact, Mr Kelly seems intent on running with the frisky progressive hare while being careful to follow the cautious practical hounds. He sets his face resolutely against discussing the question of knowledge-divisions, yet this is vital for the sort of theoretical understanding that he himself argues practical teachers need. Unless we are clear just *what* intellectual 'rigour' consists in – for everyone, not just the most or least able – we shall be forced into rather trivial and, in the end, boring discussion about this or that technique, this or that nostrum. Our only final criterion will indeed, be the practice of the apparently successful – 'Many teachers favour . . . '. This type of argument is neither arresting nor finally persuasive.

On the credit side, the book contains much that is unquestionably right. Thus it suggests the term

'person centred' to replace 'child-centred' with its overtones of maternalism. Similarly the notion of maturational stages is separated from the notion of definite sequence in learning. But these insights do not compensate for the underlying pessimism, the general sense of an immanent wickedness which the unwary is likely to find – especially, heaven help us, in those of 'limited cultural background'!

DOUGLAS HOLLY
University of Leicester School of Education

Dr Johnson rides again

Chambers Young Set Dictionaries. Amy L Brown, John Downing and John Sceats. W & R Chambers. **Dictionary One** (1971) 40p; **Dictionary Two** (1971) 40p; **Dictionary Three** (1972); 50p; **Dictionary Four** (1973) 60p; **Words Children Want to Use** (1971) 79 pp, limp 30p.

This attractive, carefully planned series of four dictionaries spanning the years from nursery school to the top of the junior school is very welcome. The authors have prepared the four volumes with commendable thoroughness.

Dictionary One (160 words) is an alphabetical 'look and say' word book consisting of attractive coloured illustrations, usually with a single word in sans serif typeface against each. It is suitable for use as an early pre-reading book but since the layout suggests the form of conventional dictionaries, it is a very useful introductory volume.

Dictionary Two (1,000 words, including the 160 in Dictionary One) moves further in the direction of adult dictionaries in having short, simple definitions. Some illustration is retained. Each page carries a two-letter

heading representing either the first or last word on that page.

Dictionary Three (5,000 words, including the previous 1,000) offers fuller definitions, fewer illustrations, three-letter headings to pages and a little help with pronunciation.

Dictionary Four (15,000 words, including the preceding 5,000) forms a link with secondary school dictionaries; page headings are now whole words, more help is given with pronunciation, definitions are more detailed and shades of meaning are introduced. The small handbook to the series, 'Words Children Want to Use', offers sound advice to teachers. While the authors stress that 'these dictionaries should never be associated with uninteresting tasks or burdensome exercises', they also warn that mere possession of the dictionaries will not necessarily develop understanding and recommend lively ways of teaching a range of sub-skills associated with the use of dictionaries and indexes.

The series seems destined to be popular and deservedly so. However, criticism of some details must be offered. The help with pronunciation seems sparse and somewhat arbitrary. For example, the word 'prophecy' is qualified in this way but words like 'atrocious', 'heifer' and 'tenure' are not (all of these latter words have a pronunciation guide in the Concise Oxford Dictionary).

The coloured illustrations of Dictionary One are good but the addition of a single colour to the black and white illustrations of Dictionary Two is much less successful, while the printed alphabet on the end papers of the first two volumes is misleading because of its layout.

But these are minor criticisms of a well thought out series which seems to provide better over-all support for the primary school child than any combination of children's dictionaries so far published.

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